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Standards-Based Performance Assessment in the Comprehensive Music Classroom

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STANDARDS-BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN THE

COMPREHENSIVE MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

Matt McVeigh

A Thesis Submitted in

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ABSTRACT

STANDARDS-BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN THE
COMPREHENSIVE MUSIC CLASSROOM

by

Matt McVeigh

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013
Under the Supervision of Professor Scott Emmons

The purpose of this study is to serve as a template for music educators to use standards-based grading procedures within the context of the comprehensive performance-based music classroom and to examine the effectiveness of standards-based assessment practices within a music performance curriculum. This sample assessment practice will offer one possible path for music educators to implement standards-based assessment, and provide data to address two research questions: 1. Do standards-based assessment practices provide clear and effective information regarding students' mastery level to students, parents, and teachers in performance-based music classes? 2. Are students aware of the learning targets determined by the teacher in secondary music classes?

This pre-survey, post-survey treatment included 169 students, 97 parents, and 3 teachers from 3 school districts across Wisconsin and occurred during the spring of 2013. Students ranged from grade 7-9 and included participants in both band and choir.

The results from this study indicated that music teachers rely on a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student achievement regardless of if they are using standards-based assessment practices; however, teachers who used standards-based assessment were more likely to use formal assessments to determine student achievement

and were more likely to assess students both formally and informally on a regular basis. Furthermore, when standards-based practices were implemented students' awareness of the learning target increased. Students also became less reliant on teacher feedback in determining their success but valued the feedback that was received at a higher level. Finally, parents relied on both online gradebooks, and conversations with their child regarding student achievement in music classes.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A sincere appreciation is extended to all of my teachers from preschool to graduate school.

My Mom and Dad have done so much more than just bring me into this world, they have also prepared me to live and work through it. They have always been there to catch me when I have fallen, and have seemed to make sure that it hurt just enough so that I learned along the way!

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To my former, current, and future students, this has always been about you.

Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

A teacher's ability to assess a student's growth and development is critical for successful education. This is true in music as with any other content area. The information gathered through assessment that is used to determine whether or not students understand and can apply content is perhaps the most critical aspect of the learning process for teachers. Edmund (2008) states, "As assessment plays an increasingly crucial role in education, it is up to music educators to use it most effectively" (p. 45). Marzano (2010), describes standards-based grading as an assessment and reporting system that references student achievement to specific topics within each subject area. The term can be traced to the development of performance standards written for content areas in the 1990's and typically uses four categories to define student performance: Minimal, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced (Marzano, 2010).

It is also important to note the difference between a standards-based system for identifying student achievement and a standards-referenced system. According to Guskey & Bailey (2001), standards-based systems include a four-step process: the identification of standards, performance indicators, graduated levels of quality, and a reporting tool which communicates teachers' judgement regarding student achievement in a specific content area. According to literature examined in the current study, while many music educators refer to the national standards, music classes tend to be standards-referenced and not

standards-based because one or more of the key elements articulated by Guskey & Bailey are missing from the assessment process.

The idea that there are skills, or 'standards' that music educators wish to assess in the music classroom is nothing new. Music educators have goals for their students. For example, if a teacher feels it is important for students to perform in six-eight meter, each student musician is given the opportunity to prepare a performance in that meter. Students receive feedback from their instructor in a formative process and are given a summative assessment which provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their acquired mastery. Standards-based grading principles, however, indicate that if the performance standard for the term is that students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in six-eight meter, then that is precisely the information that assessments and grades should communicate. In a standards-based teaching and learning paradigm, standards replace assignments as the gradebook entry and serves as the chief information tool in communicating student mastery (Fallis, 1999; Marzano, 2010).

Purpose of Study

The initial review of existing literature revealed that while the effects of comprehensive musicianship within instrumental music programs are well documented to positively impact student's education in music, specific assessment models within this framework have been overlooked. The movement towards assessment practices in music that is truly standards-based rather than standards-referenced needs more models for curricular implementation. The purpose of this study is to serve as a model or template for music educators to use standards-based grading procedures within the context of the

comprehensive performance-based music classroom.

This sample assessment practice will offer one possible path for music educators intending to implement standards-based assessment practices, and provide data to determine the effectiveness of standards-based assessment practices within a music performance curriculum.

Research Questions

The following questions will be used to guide the research:

1. Do standards-based assessment practices provide clear and effective information regarding students' mastery level to students, parents, and teachers in performance-based music classes?

2. Are students aware of the learning targets determined by the teacher in secondary music classes?

Need for Study

The need for studying the application of standards-based assessment practices within a comprehensive music performance class is justified in two ways. First, there is a shift in education towards standards-based assessment and grading (Marzano, 2010; Russell, 2010; Schuler, 2008). Secondly, while standards-based assessment has been well researched in content areas such as mathematics and reading (Cherniss, 2008; Haptonstall, 2010; Marzano, 2010; Reys, 2003), its application in performance-based music classes has received limited scholarly research (Brophy, 1997; Fallis, 1999; Schuler, 2008). In comprehensive music performance classes, topics such as instructional methods, assessment, and performance proficiency have all been addressed, but only a limited

application of standards-based assessments have been included in these studies (Fallis, 1999).

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the discussion of standards-based instruction and the assessment model that will be implemented in this study.

Power Standards: What students should know or do; how well they must perform based on instructional content and performance expectations. These are also referred to as Core Conceptual Competencies (Hartenberger, 2007).

Learning Targets: Provide the foundation for power standards. Learning Targets serve as measurable guides for teachers and parents on knowledge and performance required to achieve the power standards. Also referred to as Outcomes, Objectives, and Key Concepts.

Common Assessment: An assessment targeted to key concepts that allows for discussion about student performance on those concepts.

Formative Assessment: A form of evaluation that systematically assesses student progress to provide continuous feedback to students, families and the teacher. Also known as assessment for learning.

Summative Assessment: Assessment determining a student's learning after numerous practice activities have been completed. Provides feedback of the mastery of the key concepts of a unit or topic.

Equal Interval Scale: An alternative to the 100 point grading scale where each letter grade carries an equal weight towards the final grade. Minimizes the power

of zeros towards a final grade. An example of the equal interval scale used in this study is shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 <u>Equal Interval Grading Scale</u>

Mastery Level	Gradebook Entry
Exemplary	4.0
Advanced	3.8
Proficient	3.4
Basic	3.0
Minimal	2.6
Not Observed	2.2

Limitations

This study serves to provide one model for implementing standards-based assessment in performance-based, secondary music classrooms. The study was limited to a small group of secondary students, teachers, and parents representing three school districts in Wisconsin. No attempt has been made to state that this is the only way students can be assessed in music classes, or that this is the only way students can be assessed using the Core Arts Standards. The information in this study can only be validated through further research. However, this study does guide music educators to understand standards-based assessment and offers a model which provides clear and effective information to students, teachers, and parents related to student achievement in performance-based secondary music classes.

Organization of the Study

The information in this study is organized in five chapters. Chapter 2 offers a review of related literature. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the methodology which was

used including the development of a sample assessment model based on the Core Arts

Standards. The final two chapters present the results from the study along with a

discussion regarding conclusions based off the interpretations of that data and further areas

of study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Assessment in education has taken on an increasing variety of functions. Orzolek (2008) captures the complexity of modern day assessment in this way:

> Assessment has become a driving force and factor in the funding of schools, teacher evaluation, curriculum development, the adaptation of curriculum and testing for special needs learners, determining mission and vision for schools, the retention of administrators and even the re-election of politicians. (p. 37)

The commentary above demonstrates how the high stakes culture of modern education has taken the relatively straightforward process of assessment and created many layers of complexity. A simpler definition of assessment could be reduced to communication. Guskey and Bailey (2001) indicate, "The primary goal of grading and reporting is communication" (p. 45). Regardless of the complexity with regards to ones approach to assessment, schools rely on this data to determine student, teacher, and system success.

This review of literature is focused on several strands that relate both to assessment as a whole and assessment specific to music instruction: Standards-based assessment, feedback in assessment, assessment in music, and research on assessment in music. Because the proposed treatment in this study can be categorized under the umbrella of comprehensive musicianship, a summary regarding a variety of studies pertaining to comprehensive musicianship has also been included.

Standards-Based Assessment

Standards-based assessment is defined by Marzano (2010) as a reporting system which references student achievement to specific topics within each subject area. Guskey (2001) refers to this as a criterion-referenced approach and explains the process in this way, "Teachers at all levels must identify what they want their students to learn and be able to do and what evidence they will use to judge that achievement or performance" (p. 20-21). Research regarding standards-based instruction presents several threads including student achievement in standards-based systems, and implementation of standards-based instructional and assessment practices.

Several researchers have completed studies that examine the effects of standards-based systems (Cherniss, 2008; Haptonstall, 2010; Reys, 2003). Cherniss (2008) found that standards-based systems increase the awareness for both teachers and students of the concept that is being taught, increase student interest in their achievement levels, but have an inconclusive effect on motivation. Reys (2003) examined student math scores and found that students in standards-based classrooms equal or exceed the achievement of students in traditional classrooms. Haptonstall (2010) examined state assessment scores of 11,845 students and found significantly higher correlations between state assessments and course grades of students in standards-based systems versus those who were not involved in standards-based systems.

Standards-Based Reporting Forms. Another aspect of Standards-Based assessment which has received considerable research is the use of alternative report cards,

or Standards-Based Report Cards. According to Guskey & Bailey (2009),"A standards-based report card breaks down each subject area or course into specific elements of learning. The standards within each subject area offer parents a more thorough description of their child's achievement" (p. 7).

Guskey and Bailey (2001) indicated, "Although, it makes reporting forms more detailed and complex, most parents value the richness of information when the reports are expressed in terms that they [parents] can understand and use" (p. 92). Bouton (2001) advocates for reporting student achievement with more detail. "By using such an instrument for assessment, students and parents can have a better understanding of our expectations" (Bouton, 2001, p. 5). Still, researchers find the transition to standards-based assessment and grading practices can be challenging for students, parents and teachers (Berridge, 2006; Ogawa, 2003; Schmidt, 2008). Some of the themes taken from a 2005-2006 case-study indicated parent confusion regarding student achievement on a standards-based report card (Berridge, 2006). Ogawa confirmed some of these challenges and adds that a lack of clear instructional philosophy can negatively impact student learning and assessment results (Ogawa, 2003). Schmidt (2008) also found that the transition to standards-based practices can create confusion for parents particularly when teachers within the same school are not making the transition together (Schmidt 2008). Smooth transitions to standards-based reporting systems occur when there is a clear vision and instructional practices on the district level, strong parental communication, and consistency in teacher scoring rubrics (Berridge, 2006; Guskey, 1996; Ogawa, 2003; Schmidt, 2008). Additionally, Guskey (1996) offers three practical guidelines for any assessment or grading

system: 1) Begin with a clear statement of purpose, 2) Provide accurate and understandable descriptions of student learning, and 3) Use grading and reporting methods to enhance, not hinder, teaching and learning.

Feedback in Assessment

Feedback related to student success is a vital part of the learning process (Bailey, 1997; Brandl, 1995; Hattie 2007). Orzolek (2008) offers that feedback is a critical part of the assessment. "Assessment should provide students with feedback on progress and their learning. It should offer suggestions of what needs to be reviewed. It should offer the teacher a 'teachable moment'" (p. 39). Feedback is defined by Shute (2008) as information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behavior to improve learning. Marzano (2010) adds that the dominant characteristic of feedback is that it should inform all interested parties on how best to enhance learning. Research indicates that both the type and timing of feedback effects the learning process (Bailey, 1997; Brandl 1995; Hattie, 2007; Moss, 1998; Shute, 2008).

While feedback is powerful, the type of feedback and the timing of its submission can have different effects on that impact. Hattie (2007) identified three major feedback questions: Where am I going? How am I going? What next? Hattie found that feedback addressed at the self level (praise) is rarely effective in enhancing learning because it fails to address these questions. Furthermore, it is the feedback and information for improvement that can be gained from assessments that matter. Too often these assessments are used as external accountability devices and not feedback devices (Hattie, 2007). Shute (2008) also confirms formative feedback should be non-evaluative, supportive, timely, and specific.

Moss (1998) found that following poor performance leaders typically, delay feedback, distort it to make it less negative, or avoid providing feedback at all.

Bailey (1997) studied the conceptions of self as it related to students in the United States, China, and Japan. Bailey reports that U.S. students desire success feedback compared to their Japanese counterparts who prefer failure feedback and their Chinese counterparts who desire both success and failure feedback. Success feedback can be defined as aspects of performance that students are doing well. Failure feedback can be defined as aspects of performance that students are not doing well. Bailey's research offers an important finding for teachers of American students; students respond best when feedback relates to what they are doing well. Brandl (1995) completed a comparative analysis between strong and weak students preference for feedback. Brandl found that both high achieving and low achieving students preferred feedback which indicated a right or a wrong answer. This was preferred over feedback regarding error location, a description of the correct response, or the correct response altogether.

While feedback in educational settings is important for learning, feedback in the workplace has also been researched and offers insight. Dugan (1989) found that managers' perception of effort and ability influenced verbal feedback. When poor performance was viewed as a lack of effort, feedback was directed toward expectation of effort levels rather than toward the output of performance.

Assessment in Music

Title II of Goals 2000: Educate America Act established a National Education Standards Improvement Council charged with finding appropriate organizations to develop

standards for specific content areas (Byo, 1999; National Coalition for Core Arts

Standards, 2012). The National Standards for Music Education were published in 1994, the

same year as the passage of the Goals 2000 act. According to the Consortium of National

Arts Education Organizations (CNAEO), the publication of the national standards in Arts

Education provided the first truly nationwide attempt to codify the key components of what

students should know and be able to do (CNAEO, 1994). The nine standards included

student achievement indicators for grades 4, 8, and 12. Table 2.1 lists the nine national

standards for music education (CNAEA, 1994, p. 59-63).

Table 2.1. The National Standards for Music Education

The National Standards for Music Education 1994
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.

Shortly after the publication of the National Standards for Music Education music

educators began considering assessment practices. While the National Standards for Music

Education identified and prioritized a variety of skills for music instruction and assessment,

music educators have struggled to find the best method for assessing students on these

standards (Brophy, 1997; Fallis, 1999; Lehman 1997; Nierman, 1999; Russell 2010;

Williams, 2007). Brophy (1997) advocates for using a developmental profile to track

student progress on each standard and that this profile should replace a traditional letter grade. The same suggestions by Brophy were also shared by Lehman (1998) in a report which presented a four-point scale of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Needs Improvement to demonstrate student achievement. The Music Educators National Conference (MENC), now the National Association for Music Education (NAFME) report also used all nine national standards as the basis for an individual developmental profile (Lehman, 1998). Fallis (1999) proposed a standards-based model which involved teaching repertoire through its musical elements. Fallis asserted that teaching through this model ensures that all students experience all standards through the rehearsal process (Fallis, 1999). Because the approach described by Fallis only refers to the National Standards for Music Education rather than use them as the basis for assessment, it may be more accurately termed standards-referenced through definitions presented by Marzano and Guskey (Marzano, 2010)

In 1997, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) developed an assessment framework which would provide common ground to four arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts (Nierman, 1999; Schuler, 2008). The NAEP framework and the development of the National Standards for Music Education were closely linked because of common membership in the leadership of these two movements. Schuler (2008) wrote that ultimately, the NAEP design adopted the three Artistic Processes: Performing, Responding, and Creating as its central model.

Music educators have been challenged to develop standards-based assessment systems with diverse national standards. Williams (2007) states that "Although the National

Standards have had more than ten years to influence the profession, it's questionable how pervasive their implementation is in music classrooms day-to-day" (p. 18). Hartenberger (2008) recommends an approach which aligns curriculum to the national standards by establishing a standards-based curriculum on "big picture" ideas referred to as Core Conceptual Competencies. Aligning district curriculum with national standards is important for providing assessment experiences that have relevance outside of the music classroom, and allow the educator to assess concepts that are not specific to the national standards, but are in alignment with them.

Similarly, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is developing a set of standards based on big picture ideas which are common to all mediums of art.The authors write, "These standards are being crafted to guide arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment in America's schools" (NCCAS, 2012, p. 11). Table 2.2 defines the big ideas which the Core Arts Standards are based upon.

Table 2.2. Core Arts Standards

Standard	Definition
Performing	Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.
Creating	Interacting with and reflecting on artistic work and performances to develop understanding.
Responding	Interacting with and reflecting on artistic work and performances to develop understanding.
Connecting	Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and contextual knowledge.

These standards are broad enough, that the big picture ideas which are identified for

assessment can be used for all arts disciplines.

The Core Arts paradigm also introduces the idea of Cornerstone assessments to guide music instruction. NCCAS (2012) states:

Unlike external standardized tests that "drop in" occasionally, cornerstone assessments are curriculum-embedded. Indeed, the term cornerstone is meant to suggest that just as a cornerstone anchors a building, these assessments should anchor the curriculum around the most important performances that we want students to be able to do (on their own) with acquired content knowledge and skills. (p. 12)

The clarity of expectation is an important aspect of the Cornerstone Assessment concept. The NCCAS writing team remarked on regarding Cornerstone assessments:

[Cornerstone Assessments] should be presented at the *beginning* (italics in original) of a course or a unit of instruction to serve as meaningful and concrete learning targets for students. Such assessment transparency is needed if standards are going to be met. Students must know the tasks to be mastered well in advance, and have continued opportunities to work toward their accomplishment. (NCCAS, 2012, p. 13)

Sindberg (2007) also discusses this same concern in assessment and terms the issue alignment.

It is critical, then, that we take steps to investigate the extent to which students are 'on the bus.' For that to happen two things are necessary. First, we need to be planful – we need to be clear about what our goals are for our students and to enact

those goals with a broad and deep vision of music learning. Second, we need to

interact with our students in ways that help us to better determine their perceptions.

(Sindberg, 2007, p. 21)

While music teachers tend to be very thoughtful in their plan for instruction, their learning

outcomes are not always clear to students. Sindberg's alignment thread specifically

examines the level to which students can accurately describe the learning outcomes which

the teacher intends (Sindberg, 2006; Sindberg, 2009). Hansen (2001) also offers a process

for curriculum development for meaningful assessment that she has termed the Alignment

Loop.

Large-Scale Assessment in Music. Large Scale assessments are used on either a

state, district, or school level to provide accountability for student learning. A rationale for

the purpose of large-scale is stated in this way:

In today's "data or die" system, which demands evidence of the extent to which

teachers' efforts are helping students master the curriculum, music educators who

want to focus on teaching music must develop and implement systems to measure,

analyze and improve music achievement. (Schuler, 2008 p. 124)

Design considerations for large-scale assessments are addressed by Schuler (2008)

including how repertoire should be selected, individual versus group performance

assessment, who should score student performances, and which students should be

included in large-scale assessment. Schuler's design considerations are valuable for

large-scale assessments at the state, district, or program level.

In 2002, the State of Washington began the process of developing a large-scale

assessment model based on benchmark performance assessments. According to Smith (2008) this large-scale assessment is based on five benchmark assessments in grades five, eight, and ten. Smith (2008) states, "A predictable difficulty in the face of top-down change is the inertia of tradition, particularly in secondary school music programs where the emphasis has traditionally been on the performance of quality music literature in groups" (p. 157). Schuler (2008) recognizes that American schools place the greatest emphasis on performing and recommends that if large-scale assessment on student achievement in music is to be authentic it requires the measurement of performance achievement. "At the secondary level, by which time many students have chosen to focus on an instrument, the most sensible approach to performance assessment is to ask students to perform on their 'instrument of choice,' which might be voice" (Schuler, 2008, p. 126).

Both Schuler's large-scale assessment design considerations and the Washington State model are very similar to the Core Arts concept of cornerstone assessments. Basing summative assessments or cornerstone assessments on big ideas which are curricularly embedded provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and ability. Music educators developing cornerstone assessments can turn to these large-scale assessment models as templates for their own designs.

Research on Music Assessment

Research involving assessment in music has historically centered on grading practices employed by both elementary and secondary music educators (Barkley, 2006; McCoy, 1991; Lehman, 1998; Simanton, 2000; Sherman, 2006). However, there has been some work regarding the collection of assessment data including performance-based or

criterion-based assessment and portfolio assessment. Fiese & Fiese (2001) explain the focus on assessment in this way, "If you believe that what you teach is important and how you teach is important, then what and how you assess what you teach is no less important because it is all one process" (p. 13).

Recent studies continue to find that a significant amount of music educators continue to base grades on a combination of achievement and non-achievement criteria; however, greater emphasis is placed on non-achievement criteria including attendance, attitude, and practice time (Russell, 2010). Lehman (2008) remarks towards these practices in a very direct manner, "This borders on fraud" (p. 23). Lehman identifies grading based on non-achievement factors is a practice often viewed by other educators as evidence that music is a content area that lacks substance. Lehman (1998) also shares this view stating, "Using grades to reflect criteria not based on the subject matter is at best dramatically inconsistent with the dominant culture throughout the school and at worst a blatant misuse of the grading system" (p. 38).

Barkley (2006) studied elementary teachers implementation of assessments based on the national standards. Findings from this study indicated that there continues to exist inconsistency with regard to which standards are regularly assessed. Barkley noted that standards such as improvisation and composition are rarely assessed at all. Additionally, Barkely indicated the prevalence of non-achievement factors in assessment. Teachers who were not using performances or written assessments in music classes were using indicators such as attitude and effort as a basis for grades.

Russell (2010) recognized that a lack of administrative guidance, low educator

confidence in assessment practices, and a concern in program enrollment all increase the likelihood that educators weigh student grades more heavily towards non-achievement factors. Lehman (1997) recommends that student grades be based on standards and identifies large class sizes in music as one obstacle in meeting that goal.

McCoy (1991) investigated the grading practices of high school music educators and compared those practices with principals' suggestions for grading. McCoy found that music directors tended to rely most heavily on non-musical factors including behavior and attendance. This was in contrast to the principals in this study which favored more cognitive and basic performance skills as the heaviest portion of the grade. McCoy (1991) comments:

> At a time, however, when claims are being made for the rightful place of music in the academic circle along with english, mathematics, and science, music educators must reexamine grading policies that rely most heavily on criteria that do not directly measure student achievement and develop their course and grading systems to reflect those objectives that they deem most important. (p. 189)

The question of what kinds of information music educators should use as a basis for student grades is a common theme in the literature on assessment. Lehman (1997) outlines a specific way to measure student progress in what he refers to as criterion tasks, or tasks which are assigned to specific standards or expectations within the curriculum. He recommends that students grades should be based on progress in learning specific skills and knowledge in music. Lehman (1997) writes:

> Criterion tasks serve as the basis for grades should be identified. Specific levels of

expectation (for example, basic, proficient, and advanced, or A, B, C, and D) should be described. Audiotaped or written benchmarks representing student performance at each level can provide guidance for students and teachers and improve scoring reliability. (p. 58)

Reliability between assessment raters has been a key issue which challenges music educators. Bergee (2007) found that disagreements between raters were significant. Ten certified adjudicators listened to and rated nine pre-recorded performances of brass and woodwind soloists who had received superior ratings at both district and state music festivals. Measurement errors originating from raters' disagreements with one another overwhelmed all other sources of variance. Bergee recommends that raters be trained and reach consensus with "anchor" performances before attempting to assess or rate the real performance. Sherman (2006) found that while music educators generally agree on strategies used for assessment the degree to which these assessments are modified indicate that the profession continues to search for the ideal method to assess students.

According to Barkley (2006) music educators frequently use formative assessment to measure student progress. One needs to be careful, however, in how they term this assessment. Colwell (2008) states, "Formative assessment does not occur unless some learning action follows from the testing" (p. 13). The continued learning that Colwell describes supports teacher feedback as the predominant student benefit to formative assessment.

Developing student portfolios is one way music educators have demonstrated assessing a variety of performance related learning goals (Hale & Green, 2009). Kelly (2001) writes,

> While some music educators may believe that no grading system exists that adequately reflects what a student learns in the classroom, the use of portfolios through the process of authentic assessment may be an alternative technique that may indicate higher student performance and improve teaching effectiveness.
>
> (p. 28)

A portfolio is described by Kelly (2001) as a collection of student's work over a period of time and by Asmus (1999) as a tool for recording both the process and product of musical learning by including tangible artifacts of student learning collected over time.

A music assessment portfolio may include a variety of examples of student work. Asmus (1999) notes that a portfolio may include musical programs, teachers' written evaluations, recordings, and self evaluation. Orzolek (2008) says a student portfolio could include just about anything such as written work, tests, recordings of performances, compositions, and much more. Nierman (2001) describes several advantages for using portfolios to archive performance assessments. Performances require active participation by the students, performances demonstrate student knowledge in an observable way, and multiple performances can document growth by the student. Portfolios provide a key link to empower students to monitor their own growth. Nierman (2001) adds, "A major advantage of using the portfolio for assessment is that it provides an opportunity to make students accountable for documenting growth in musical skills and knowledge" (p. 50).

Current research continues to show that many music educators still base student assessment and grades and non-achievement factors (Barkley, 2006; McCoy, 1991; MENC, 1998; Simanton, 2000; Sherman, 2006). There is, however, a movement in music education for assessment and grades which are based on specific criteria of music performance and understanding (Lehman, 1997; Lehman 2008; Sherman, 2006). Portfolios, or collections of work which students achieve over time, provide one path for achieving these performance-based, criterion-referenced goals (Asmus, 1999; Kelly; 2001; Nierman, 2001; Orzelak, 2008).

Arts & the Common Core

Common Core Standards for Math and Language were written in 2010 and have been adopted by almost all 50 states. According to the College Board (2012) "In reviewing the arts references already existent in the Common Core Standards, the most substantial mentions of the arts were presented in relation to analyzing and responding to works of art, especially as they relate to a text" (p.11). The College Board report indicates many points of alignment between the Core Arts Standards and the Common Core which includes references to arts disciplines in numerous Core Standards across many grade levels (College Board, 2012).

Comprehensive Musicianship

The concept of musical understanding within the context of ensemble rehearsals has been referred to as comprehensive musicianship. Throughout time it has manifested in different forms but the commonality is that educators who embrace comprehensive musicianship favor a learning environment that teaches foundations of musicianship

through musical performance. Students in a comprehensive classroom experience music from a variety of musicianly roles including: composer, improviser, listener, musicologist, and of course, performer (Reimer, 2003).

Comprehensive musicianship in secondary music education has been a growing philosophical concept over the past fifty years and in many respects dominates the philosophical writing, curricular activities, and national initiatives of secondary music educators over the last half-century (Bess, 1991; Burton, 1990; Dello Joio, 1984; Garofalo, 1976; Sindberg, 1998; Thompson; 1970). Comprehensive Musicianship is a term used to signify the teaching of a full range of musical skills. These skills include, but are not limited to, ear training, sight singing, music theory, music history, analysis, composition, and performance (Bess, 1991). Johnson (1992) observed that even teachers who are not familiar with specific instructional models of comprehensive musicianship still implement practices of comprehensive music into their teaching.

Practically since the inception of the concept of comprehensive musicianship, researchers have been interested in its effectiveness as a method of musical instruction (Austin, 1998; Culbert, 1974; Gephardt, 1974; Garofalo/Whaley, 1979; Gleason, 2002; Sherburn, 1984; Swearingen 1993; Whitener, 1981). Two main research questions guided early studies regarding comprehensive music instruction: 1) does including comprehensive musicianship strategies hinder the performance level of student ensembles? and 2) does a comprehensive musicianship approach really produce students with stronger awareness and musical understanding?

Research which suggests that using a comprehensive musicianship approach

hinders musical performance was not found. Quite the contrary, researchers have found that students receiving comprehensive musicianship perform at an equal or superior level to students that receive a strict performance oriented experience (Austin, 1998; Culbert, 1974; Gephardt, 1974; Garofalo/Whaley, 1979; Gleason, 2002; Sherburn, 1984; Swearingen 1993; Whitener, 1981). Consistent in their design, each study is a slight variation of pre-test/post-test experimental design (Culbert 1974; Garofalo/Whaley 1979; Gephardt, 1974; Gleason, 2002; Sherburn, 1984; Swearingen, 1993; Whitener, 1981). Typically, the only substantial difference is the source of the treatment materials. Garofalo/Whaley implemented the *Unit Study Composition Curriculum Model* from Blueprint for Band (Garofalo, 1976; Garofalo/Whaley, 1979); Swearingen (1993) applied his own *Music Appreciation Module*.

Early research involving comprehensive musicianship practices were applied to summer band programs (Gephardt, 1974; Parker, 1975). While the initial experimental models focused secondary students (Garofalo/Whaley, 1979; Gephardt, 1974; Parker, 1975; Swearingen,1993), Whitener (1981) replicated previous moles and the treatment to beginning band students, and Gleason (2002) completed a treatment with middle-school students.

Summary

Though the effectiveness of a comprehensive approach has been well established through experimental research, there is a large area of understanding as to effectiveness of music assessment within this paradigm left to be explored. The comprehensive musicianship approach continues to be one pathway toward a student-centered experience

in music which develops a unique form of human intelligence. However, in order to

examine students understanding in music, assessment practices must be developed based on

the big ideas or essential questions in a music curriculum. The big ideas prioritized through

Core Arts Standards of Performing, Creating, Responding, and Connecting provide a clear

framework to research the effectiveness of standard-based assessment practices.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this study I examined the effectiveness of standards-based assessment practices in secondary music classes. An assessment model based on the Core Arts Standards (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2012) was developed and administered to students with pre and post surveys completed by parents, students, and teachers. As a result of the review of literature, the research questions below were asked.

Research Questions

1. Do standards-based assessment practices provide clear and effective information regarding students' mastery level to students, parents, and teachers in performance-based music classes?

2. Are students aware of the learning targets determined by the teacher in secondary music classes?

Rationale for Design

A pre-test, post-test design is frequently used for studies involving some aspect of the learning process with comprehensive musicianship (Culbert 1974; Garofalo/Whaley 1979; Gephardt, 1974; Sherburn, 1984; Swearingen, 1993; Whitener, 1981). Because this study involves student, parent, and teacher perceptions, a survey was used instead of a test as the data instrument. Groups of study participants were divided randomly into treatment and control groups. This study used secondary performance-based music classes in their

authentic setting during the spring of 2013. Because of this, it was necessary to keep all students, and teachers with their own school music classes. In order to preserve this, the school groups rather than individual students, parents, or teachers, were randomly assignment to either the control or treatment groups. A coin flip was used to determine the group assignments.

Survey Design

To examine the effectiveness of standards-based Aassessment, a survey tool was developed. The survey monitored the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers from three schools. Three separate surveys were designed, one for the students, one for the parents, and one for the teacher. The purpose of the survey was to provide data to examine the two research questions 1) Do standards-based assessment practices provide clear and effective information regarding students' mastery level in performance-based instrumental music classes? and 2) Are students and parents aware of the learning goals determined by the teacher in instrumental music classes?

Rating scales were used to determine the strength of conviction in teacher, student, and parent responses. The same questions were asked on each of the pre- and post-surveys. Copies of the student, parent, and teacher surveys can be found in appendices A, B, and C respectively. Table 3.2 demonstrates the relationship between the study's research questions and the survey data.

Table 3.1. <u>Relationship of Research Questions to Survey Data</u>

	Student	Parent	Teacher
Demographics	Questions 1 & 2	Questions 1-3	Questions 1-5
Curriculum			Questions 6-11
Research Question 1	Questions 6-9	Questions 4, 6, and 7	Questions 12,13,16-18
Research Question 2	Questions 3-5	Question 5	Questions 14 & 15

Data Collection. The teacher pre-survey was administered to teachers after they agreed to participate in this study. Both the student and parent pre-surveys were administered at the beginning of the grading periods. At the conclusion of one grading term, all three groups (students, parents, and teachers) were given the post-survey. Because the parent surveys did not yield any noteworthy differences between the control and treatment groups, their survey data was handled as one group. <u>Surveymonkey.com</u>, an online survey tool was utilized to create the survey, send the survey to students, parents, and teachers, and collect the data.

At the conclusion of the study, additional questions were also asked through phone contact with the teachers administering this study to provide a deeper level of information regarding their experience and the perception of the students involved in the experimental groups. The follow-up questions consisted of the following: After completing this treatment, was the standards-based assessment practice effective in reporting student achievement? Were there any changes in students attitudes, understanding, or work habits? Were there any changes that you noticed in your own teaching? After looking at the

student assessment data, is there anything you would change about how you taught the

learning targets?

Setting

Three schools were selected for this study; a middle school band program in

northwestern Wisconsin, a high school band program in northwestern Wisconsin, and a

high school choir program in southeastern Wisconsin. Two schools constituted the

experimental group and one constituted the control group. Because the intention of the

study was to examine the effects of standards-based assessment and grading, programs

which had not previously implemented this assessment paradigm were used. Once the

schools were selected, data was collected through pre-surveys. Table 3.1 shows the

breakdown of participants in this study.

Table 3.2. <u>Breakdown of Study Participants</u>

	Control	Treatment
Students	38	131
Parents	27	70
Teachers	1	2

The goals and objectives given to the teachers of the treatment group were to assess

students according to their selected learning targets for one grading period using a

standards-based model. Student grades would be made up of summative achievement

mastery for each of these standards. Teachers from the treatment group received training

and study material from the researcher regarding standards-based assessment. Teachers

were coached to develop units based on the Core Arts Standards of Performing, Creating,

Responding (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2012), and Knowledge and

Skills. Teacher units and instructional materials were approved by the researcher before

classroom implementation.

The control group was told that the goals and objectives of this study were to

examine the use of assessment practices for one grading period. The control group did not

receive training or information on standards-based assessment and was directed to continue

with previous classroom instructional and assessment practices.

Assessment Model

The power standards used in this assessment model were based on the Core Arts

Standards (NCCAS, 2012). These power standards were developed through research by

the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards and through the work of Schuler (NCCAS,

2012). For this study, the three artistic processes: Performing, Creating, Responding,

combined with a Knowledge and Skills category were used as the Power Standards

(NCCAS, 2012; Schuler, 2008).   Below are definitions of each power standard and

learning target on which teachers focused during the treatment:

Performing
Realizing artistic ideas and working through interpretation and presentation (NCCAS,
2013, p. 10) *to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to
excellence.*

Treatment Learning Targets
Treatment School 1: Student can perform syncopated rhythms with technical accuracy.
Treatment School 2: Student can sight-sing diatonic patterns and melodies.

Creating
Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work (NCCAS, 2013, p. 10).

Treatment Learning Target
Treatment School 1: This power standard was not assessed during this grading term.
Treatment School 2: This power standard was not assessed during this grading term.

Responding
Interacting with and reflecting on artistic work and performances to develop understanding (NCCAS, 2013, p. 10).

Treatment Learning Targets
Treatment School 1: Student can evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others performances and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
Treatment School 2: Student can be a self-reflective performer.

Knowledge and Skills
Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and contextual knowledge.

Treatment Learning Targets
Treatment School 1: Student can analyze music by identify major key signatures.
Treatment School 2: Student can visually and aurally identify intervals between a unison and an octave.

Instructional Materials. Teachers selected or developed instructional material based on their selected outcomes. Curriculum information obtained from pre-surveys indicated that each teacher participating in this study already used a combination of method books, warm-up books, comprehensive teaching plans, and teacher-made materials.

Repertoire Selection. Teachers selected repertoire which aligned with the key concepts studied during the grading period. For example, the teacher who selected syncopation as a their learning target for the Performing power standard also selected repertoire for the full ensemble which included syncopated rhythms in addition to the individual assessment materials which were prepared. This is an important link in teaching

standards-based outcomes in a full ensemble setting and also connects this assessment model within the Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance planning model (O'Toole, 2003, p. 101-104).

Evaluation of Student Performance

Specific assessment methods for collecting data on student achievement were left to the treatment teachers' discretion. Teachers were instructed, however, to include several formative experiences on each learning target designed to give students feedback on their progress. A summative experience was also required for the students to earn a final mastery-level on each concept. Students' grades reflect their achievement on a summative experience for the the learning concept rather than by averaging different assignments.

Teachers within the treatment group involved in this study provided a variety of formative assessments in order for students to gain feedback which guided them to higher levels of performance. Research indicates that feedback is a vital part of the learning process (Bailey, 1997; Brandl, 1995; Hattie, 2007). The importance of a variety of formative assessment experiences is that it provides multiple opportunities for students to receive feedback which can deepen their level of understanding and bring them to higher levels of achievement. Formative assessment also predicts student achievement on a given concept and can be used by students, teachers, and parents in predicting student success on a summative assessment.

The treatment of this study relied on student performance on one summative assessment per learning concept. The summative assessment provided both final feedback related to a student performance, and a final mastery level indicating student performance.

It is noteworthy that while it is the purpose of the formative assessment to provide feedback for continuous improvement, it is the purpose of the summative assessment to determine a final evaluation for the learning concept, and ultimately to provide the rating that is entered into the gradebook.

In order to clearly communicate performance expectations for the learning concepts organized under the Performing power standard, a rubric was developed by the researcher. This rubric was based on the Wisconsin School Music Association rubric for solo and ensemble performance (see appendix G). It differs however in its use of mastery levels rather than ratings. The indicators for mastery levels have been rewritten to accurately describe student performance under the headings of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Minimal and Not Observed. Students receiving a perfect score as determined by the rubric receive an Exemplary mastery level. Rubrics for Instrumental, Percussion, and Vocal performance were developed by the researcher and can be found in appendices H, I, and J.

Gradebook Entry and Equal Interval Scale. Within this study treatment, students' grade in a performance-based music class was made up solely on their ability to master specific learning targets for one grading term. The specific targets replaced assignment listings in the gradebook entry. Students received only one grade on each concept which represented their culminating or summative experience. A traditional gradebook might list all assignments or lessons; however, teachers implementing standards-based assessment use the lesson experiences and assignments as evidence of student mastery, but list and assess each concept separately and only once.

An alternative to the 100 point grading scale is what is referred to as an equal

interval scale. An equal interval scale is where each letter grade carries an equal weight towards the final grade. This scale is used to organize student mastery into 5 categories. As can be seen in table 3.3 each mastery level corresponds with a specific point value for gradebook entry.

Table 3.3. <u>Equal Interval Grading Scale Modified for Gradebook Entry</u>

Mastery Level	Gradebook Entry	Key Identifier
Exemplary	4	Student work serves as a model for others.
Advanced	3.8	Student goes beyond proficient in complexity, expression or execution.
Proficient	3.4	Student usually demonstrates an understanding of the concept.
Basic	3	Proficiency is still emerging. Inconsistent, but the general idea is there.
Minimal	2.6	Student can meet 'basic' or 'proficient' level with instructors with help.
Not Observed	2.2	Skills are unobservable. Even with instructors help, student cannot meet 'basic' or 'proficient' level.

The specific equal-interval grading scale shown in table 3.3 is intended to be used for point-based and percentage-based gradebook computer programs. While standards-based assessment utilizes 4 or 5 mastery levels, most educators still work with computer gradebook programs which are based on points and percentages. It is common in standards-based grading systems and in equal interval grading scales to relate a mastery

level to an integer: 4 - Advanced/Exemplary; 3 - Proficient; 2 - Basic; 1- Minimal; and 0 - Not Observed; however the result of that system in a traditional point-based or percentage-based gradebook means that even a student who met expectations (Proficient) would only earn a letter grade of a 'C.' Additionally, each of the categories of Basic, Minimal, and Not Observed all would work out to a letter grade of an 'F.' The solution to this is to not rely on integers only but weight the grading scale so that each mastery level mathematically equates to the exact center of a traditional letter grade as shown in Table 3.3.

Summary

In summation, this experimental treatment featured a pre- and post-survey design for students, parents, and teachers. Three schools were randomly sorted into either the treatment or control group and given a pre-survey. The treatment schools implemented a standards-based assessment practice based off the Core Arts Standards, while the control group continued to use previous classroom instructional and assessment practices. At the end of one grading term each group was given a post-survey with the same questions as the pre-survey.

The initial review of literature revealed that while the effects of comprehensive musicianship within secondary music programs are well documented to positively impact students' education in music, specific assessment models within this framework have not received a great amount of research. This study serves as one model or template for music educators to use standards-based grading practices within the context of the comprehensive performance-based music classroom. The following chapter provides data to answer the

research questions related to the effectiveness of standards-based assessment

practices and students' awareness of learning targets in secondary music classes when

standard-based assessment practices are implemented.

Chapter 4

Results

Data Analysis

Because this study examined the effectiveness of standards-based assessment and student awareness of learning targets in music classes, results from the survey are an important link in making any meaningful conclusions. Data collected through this study was analyzed by examining relationships between assessment and curricular aspects between treatment and control schools in both pre-surveys and post-surveys. The results have been organized by the research questions to provide data to investigate the effects of standards-based assessment.

Demographics

The control group was made up of a freshman band in a high school of over 750 students in northwestern Wisconsin. Over 200 students participated in 3 bands which were assigned by a combination of school grade and ability. Students received instruction in band everyday for a 45 minute period. The school district had a written music curriculum, but did not have written assessment practices for that curriculum.

The treatment group consisted of both a freshmen treble choir in southeastern Wisconsin, and a 7th- and 8th- grade band in northwestern Wisconsin. The middle school served a population between 251-500 students, and had between 150-199 students in band. Students met everyday for 45 minutes throughout the school year. While the school did not

have a formally written curriculum for music, it did have a written assessment policy for teachers. The high school served over 2,000 students and had approximately 250 students who participated in five choirs. Each choir met for instruction for 45 minutes daily. Both a written music curriculum, and written assessment practices existed.

Teachers in this study had a moderate level of professional experience. The teacher of the control group was in his 9th- year teaching and the teachers of of the treatment group were in their 9th- and 10th- year of teaching. None of these teachers had implemented standards-based assessment practices, and claimed to be minimally aware of this assessment paradigm prior to this study. The teachers used in this study all have a reputation for high quality teaching. Each of them have been involved in state music initiatives and youth programs including the Wisconsin School Music Association's Honors Project and Wisconsin School Music Association's Marching Band Committee.

Research Question 1 (Effectiveness)

The first research question stated earlier relates to whether standards-based assessment practices are effective in reporting students' mastery level in performance-based secondary music classes. Survey data for this thread consisted of looking at how students use feedback in determining their own achievement level in music classes, as well as data related to students perception examining how closely their grade reflects their current achievement in a performance-based music course. Parent surveys generated data regarding types of information parents use in deciphering their child's achievement level in music classes. Finally, Teacher surveys provided insight related to how teachers check for

understanding and document student achievement, as well as the frequency of both formal and informal assessment practices.

      Students. Comparison of pre-survey and post-survey data indicated that students were less reliant on teacher feedback when the standards-based treatment was implemented. Figure 4.1 shows the pre-survey and post-survey data for both the treatment and control groups related to reliance on teacher feedback. As can be seen in the figure, the control group indicated a higher reliance on teacher feedback, while the treatment group indicated a decreased level of reliance on teacher feedback to determine their success in music classes.

Figure 4.1. Students Reliance on Teacher Feedback
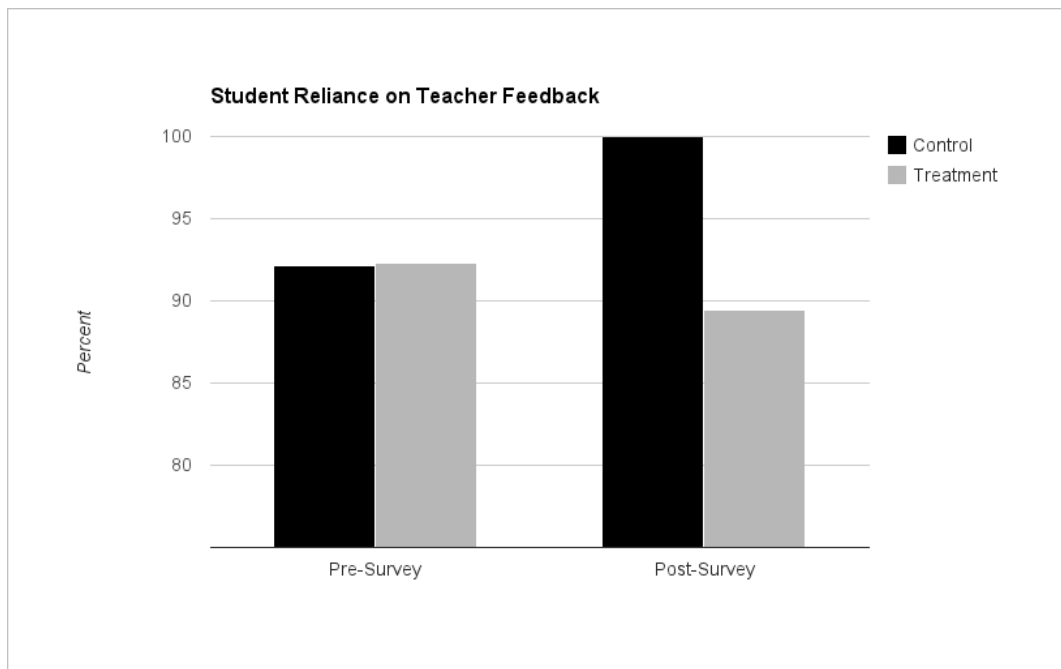
Even though treatment students became less reliant on teacher feedback in determining their own success in music classes, students in the standards-based treatment tended to value the feedback they gained from their teachers at a higher rate than their control group

peers. On Figure 4.2 the increase in value of teacher feedback from the treatment group is evident. 68% of students felt teacher feedback was "Very Important" at the end of the treatment compared to the 55% who indicated teacher feedback was "Very Important" before the treatment began.

Figure 4.2. Value of Teacher Feedback
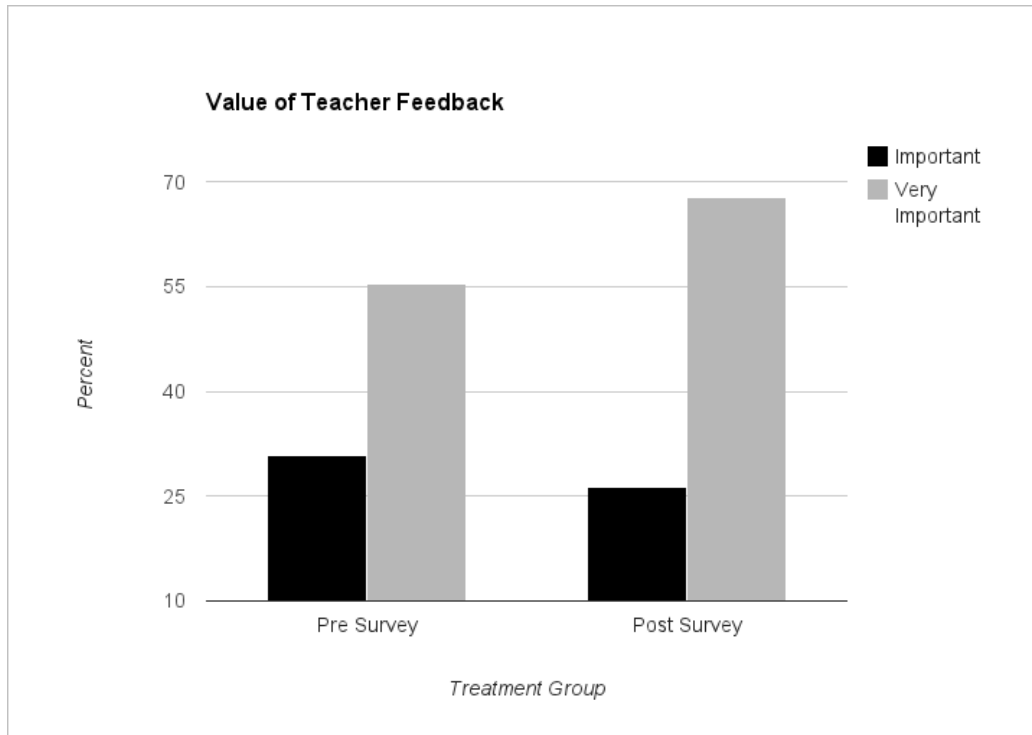
Students involved in the standards-based treatment also showed an increased rate in which they believe their grade reflected their achievement in class as compared to the control group. Figure 4.3 demonstrates changes in the average rating of how well students thought their course grade reflected their achievement in music classes. While the treatment group's confidence between the relationship of their grade and their achievement in class increased, the control group's confidence decreased.

Figure 4.3. Student Achievement and Course Grades (Student Perception)
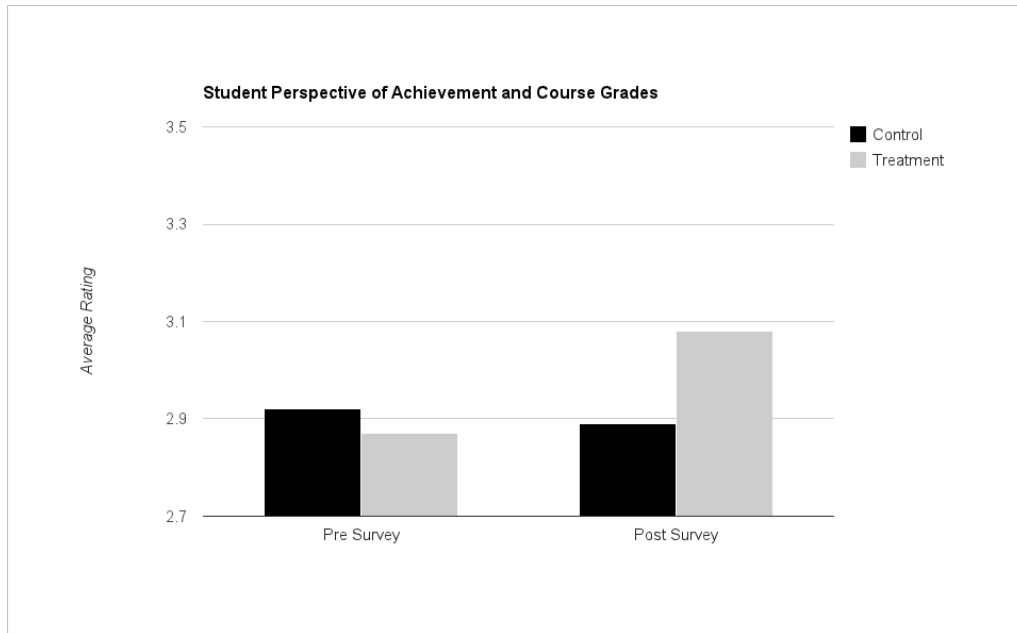
Parents. Examining the effectiveness of standards-based assessment, it becomes important to consider the types of information parents use to monitor their child's achievement in secondary performance-based music classes. As can be seen in Figure 4.4, parents use a variety of resources to monitor their child's success, including online gradebooks, parent/teacher conferences, informal discussions with their child's teachers, and conversations with their child; however, parents predominantly rely on two: Online grading programs, and conversations with their child.

Figure 4.4. <u>Resources for Determining Student Success</u>
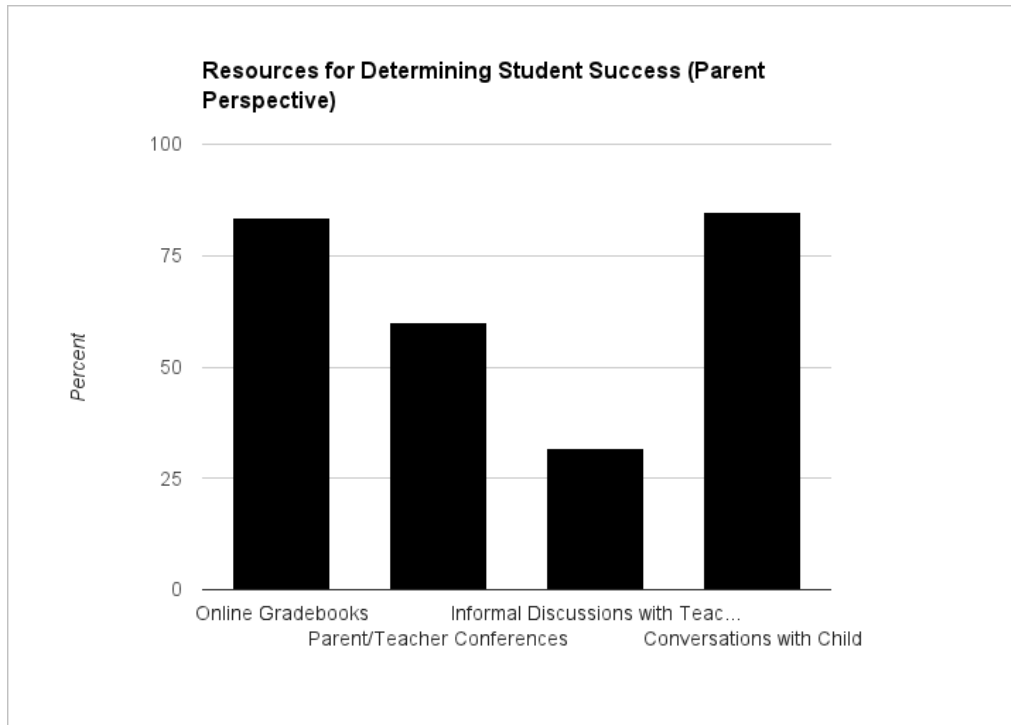
While Figure 4.4 demonstrates the types of information parents rely on to monitor their child's achievement, there needs to be continued discussion as to the reliability of that information. Since parents rely on online gradebooks and conversations with their child it becomes imperative that school systems are providing the richness of information to help parents understand achievement expectations, and that students are very aware of the learning targets in their music courses. A more indepth discussion of this will be included in chapter 5.

Teachers. This study indicated that teachers check for student understanding in a variety of ways regardless of the label of their assessment practices. Teachers both in the control and treatment groups indicated using formal assessments, informal assessments, tests, projects, performance quizzes, and observations as strategies for assessing student

understanding and performance. While both the control and treatment teachers indicated using a variety of strategies for assessment of learning, the post-treatment survey results demonstrated greater frequency in both the formal and informal assessments over the control group. Figure 4.5 compares the post survey data on the frequency of formal and informal assessments between the control and treatment groups and demonstrates the greater frequency in which the treatment teachers used both classifications of assessment strategies.

Figure 4.5. <u>Frequency of Formal and Informal Assessments</u>
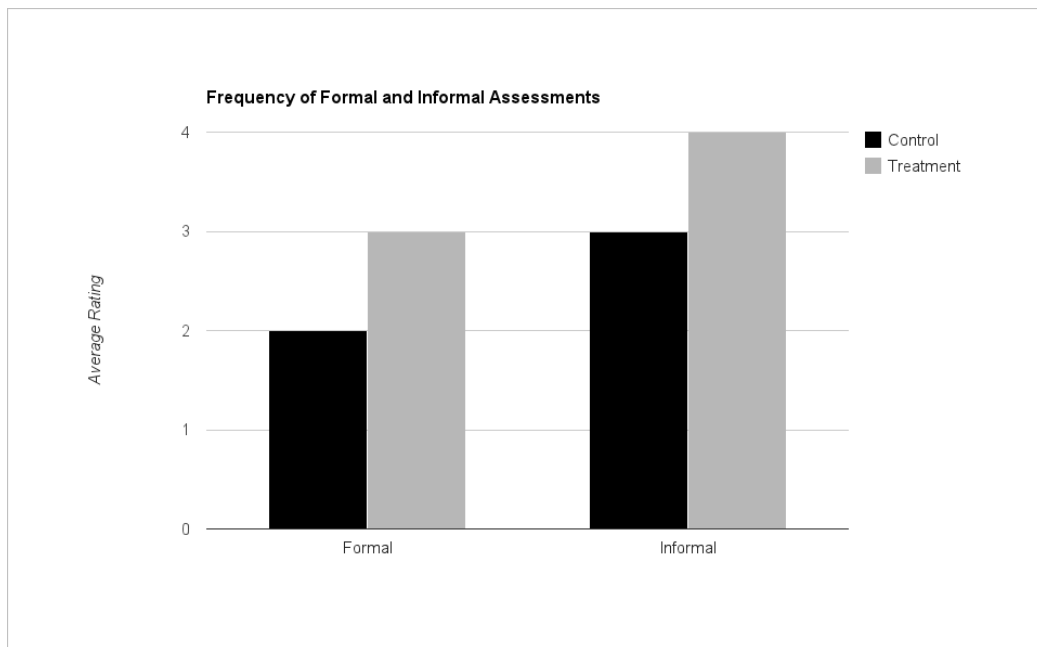
Additionally, teachers involved in the standards-based treatment were more likely to use formal assessments to determine student mastery for a variety of concepts. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 show the change in frequency of formal assessments on music literacy concepts, tone quality, articulation/diction, historical and cultural connections, and music theory concepts from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Figure 4.6 shows that pre-survey data

indicated the control group teacher formally assessed students more frequently; however,

the post-survey data shown in Figure 4.7, demonstrates that the treatment group was

assessed more frequently.

Figure 4.6 Frequency of Formal Assessment- Pre-Survey
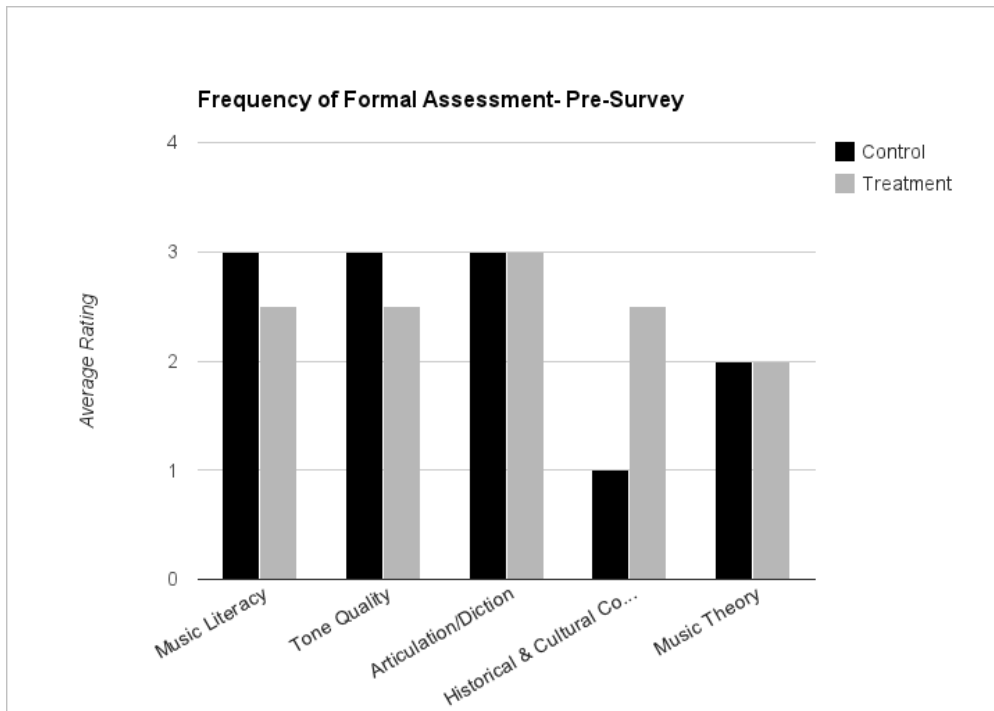
Figure 4.7 <u>Frequency of Formal Assessment- Post-Survey</u>
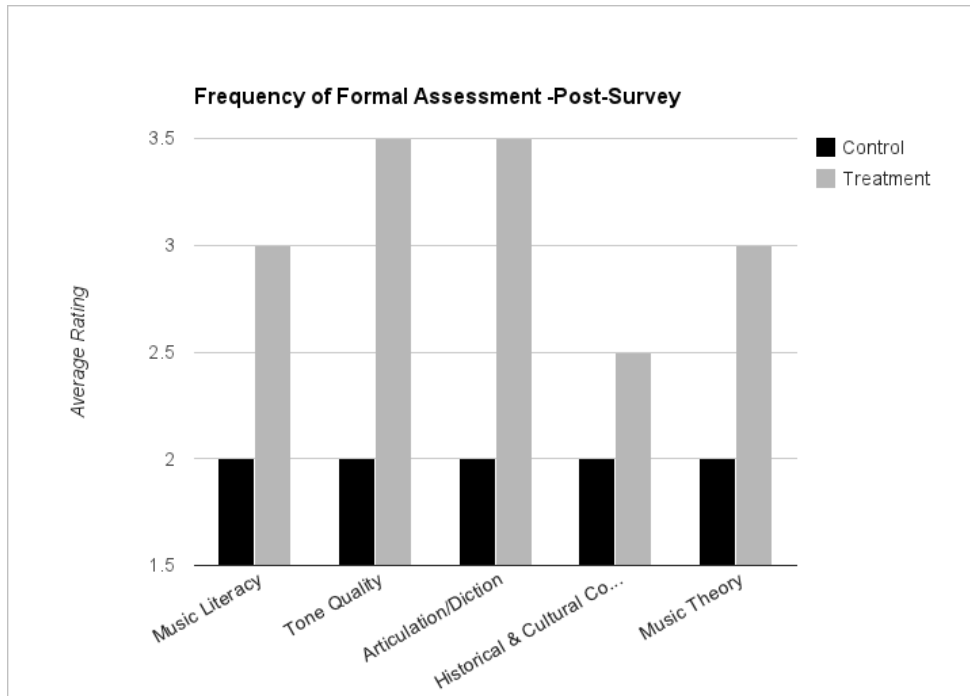
The frequency of formal assessments can also be looked at by examining the changes in the control and treatment groups separately. Figure 4.8 demonstrates the changes in frequency of formal assessment involving just the control group. The decrease in regularity of assessment within this group is easily seen in this figure.

Figure 4.8. <u>Use of Formal Assessments Control Group</u>
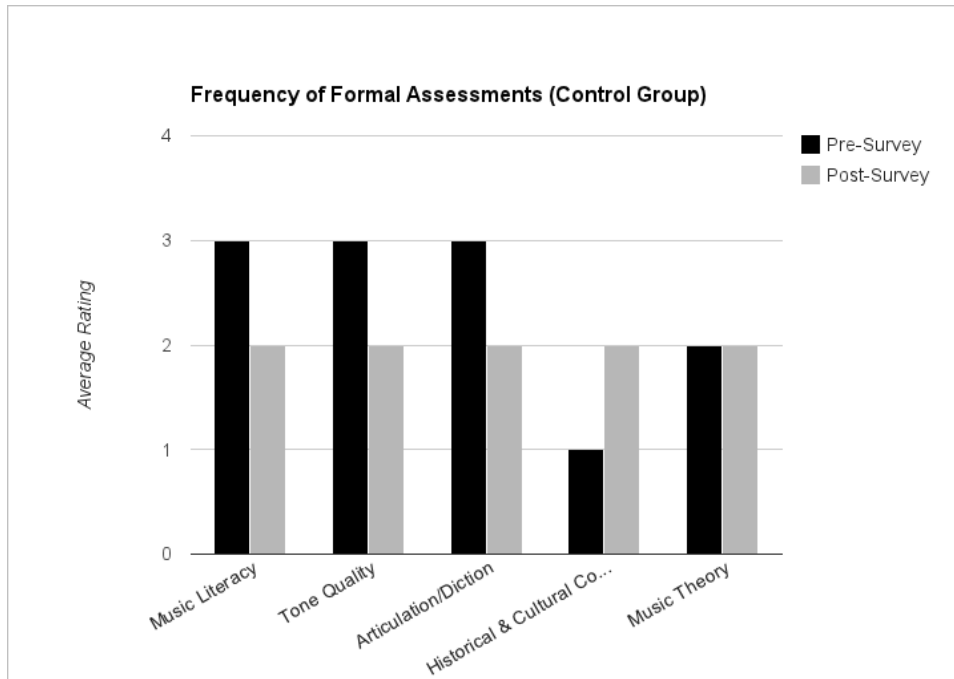
In contrast to the decrease in the frequency of assessment in the control group,

Figure 4.9 shows that the frequency of assessment in treatment group increased from

pre-survey to post-survey.

Figure 4.9. <u>Use of Formal Assessments Treatment Group</u>
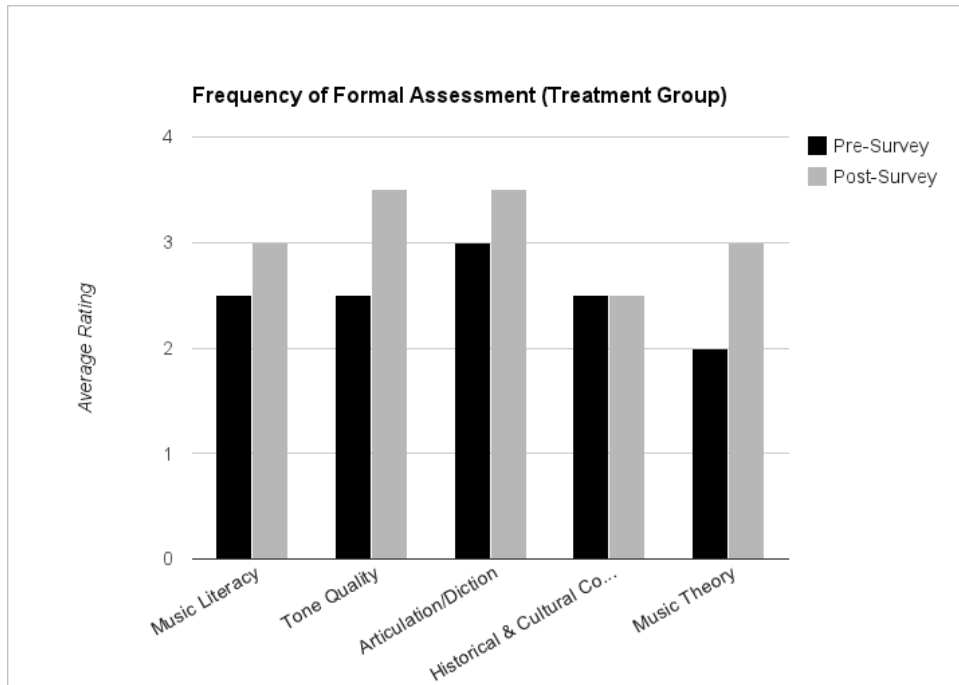
It is beneficial to take a closer look at the strategies the treatment group used for assessment. The treatment group demonstrated growth in various types of strategies used to monitor student achievement.   Figure 4.10 presents the increase in frequency for tests, projects, and performance assessments from pre-survey to post-survey. It is noteworthy that while there was some growth in the use of both tests and projects, the growth in the use of performance assessments or "performance/playing quizzes" as a strategy for assessment was far greater than other strategies. Observation, as a strategy for assessment remained unchanged.

Figure 4.10. <u>Types of Assessments</u>
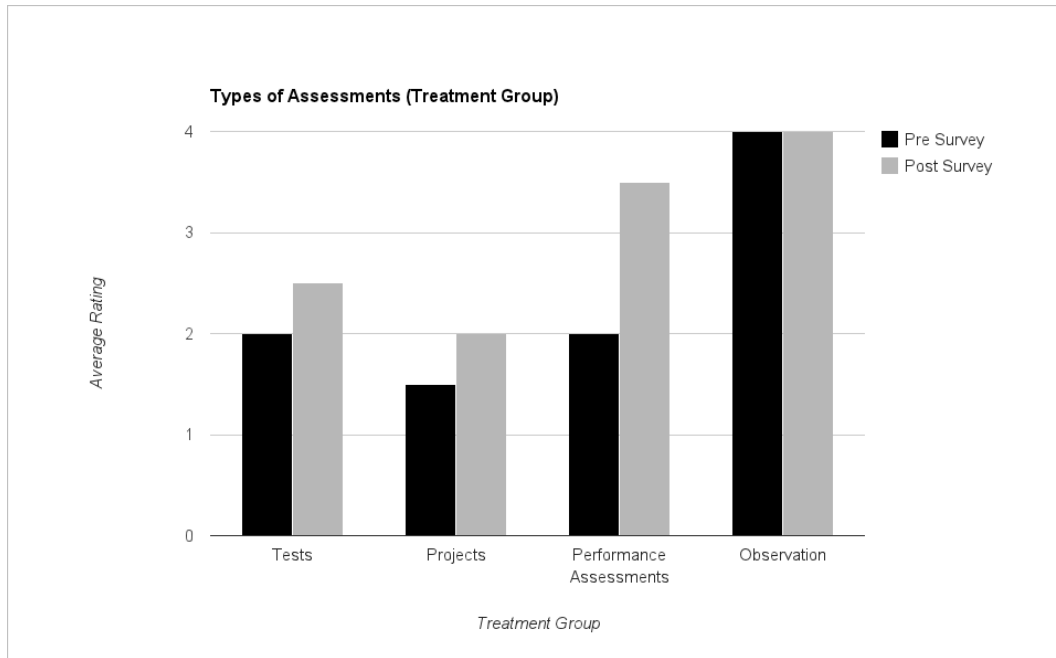
Summary. In determining whether standards-based assessment is effective in reporting students' mastery level in performance-based secondary music classes, this study provided several important findings. Students reported that they became less reliant on teacher feedback, but valued that feedback more. While parents use a variety of information sources to monitor their child's achievement, they rely most heavily on online gradebooks and conversations with their child. Regardless of the label of assessment practices, teachers use a variety of assessment strategies. However, teachers who implemented the standards-based treatment experienced increases in the frequency of both informal and formal assessment, as well as individual assessment strategies such as tests and quizzes, student projects, and performance assessments. Performance assessments saw the biggest growth in post-survey data.

Research Question 2

The second research question related to student awareness of the learning targets for music classes. Survey data for this thread consisted of examining student's perception of their own awareness and the frequency and methods teachers use to communicate learning targets. Parent surveys collected data related to parent awareness of the assessment process. Lastly, teacher surveys provided data on teachers' perception concerning student awareness of learning targets and teachers' perception related to their frequency of communicating learning targets.

Students. Students in the control group become less confident of their awareness of learning targets, the frequency of communication of learning targets, and the methods of communication of learning targets. This is in contrast to the treatment group whose surveys demonstrated a greater confidence in the frequency, methods of communication, and awareness of learning targets.

Students indicated their awareness of the learning goals in music class increased when standards-based assessment was implemented. Figures 4.11 and 4.12 demonstrate the changes in awareness between both the control and treatment groups. As can be seen in figure 4.11, students in the control group experienced a decrease in their awareness of the learning goals. While within the control group the percentage of students indicating that they were "Aware" of the learning goal did show an increase, a significant portion of this increase was made possible by fewer "Very Aware" responses. In other words, the increase of students responding that they were "Aware" of the learning goals was only made possible by a decrease of the students indicating that they were "Very Aware."

Figure 4.11. <u>Students Awareness of Learning Goals (Control Group)</u>
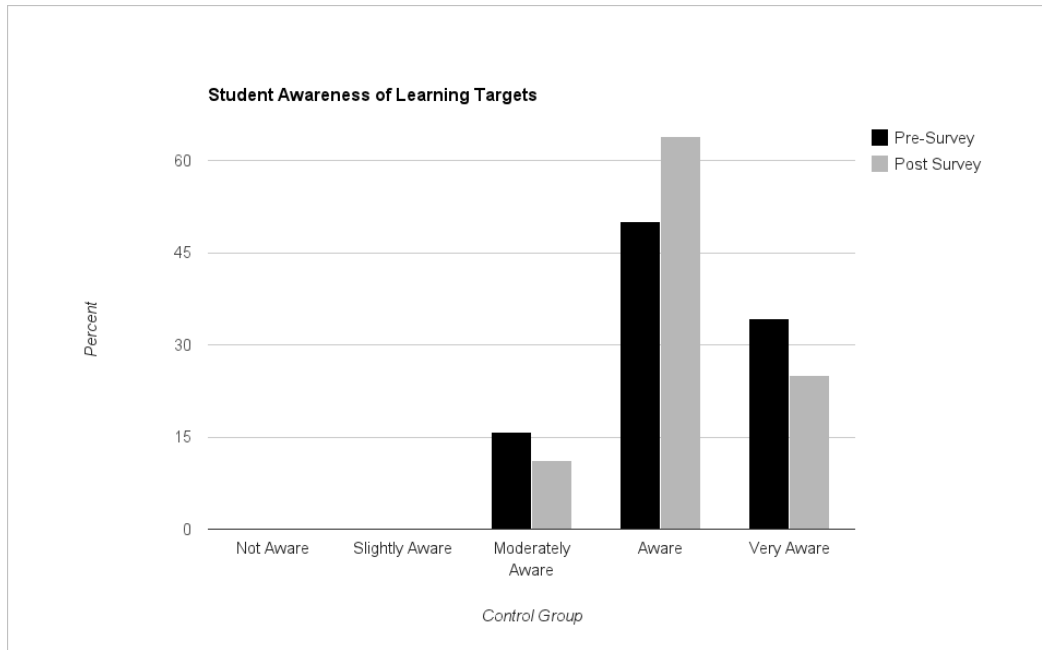
Figure 4.12 demonstrates the treatment groups' gains in the percentage of students who indicated they were "Aware" and "Very Aware" of the learning goals. It is noteworthy to compare the "Very Aware" columns from both figure 4.11 and 4.12 to see the decrease in responses from the control group and the increase in responses from the treatment group.

Figure 4.12. <u>Student Awareness of Learning Goals (Treatment Group)</u>
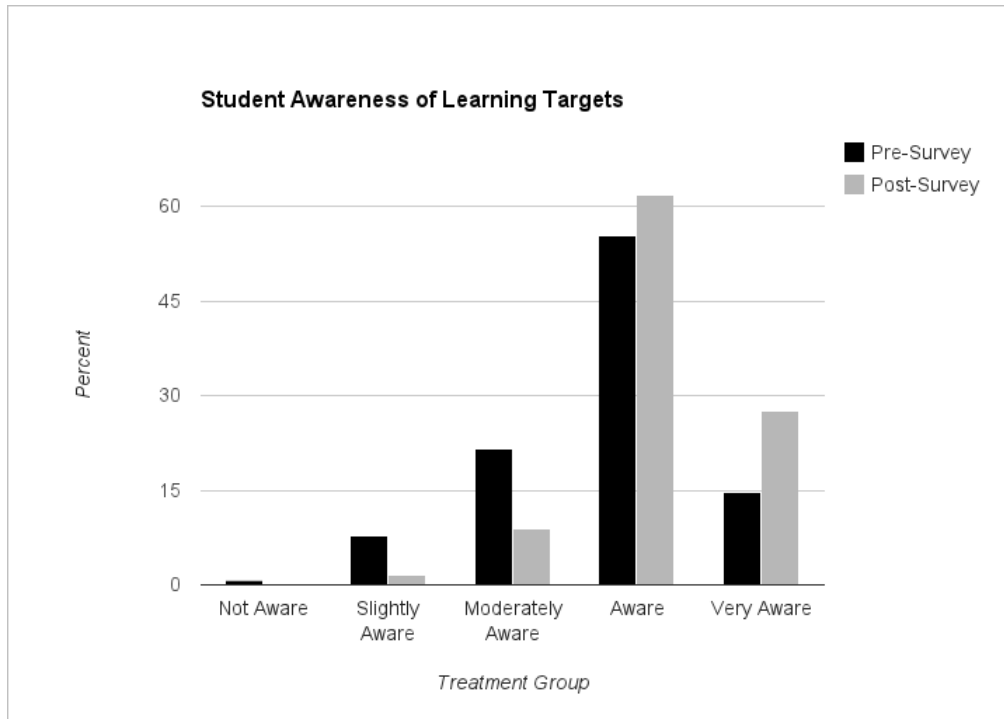
In addition to and in support of an increase in student awareness of the learning target, the treatment group also demonstrated increases in how often learning targets were communicated in class and increases in the frequency of all forms of communication including: writing learning goals on the board, verbally communicating learning targets, and organizing learning goals by unit. Figure 4.13 shows the student perspective of the methods for communicating learning targets. As seen in this figure, the control group indicated that learning targets are communicated by both writing them on the board, and through verbal communication. The post-surveys demonstrated a slight decrease in writing the learning targets on the board, and a slight increase in verbally communicating learning targets. Few students in the control group indicated that learning targets were organized into units of study.

Figure 4.13. <u>Methods of Communicating Learning Targets (Student Perspective)</u>
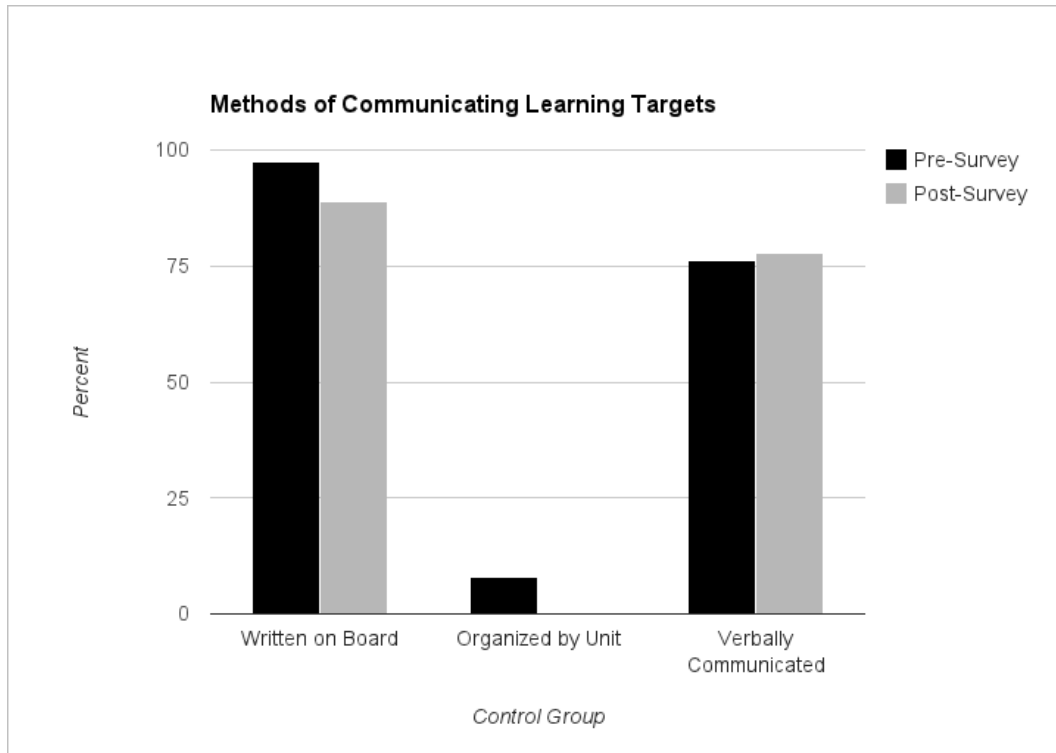
The treatment group's responses regarding the methods of communication differ from the control group. Figure 4.14 shows increases in all three forms of communication measured in this survey including writing learning targets on the board, organizing learning targets by unit, and verbally communicating learning targets. The information in this figure also supports the increase in awareness of the learning target shown in Figure 4.12. It is also important to note in figure 4.14 that the treatment group shows a more balanced use of methods for communicating learning targets.

Figure 4.14. <u>Methods of Communicating Learning Targets (Student Perspective)</u>
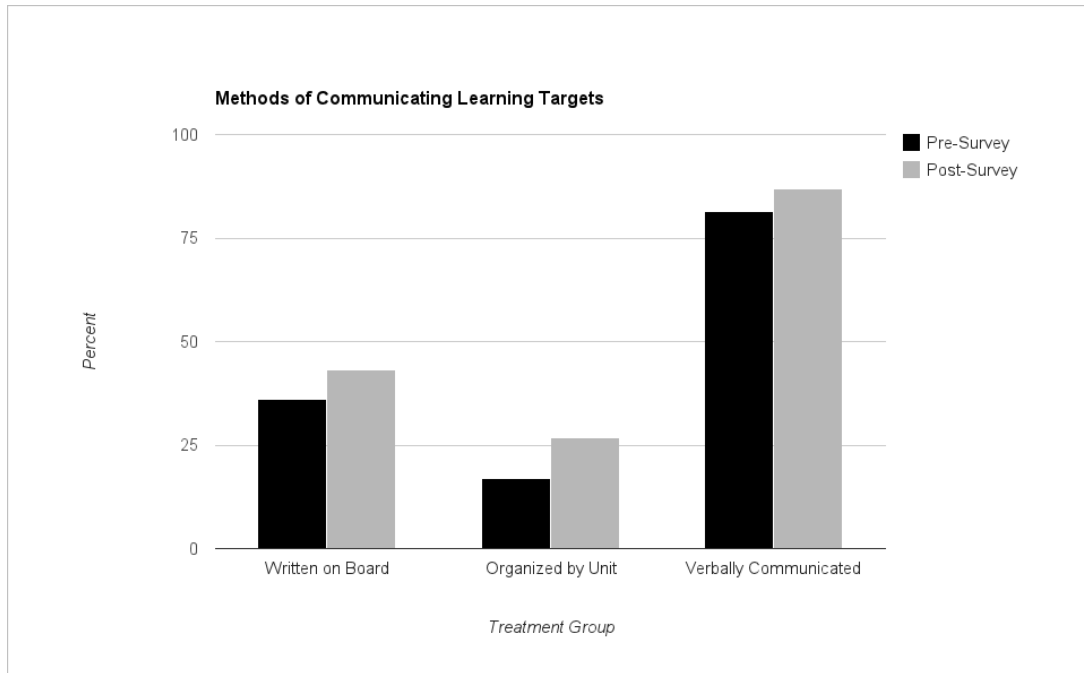
Parents. Since parents indicated that they rely on conversations with their child in understanding the goals and expectations in music classes, it becomes important to see how parent awareness changed over the treatment period. For this question, just the treatment group's surveys were used. Figure 4.15 shows an increased level of parent awareness relative to the learning targets in music, the types of assessments used, and their child's success on music assessments.

Figure 4.15. <u>Parents Awareness of Assessment Process</u>
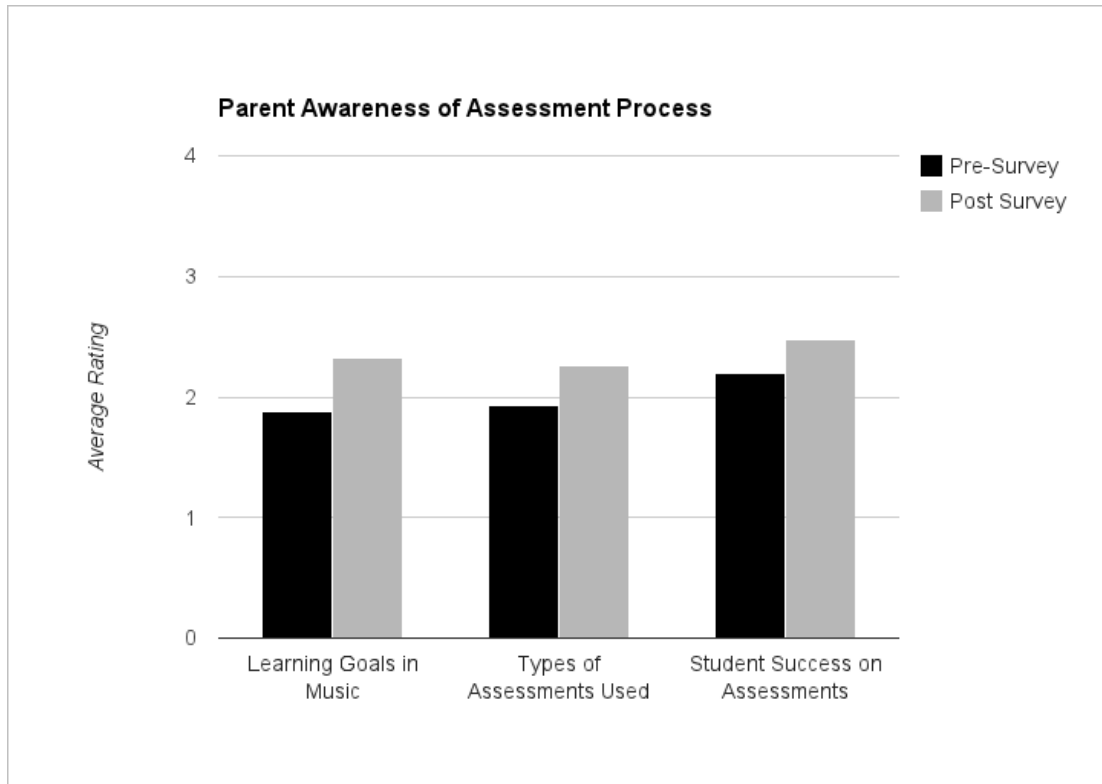
Teachers. Post-survey data supplied by the teachers indicated that within the treatment group there was an increase in teacher confidence regarding student awareness of learning targets as well as in the regularity in which teachers communicated learning targets to students.

While the control group teacher indicated that they felt students were 'Aware' of the learning goals in class in both pre and post surveys, the treatment teachers both moved from indicating they believed students were "Moderately Aware" of learning goals in the pre-survey, to "Aware" in the post survey. The growth in the treatment group is seen in Figure 4.16. This figure also shows consistency in the control teacher's perception of student awareness of the learning target. It is noteworthy, that while the control teacher's

perception regarding student awareness was unchanged from pre-survey to post-survey,

actual student awareness of the control group decreased during this time (see figure 4.11).

Figure 4.16. Teacher Perception of Student Awareness of Learning Targets
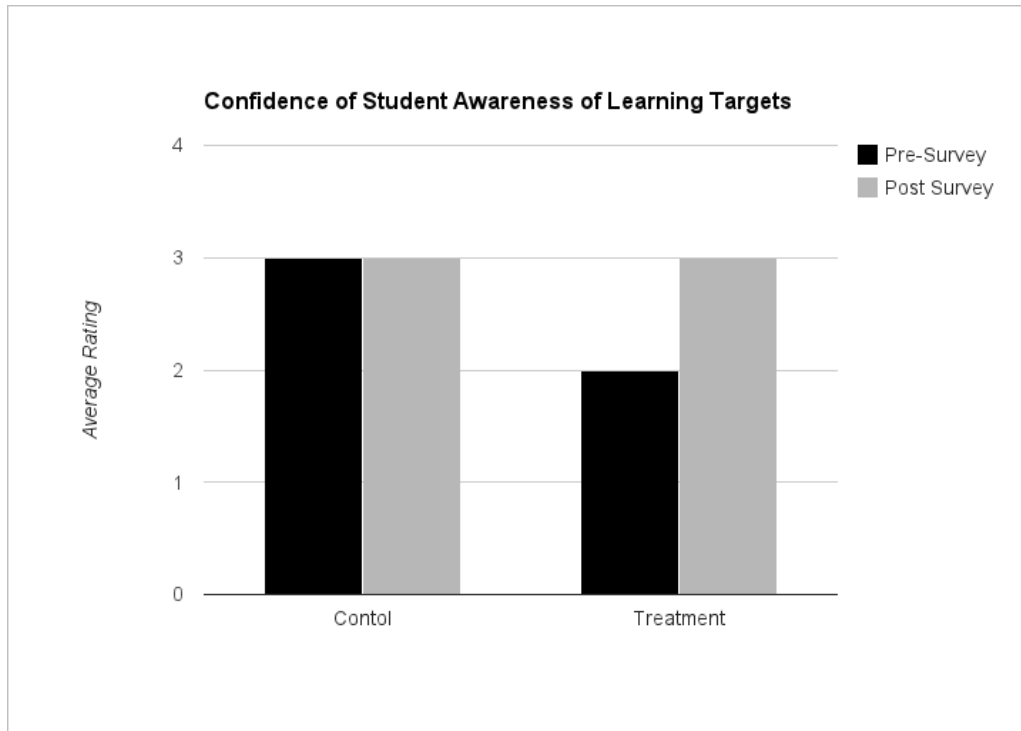
The increase in treatment teachers confidence in student awareness of learning

targets is also supported by the increase in regularity of communication. As shown in

Figure 4.17, treatment teachers indicated that they were only occasionally communicating

learning targets on the pre-survey. Post-survey data, however, indicated that the treatment

teachers believed they communicated learning goals either "regularly" or "very regularly."

Figure 4.17. <u>Teacher perception of the Regularity of Communicating Learning Targets</u>
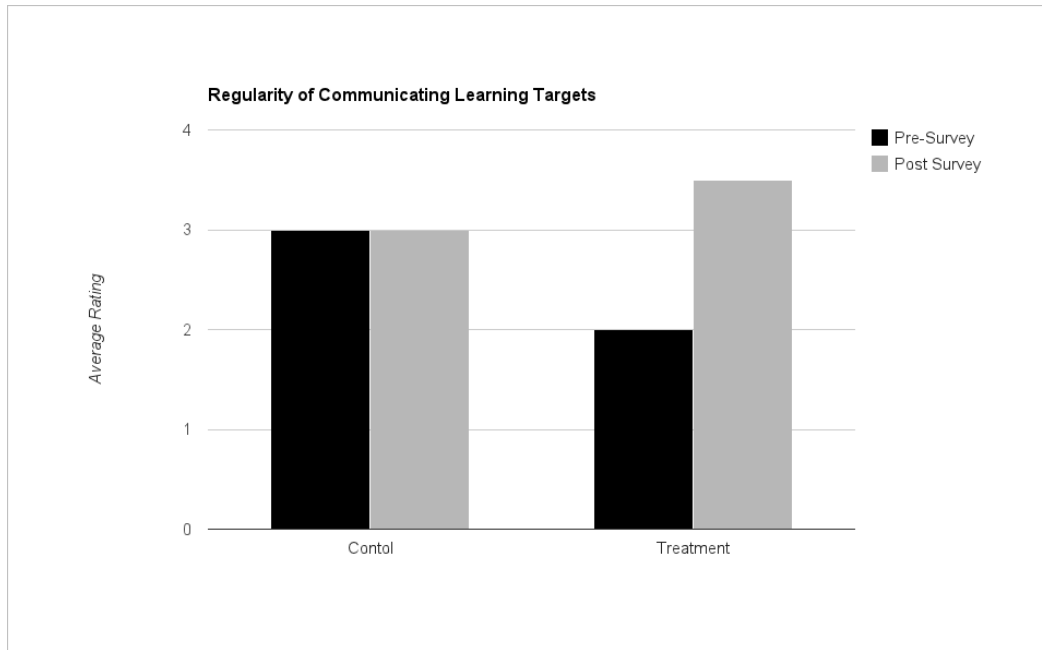
The data in figure 4.17 regarding teacher frequency of communicating learning targets is mirrored in figure 4.13 which shows students perspective of which strategies teachers use to communicate those targets. Teacher data in 4.17 indicates teachers communicated more frequently after the standards-based treatment was applied, student data in 4.13 indicates a greater diversity in the communication strategies.

Summary. In determining whether standards-based assessment increased students' awareness of the learning targets in music classes this study provided several important findings. Survey data indicated that both student and parent awareness of the learning goals in music class increased when standards-based assessment was implemented. Additionally, students indicated that their teachers' diversity of communication strategies also increased when the standards-based treatment was implemented. Data also indicated

an increase in teacher confidence regarding student awareness of learning targets and an increase in the regularity in which teachers communicated learning targets to students.

Conclusion

Music teachers rely on a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student achievement. Data in this survey indicated that music teachers are formally and informally assessing students on a regular basis regardless of if they are using standards-based assessment practices; however, teachers who used standards-based assessment were more likely to use formal assessments to determine student achievement and were more likely to assess students on a more frequent basis. Furthermore, when standards-based practices were implemented students' awareness of the learning target increased. Students also became less reliant on teacher feedback in determining their success but valued the feedback that was received at a higher level. Finally, parents relied on both online gradebooks, and conversations with their child regarding student achievement in music classes. Additionally, parents awareness of assessment practices increased when the standards-based model was implemented.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study provides information concerning how students, parents, and teachers use assessment to monitor student achievement. Key findings from this study indicate that:

- While music teachers rely on a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student achievement regardless of if they are using standards-based assessment practices, teachers who used standards-based assessment were more likely to use formal assessments to determine student achievement and were more likely to assess students both formally and informally on a regular basis.

- When standards-based practices were implemented students' awareness of the learning target increased.

- Students also became less reliant on teacher feedback in determining their success but valued the feedback that was received at a higher level.

- Students who received the standards-based treatment experienced an increase in the perception that their course grade was an accurate reflection of their achievement.

- Parents relied on both online gradebooks, and conversations with their child regarding student achievement in music classes.

These findings will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter. In addition, I will

show connections between the findings of this study and prior research.

Students

Building off the research of Cherniss (2008) this study also found that students became more aware of the learning target when a standard-based approach was implemented. This finding was noteworthy on multiple levels. First, though further research is needed, there is a widespread belief among educators that students achieve more when they are aware of the learning target. Assuming that student achievement is positively impacted by their awareness of learning targets, teachers have a vested interest in instructional and assessment practices which maximize that awareness. Data from this study indicated that students who received the standards-based treatment were more likely to report that they were "Very Aware" of the learning target. This is important for educators to consider when working to establish clear learning and performance expectations in their ensemble classes. Secondly as seen in figure 4.4, 84.71 percent of parents indicated that they depend on their child for critical information related to learning targets in school. While this will be discussed in greater detail in the parents section, it will suffice to say here that students increased awareness of the learning outcomes support positive parental interaction because students and parents have the information to conduct more informed discussions on achievement in school.

Additionally, students involved in the standards-based treatment also reacted differently to teacher feedback than their control group peers. Students in the treatment group reported less reliance on teacher feedback in determining their success in music classes, but also reported that they valued teacher feedback at a higher level. This can be

seen as a very positive sign in developing self-directed learners. Comparing this analysis with the information related to students' awareness of the learning goals in class, one conclusion is that with increased awareness of the learning expectations, students can make determinations on their own in terms of how they are meeting those expectations.

Finally, students in the treatment group experienced an increase in the perception that their course grade was an accurate reflection of their achievement. Ultimately this is an important finding.   The optimum reporting system would be one where all students believe that their course grade is an extremely accurate reflection of their achievement in class. According to Marzano (2010), Standards-Based assessments reference student achievement to specific topics. It is not a surprising conclusion to find that standards-based assessment increased the perception that a course grade accurately reflected student achievement, this is precisely what this type of assessment practice is designed to do.

Parents

While there were limited noteworthy differences between the survey data between the parent control and treatment groups, we can look at the combined parent surveys and begin to understand how parents view assessment in music classes and monitor their child's achievement. Two themes emerge: which information parents use to monitor their child's success and how well parents are aware of the learning expectations for music classes.

Parents indicated using information from online gradebooks and conversations with their child as the chief resources for determining their child's achievement in music classes. This brings to light questions related to how meaningful are these resources are if 1) the gradebook lists only assignments rather than the concepts and skills student need to master,

and 2) students are not highly aware of the learning targets in class?

These findings also point to the importance of adopting a standards-based report card which communicates student achievement by learning targets to parents. It was not in the scope of this study to alter the report card method of the participating school districts; however, other researchers indicate that parents value and benefit from the richness of information provided by a standards-based report card (Guskey, 2001). The initial surveys indicated that 84.71 percent of parents rely on conversations with their child to know what the learning targets are for music classes, but only 14.62 percent of the treatment students indicated that they were 'very aware' of what those learning targets were on pre-surveys. While standards-based practices increased the amount of students indicating they were 'very aware' of the learning targets to 27.64 percent, a reporting system which identifies these learning targets is needed for parents to gain a greater understanding of what their child is learning in music classes.

Teachers

Many of the findings in this study support the belief by Johnson (1992) that teachers who are not familiar with specific instructional or assessment models still implement practices of those into their teaching. For example, this study found even teachers who were not trained in specific standards-based assessment practices still used many of the same concepts in their own assessment. Teachers surveys, however, pointed to differences in the frequency of assessment, and frequency of communicating learning

targets. Discussion with teachers indicated a difference in how the treatment teachers interpreted assessment data.

Frequency of Assessment. While this study found that music teachers use a combination of formative and summative assessments on a regular basis, teachers who used a standards-based assessment model assess at a higher frequency than those who do not. One area that saw significant growth was the use of performance assessments. It is reasonable to conclude that if teachers are concerned with student achievement on specific content expectations, that performance assessment would be a preferred strategy for collecting assessment information. Regarding performance assessment, one teacher commented, "Depending on the concept that is being assessed, performance assessments, are the most accurate way because the performance assessment shows the actual application of the musical concept."

It is important, however, to keep the relationship between assessment and instruction within balance. One teacher commented, "I felt I was assessing all the time. I felt I would finish testing and I didn't get a lot of time to work on something that students personally might have struggled on." Possible solutions to this problem lie within two areas. First, the use of audio recording and student portfolios allow teachers to listen, evaluate, and provide feedback while maintaining instructional time with students (Asmus, 1999; Kelly, 2001). The second is finding formative assessment strategies that are more authentically part of the instructional process.

Communication of Learning Targets. The control group's confidence of student awareness of learning targets remained unchanged, even though the control group students

reported being less aware of learning targets on their post surveys. However, the increase

in confidence of student awareness from the treatment teachers mirrored the actual increase

of awareness from the treatment students. This finding has important considerations for

planning, instruction, and assessment. When the learning target, rather than the assignment,

forms the basis of student achievement clarity comes into greater focus for both teachers

and students.

Many teachers encounter encouragement if not pressure from administrators to

communicate learning targets to students. The results from this study are noteworthy

because they indicated that students were more likely to respond that they were "Very

Aware" of the learning targets when teachers used a variety of strategies to communicate

learning goals. This cuts against the grain of some present day thought which often focuses

on visible learning targets in every classroom at all times. In fact, the clarity of a learning

target may be more complex than a visible posting. Perhaps the mode of assessment that is

used also communicates a great deal about what is important for students to learn. For

instance, the cornerstone assessments presented in the Core Arts Standards are meant to

anchor the curriculum by assessing the most important aspects of learning. When

assessment experiences are presented to students well in advance, the very skills which are

being observed are brought into focus and communicate a great deal about what is

important to learn. If educators want to present clear learning targets to students,

considerable focus then should be on the assessment experience which will measure that

learning target.

The standards-based treatment altered more than just the frequency of learning

target communication. Teachers began to discuss student achievement relative to the learning targets rather than assignments. One teacher remarked, "I don't know in my former way if that I would have been as intentional about what I wanted students to learn. I have already noticed a difference in my kids. They knew down to a T exactly what to expect, it was so clear to them." This study did not track student achievement levels and compare them to their awareness of the learning target; however, treatment teachers responded very positively to the level of achievement students experienced through summative cornerstone assessments.

Interpreting Assessment Data. Providing clear data for teachers to refine their instruction is a vital part of assessment. The degree to which student assessment data focuses on specific musical concepts aids in knowing precisely which aspects of the curriculum need to be retaught and which aspects of the curriculum students are mastering at a high level. The focus on learning targets rather than assignments in this study also affected how teachers reviewed assessment information. One treatment teacher commented, "I know that I need to do some re-teaching on 1 of the three 3 concepts I assessed because the student scores were not what I had expected in that one area. Had I assessed all of these concepts together, the lack of student understanding on one of them would not have been as clear to me because of the strength of the other two." This is in contrast to discussions with the control group which focused more on lesson attendance, behavior, and work completion.

Areas of Further Study

While this treatment determined that a standards-based assessment provides effective information regarding students' achievement in music classes and that standards-based assessment increased students' awareness of the learning goals in music classes, there still remains significant areas of standards-based assessment which need to be explored.

Alignment of Learning Targets. The survey tool used in this study determined whether students believed they were aware of which concepts they were learning in secondary music classes; however, there was no determination as to whether students were correct. Sindberg (2009) recognizes this aspect of instruction as alignment. In other words, students indicated an awareness of the learning target, but were they aware of learning target for which the teacher intended? Further study could examine this question and ask students to actually identify the concepts they were learning and compare their perceptions with the teacher's plan for instruction to better determine if the confidence in student awareness of the learning target is valid.

Relationships between Course Grades and State Assessments. Another area of needed study is an examination of the connection between student mastery in standards-based assessment and student achievement in solo and ensemble participation. Haptonstall (2010) observed significantly higher correlations between state assessments and course grades of students in standards-based systems. Further research is needed to determine if standards-based assessment leads to achievement scores which are consistent with what an outside assessor would find. Since performance experiences such as solo and

ensemble are a large aspect of students' musical experience, this may be an authentic outlet

to research the correlation between standards-based course grades and solo and ensemble

ratings.

Materials. Questions remain about the role of instructional material for secondary

music classes and the relationship to standards-based instruction. Survey data collected

indicated that secondary teachers already use "teacher-made" materials for classroom

instruction. This study brought into question the traditional organization of method books

as a logical sequence for standards-based assessment. One of the treatment teachers

commented, "It would be nice see method books organized by sections. Rather than having

the books progress from the easiest exercise to the hardest, it could progress within each

section."

Another teacher commented that while she uses a sightreading method she did not

rely on those materials exclusively during the standards-based treatment because they did

not isolate the learning target which she chose to focus on. "The sightreading method I

have used doesn't isolate the diatonic material that I focused on. It places it in a greater

context so it wasn't effective to continue to use that method." Having method series which

are organized conceptually would aid in standards-based instruction.

Summary

The basis for this study was to examine the effectiveness of standards-based

assessment in communicating student achievement in secondary performance-based music

classes. The implementation of the standards-based assessment practices and the student,

parent, and teacher surveys provided important information to music educators related to

communicating learning targets and students musical growth and achievement.

The standards-based assessment treatment was effective not only in communicating learning targets, but also in delivering feedback to students related to their achievement in music classes. Through the standards-based treatment, both student and parent understanding of the learning targets in music class increased and teachers in the treatment group used a variety of strategies to communicate learning targets to students. Because of the clarity of expectation, students became less reliant on teacher feedback to determine their own growth and success through performance-based assessments and believed their course grade was an accurate reflection of their musical achievement.

Conclusion

In today's data-driven educational climate, it becomes imperative for music teachers to develop and implement assessment models which monitor student performance, provide feedback for continued student achievement, and provide teachers with data related to individual and program success. The Core Arts Standards provide an effective template for assessment of student achievement in music classes. The assessment model presented in this study provides one path for teachers to monitor students using the Core-Arts standards which is standards-based in that students are assessed according to specific concepts and skills.

In the most simplest terms possible, assessment is figuring out whether or not students understand and can apply content. While assessment does not have to be complicated in its practice, the realities of high-stakes education necessitate that assessment be formalized in a way which can support the quality of work that music teachers and

music students do on a daily basis. Assessment practices should also maintain the integrity and authenticity of the subjects which are being taught, and reflect students' actual achievement according to big ideas embedded in the learning process. A standards-based assessment practice based on the Core Arts Standards is an effective way to provide parents, teachers, and most importantly, students with the necessary feedback to direct achievement.

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APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Assessment in Music: Student Survey

Background Information

*1. What is the Name of your school?

[   ]

*2. What grade are you currently in?

○ 6

○ 7

○ 8

○ 9

Assessment in Music: Student Survey

Background Information

Assessment in Music: Student Survey

*3. How aware are you of the learning goals in your music (band/choir) class?

Not Aware	Slightly Aware	Moderately Aware	Aware	Very Aware
○	○	○	○	○

*4. How often are learning goals communicated in your music (band/choir) class?

Never	Sometimes	Occasionally	Regularly	Very Regularly
○	○	○	○	○

*5. What types of strategies does your teacher use to communicate learning goals in music (band/choir)?

☐ Learning Goals are written on the board

☐ Learning Goals are organized by unit

☐ Learning Goals are verbally communicated

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*6. When you think about how well you are doing in music which of the following do you consider (check all that apply)?

☐ Teacher Feedback

☐ Student Feedback

☐ Parent Feedback

☐ Formal Assessments

☐ Grade on a Report Card

☐ Your own observations

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*7. How important are the following types of information to you?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Teacher Feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Parent Feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Formal Assessments	○	○	○	○	○
Report Card Grades	○	○	○	○	○

Assessment in Music: Student Survey

✱8. Rate how much of a factor the following should have on your grade?

	Not a factor	A small factor	A moderate factor	A factor	A large factor
Skill on a musical instrument/voice	○	○	○	○	○
Understanding of musical concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Attendance in lessons	○	○	○	○	○
Class Behavior	○	○	○	○	○

✱9. How well do you think your grades in music class (band/choir) reflect your achievement?

Not well	Slightly well	Moderately well	Well	Very Well
○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX B

Parent Survey

Assessment in Music: Parent Survey

Demographic and Background Information

*1. What is the name of the school your child attends?

*2. Where is this school located?

City:

State:

*3. What grade is your child currently in?

○ 6

○ 7

○ 8

○ 9

Assessment in Music: Parent Survey

Assessment in Music: Parent Survey

*4. Which resources do you use to determine how well your child is doing in school? (Select all that apply)

☐ Online Gradebooks

☐ Formal Parent/Teacher Conferences

☐ Informal Contact with teachers

☐ Conversations with child

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*5. Based on conversations with your child, and information you have received from teachers, how aware are you of:

	Not Aware	Slightly Aware	Moderately Aware	Aware	Very Aware
The learning goals in music	○	○	○	○	○
The type of assessment practices used in music classes	○	○	○	○	○
Your child's success on assessments in music	○	○	○	○	○

*6. How well do you believe your child's grade reflects their achievement in their music class?

Not well	Slightly well	Moderately well	Well	Very Well
○	○	○	○	○

*7. Rate how much of a factor the following should have in a child's grade

	Not a factor	A small factor	A moderate factor	A factor	A large factor
Skill on a musical instrument or voice	○	○	○	○	○
Understanding of musical concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Attendance in lessons	○	○	○	○	○
Class behavior	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX C

Teacher Survey

Assessment in Music: Teacher Survey

Demographic and Background Information

*1. What is the name of your school?

[_____]

*2. Which city and state is your school located in?

City: [_____]

State: [_____]

*3. About how many students attend your school?

☐ 1-250   ☐ 251-500   ☐ 501-750   ☐ 751 +

*4. Which grades do you currently teach? (Select all that apply)

☐ 4th   ☐ 5th   ☐ 6th   ☐ 7th   ☐ 8th   ☐ 9th   ☐ 10th   ☐ 11th   ☐ 12th

*5. About how many students are involved in the band OR choir program?

○ 50-99

○ 100-149

○ 150-199

○ 200+

*6. How often does band or choir meet as a class?

○ Every Day for at least 45 minutes

○ Every day for less than 45 minutes

○ Every other day at least 45 minutes

○ Every other day for less than 45 minutes

○ Less than every other day.

Assessment in Music: Teacher Survey

Curriculum

*7. Does the school have a written music curriculum?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

*8. Does the school have written assessment practices?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

*9. For which grades does your school require music instruction? (Select all that apply)

☐ 4th

☐ 5th

☐ 6th

☐ 7th

☐ 8th

☐ High School graduation requirement

*10. Which of the following do you use in your instruction? (Select all that apply)

☐ Method Books

☐ Warm-Up Books

☐ Teacher-Made materials

☐ Comprehensive Teaching Plans

*11. How often do you have students:

	Never	Rarely	Ocassionaly	Somewhat Regularly	Very Regularly
Define Terms	○	○	○	○	○
Analyze Music	○	○	○	○	○
Conduct	○	○	○	○	○
Participate in classroom discussion regarding music	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluate group performance	○	○	○	○	○

Assessment in Music: Teacher Survey

Assessment Practices

*12. Which of the following assessment approaches do you use? (Select all that apply)

☐ Formal (Assessments which receive and entry in the gradebook)

☐ Informal (Assessments which do not recieve an entry in the gradebook)

☐ Tests

☐ Projects

☐ Performance quizes

☐ Observation

*13. How often are students given assessments in the following styles?

	Never	Rarely	Ocassionaly	Somewhat Regularly	Very Regularly
formal	○	○	○	○	○
informal	○	○	○	○	○
tests	○	○	○	○	○
projects	○	○	○	○	○
playing quizes	○	○	○	○	○
observation	○	○	○	○	○

*14. How aware do you believe students are of the learning goals in class?

Not Aware	Slightly Aware	Moderately Aware	Aware	Very Aware
○	○	○	○	○

*15. How often do you communicate learning goals to students?

Never	Sometimes	Occasionally	Regulary	Very Regularly
○	○	○	○	○

*16. How frequently do you teach the following concepts:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regularly	Very Regularly
Music Literacy Concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Tone Quality	○	○	○	○	○
Articulation/Diction	○	○	○	○	○
Historical and Cultural Connections	○	○	○	○	○
Music Theory Concepts	○	○	○	○	○

Assessment in Music: Teacher Survey

*17. How frequently do you informally assess the following concepts?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regulary	Very Regularly
Music Literacy Concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Tone Quality	○	○	○	○	○
Articulation	○	○	○	○	○
Historical and Cultural Connections	○	○	○	○	○
Music Theory Concepts	○	○	○	○	○

*18. How frequently do you formally assess the following concepts?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Regulary	Very Regularly
Music Literacy Concepts	○	○	○	○	○
Tone Quality	○	○	○	○	○
Articulation	○	○	○	○	○
Historical and Cultural Connections	○	○	○	○	○
Music Theory Concepts	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX D

Parent Letter

February 1, 2013

Dear Parents,

During the 4th grading term I will be working with our Prescott Middle School band students on how we assess students for growth and learning. I will have more information coming shortly about how we will proceed, but I first wanted to ask for your help in completing a survey.

The survey is quite short and straight forward. Your responses are kept completely confidential and will help me understand how well I am communicating our learning goals and student progress. The survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WDWMM97

Thank you for your time and allowing me to work with your students.

Jill Jaeckel

APPENDIX E

Standards-Based Grading Basics - Instrumental

Standards-Based Grading in Band

Overview

<u>Standards-Based</u> <u>Grading</u> places emphasis on student achievement as the chief factor in grading and assessing students. It is a grading format that is designed to better report student understanding to parents in a given subject. Students' grade in band is made up solely on their ability to master concepts by the <u>end</u> of each term. In essence we will be replacing assignments in the gradebook entry with specific concepts.

- **Power Standards** are general topics which indicate what students should know or be able to do.

- The Power Standards will remain the same each term, but the Key Concepts will change. **Learning Targets** are the specific learning outcomes within the more general Power Standards.

- Students are assessed each week in small groups on the specific concepts for the grading period. These **Formative assessments** are used to provide feedback and guide students to a greater understanding and achievement level.

- The end of the term will include a summative or final assessment experience for each of our concepts. Students grades will be made up not by individual assignments, but by their ability to master concepts which will be assessed individually.

Grading Categories/Power Standards

Four grading categories will be used each term with the Power Standard listed underneath. The Power Standard will never change, but the specific concepts underneath that Power Standard will be different each term.

Performing

Students can realize artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to excellence.

Creating

Students can conceive and develop new artistic ideas and work.

Responding

Students can *interact with and reflect on artistic work and performances to develop understanding.*

Knowledge and Skills

Students can relate artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and contextual knowledge.

Assignments

Assignments will still be kept track in the grade book as a "no count" category. Parents will be able to see how many assignments and lessons students have completed- but only their achievement will be counted for the grade.

Concerts
Because concerts represent a culminating, summative assessment experience they will still be factored in as 20% of a student's grade. Really, concerts have always been (besides some entertainment for parents and grandparents) a group assessment experience that is shared in front of the public. (Shouldn't all content areas do something like that!?!)

Student Scores
Student scores represent an *Exemplary*, *Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Minimal,* and *Not Observed* classifications. The numbers representing each classification are absolute- these are the only numbers you will see in the gradebook entry. As we enter into this new grading format- we are waiting for technology to catch-up. These numbers have been compromised for gradebook entry purposes in an attempt to place each integer in the middle of the percent that typically represents its grade.

Mastery Level	Gradebook Entry	Percentage
Exemplary	4	100
Advanced	3.8	95
Proficient	3.4	85
Basic	3	75
Minimal	2.6	65
Not Observed	2.2	55

Why is this Occurring in Band?
Eventually all classes at the secondary level will be assessed in this way. The nature of a music class is all about performance- **knowing through doing**. In short, the way we demonstrate knowledge is by performing that knowledge. This is really the same basic way music classes have always been assessed- it is just in a more formal way.

How will my child's grade be affected?
Standards based grading should not have a negative effect on student grades, GPA's, class rank, etc. In fact, research shows that this approach to grading is a more reliable and valid way of communicating to parents on how well students have mastered the concepts of a given class.

APPENDIX F

Standards-Based Grading Basics - Vocal

Standards-Based Grading in Choir

Overview

Standards-Based Grading places emphasis on student achievement as the chief factor in grading and assessing students. It is a grading format that is designed to better report student understanding to parents in a given subject. Students' grade in choir is made up solely on their ability to master concepts by the end of each term. In essence we will be replacing assignments in the gradebook entry with specific concepts.

- **Power Standards** are general topics which indicate what students should know or be able to do.

- The Power Standards will remain the same each term, but the Key Concepts will change. **Learning Target** are the specific learning outcomes within the more general Power Standards.

- Students are assessed each week in small groups on the specific concepts for the grading period. These **Formative assessments** are used to provide feedback and guide students to a greater understanding and achievement level.

- The end of the term will include a summative or final assessment experience for each of our concepts. Students grades will be made up not by individual assignments, but by their ability to master concepts which will be assessed individually.

Grading Categories/Power Standards

Four grading categories will be used each term with the Power Standard listed underneath. The Power Standard will never change, but the specific concepts underneath that Power Standard will be different each term.

Performing
Students can realize artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to excellence.

Creating
Students can conceive and develop new artistic ideas and work.

Responding
Students can *interact with and reflect on artistic work and performances to develop understanding.*

Knowledge and Skills
Students will relate artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and contextual knowledge.

Assignments

Assignments will still be kept track in the grade book as a "no count" category. Parents will be able to see how many assignments and lessons students have completed- but only their achievement will be counted for the grade.

Concerts
Because concerts represent a culminating, summative assessment experience they will still be factored in as 20% of a student's grade. Really, concerts have always been (besides some entertainment for parents and grandparents) a group assessment experience that is shared in front of the public. (Shouldn't all content areas do something like that!?!)

Student Scores
Student scores represent an *Exemplary*, *Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Minimal,* and *Not Observed* classifications. The numbers representing each classification are absolute- these are the only numbers you will see in the gradebook entry. As we enter into this new grading format- we are waiting for technology to catch-up. These numbers have been compromised for gradebook entry purposes in an attempt to place each integer in the middle of the percent that typically represents its grade.

Mastery Level	Gradebook Entry	Percentage
Exemplary	4	100
Advanced	3.8	95
Proficient	3.4	85
Basic	3	75
Minimal	2.6	65
Not Observed	2.2	55

Why is this Occurring in Choir?
Eventually all classes at the secondary level will be assessed in this way. The nature of a music class is all about performance- **knowing through doing**. In short, the way we demonstrate knowledge is by performing that knowledge. This is really the same basic way music classes have always been assessed- it is just in a more formal way.

How will my child's grade be affected?
Standards based grading should not have a negative effect on student grades, GPA's, class rank, etc. In fact, research shows that this approach to grading is a more reliable and valid way of communicating to parents on how well students have mastered the concepts of a given class.

APPENDIX G

Wisconsin School Music Association Rubric

Instrumental Wind Solo								Class	
Ser#								Selection:	
Site:								Transfer#:	
Index:				*Note: More options may be available than can be displayed here. For all options refer to the current Festival Music List.*				Pg. or Mvt.:	
Time:								School:	
Min:		Comp/Arr:						Accompanist:	
		Selected Num:						**Adjudicator**	

Evaluation	I* (A only) 5 - 8	I 9 - 11 5 - 11	II 12 - 22	III 23 - 33	IV 34 - 44	V 45 - 50

Tone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Breathing • Embouchure	C & B: Focused tone for this class with consistently appropriate breathing and embouchure skills in all registers/ranges. A: Open, resonant, full tone in all registers and ranges. Consistently accurate breathing/embouchure skills.		C & B: Focused tone for this class with minor lapses in correct breathing, and/or embouchure skills. A: Characteristic tone most of the time. Minor breathing, embouchure problems in outer ranges and volumes.		C & B: Unstable tone for this class in some ranges due to incorrect breathing and/or embouchure skills. A: A basic tonal concept. Notable breathing and/or embouchure problems in outer ranges and volumes.		C & B: Thin or forced tone for this class most of the time due to lack of breath support or incorrect embouchure. A: Weak tone production most of the time due to incorrect breath support and/or embouchure.		C, B, and A: A lack of understanding of how to produce the basic tone. Fundamentals of breathing and embouchure are absent.	

Intonation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Consistency • Pitch Adjustment Skills	Accurate intonation in all ranges and registers. Pitch adjustments are made instantly.		Minimal intonation difficulties. Pitch adjustment skills are usually successful.		Mostly accurate intonation with some out-of-tune notes. Pitch adjustment skills are still developing.		Some sense of intonation, but with significant problems. Pitch adjustment skills are not yet developed.		An unawareness of tuning problems. Needs development of pitch adjustment skills.	

Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Notes • Rhythms • Pulse	Outstanding accuracy. All notes and rhythms are performed accurately. Correct pulse throughout.		Infrequent errors. A few minor problems in technical passages.		A lack of consistency in notes, rhythms and pulse in technical passages.		Numerous inaccurate notes and rhythmic passages. Technical passages and pulse are mostly incorrect.		An unawareness of correct notes, rhythms and/or pulse.	

Technique	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Articulation • Hand Position • Posture	Consistently appropriate posture, articulations, hand position.		Minor errors in posture, articulations or hand position.		Several errors in correct posture, articulation or hand position especially during technical passages.		Incorrect posture, articulations or hand position during most technical passages.		A lack of understanding of correct posture, articulations and/or hand position.	

Expression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
• Style Elements • Interpretation • Phrasing • Dynamics • Tempo	Excellent expression with accurate style elements, interpretation, phrasing, dynamics, and tempo.		Accurate expression most of the time with occasional lapses in dynamics, phrasing, correct tempo, style elements, interpretation.		Occasionally rigid and mechanical expression for this class. Style elements, correct tempo, phrasing, dynamics, interpretation are often absent.		Mechanical expression most of the time. Attention to style elements, correct tempo, phrasing, dynamics, interpretation are missing.		A lack of understanding of correct style elements, dynamics, interpretation, phrasing, and correct tempo.	

_____ **TOTAL POINTS**

WSMA

APPENDIX H

Evaluation Rubric - Instrumental

Power Standard: Performing

Students will realize artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to excellence.

Learning Target:

Mastery Level	Advanced 5 - 11	Proficient 12 - 22	Basic 23-33	Minimal 34 - 44	Not Observed 45 – 50
	Advanced	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Minimal**	**Not Observed**
Tone	1　　　　2	3　　　　4	5　　　　6	7　　　　8	9　　　　10
- Breath Support - Embouchure	Open, resonant, and full tone with consistently appropriate breathing and embouchure.	Characteristic tone with only minor lapses in correct breathing or embouchure in outer ranges and volumes.	Emerging tone quality, but unstable in some ranges due to incorrect breathing or embouchure.	Inconsistent or weak tone production due to lack of breath support and embouchure.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructors help.
Intonation	1　　　　2	3　　　　4	5　　　　6	7　　　　8	9　　　　10
- Consistency - Pitch Adjustment Skills	Accurate intonation in all registers. Pitch adjustments are made instantly.	Minimal intonation issues. Pitch adjustment skills are usually successful.	Some sense of intonation, but with some notable problems. Pitch adjustment skills are emerging..	Inconsistent intonation with significant problems. Pitch adjustment skills are not successful.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Accuracy	1　　　　2	3　　　　4	5　　　　6	7　　　　8	9　　　　10
-Pitches/ Fingerings - Rhythms - Pulse	Outstanding accuracy. All notes and rhythms were performed accurately. Consistently correct pulse.	Infrequent errors. A few minor problems in technical passages.	Notes, rhythms, and pulse concepts are emerging.	Numerous inaccurate notes and rhythmic passages. Technical passages and pulse are mostly incorrect.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Technique	1　　　　2	3　　　　4	5　　　　6	7　　　　8	9　　　　10
- Articulation - Hand Position - Posture	Consistently appropriate articulation, posture, and hand position.	Technically accurate with only minor errors in articulation, posture, or hand position.	Technique is emerging but still has some errors in articulation, posture, or hand position.	Inconsistent technique and errors in articulation, posture, or hand position.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Expression	1　　　　2	3　　　　4	5　　　　6	7　　　　8	9　　　　10
- Style - Phrasing - Dynamics - Tempo	Consistently expressive with accurate style, interpretation, dynamics, phrasing, and tempo.	Expressive performance most of the time with occasional lapses in dynamics, phrasing, style, tempo and interpretation.	Occasionally rigid and mechanical expression. Style elements, correct tempo, dynamics, and phrasing are still emerging.	Inconsistent expression that lacks appropriate style, tempo, dynamics and phrasing.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.

APPENDIX I

Evaluation Rubric - Percussion

Power Standard: Performing (Percussion)

Students will realize artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to excellence.

Learning Target:

Mastery Level	Advanced 5 - 11	Proficient 12 - 22	Basic 23-33	Minimal 34 - 44	Not Observed 45 – 50
	Advanced	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Minimal**	**Not Observed**
Accuracy	1　　　2	3　　　4	5　　　6	7　　　8	9　　　10
-Pitches/ Fingerings - Rhythms - Pulse	Outstanding accuracy. All notes and rhythms were performed accurately. Consistently correct pulse.	Infrequent errors. A few minor problems in technical passages.	Notes, rhythms, and pulse concepts are emerging.	Numerous inaccurate notes and rhythmic passages. Technical passages and pulse are mostly incorrect.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Balance/Set Up	1　　　2	3　　　4	5　　　6	7　　　8	9　　　10
- Balance between Hands - Equipment Choice - Tuning	Consistently balanced between hands. Equipment choice and tuning add to the musical performance.	Few errors in set-up. Hands are mostly balanced and equipment choices are consistent with this style.	Understanding of set up is emerging but there is still inconsistencies with equipment choices, tuning, or balance between hands.	Inconsistent set up creates performance issues. Balance between hands and equipment choice are inconsistent.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Tempo	1　　　2	3　　　4	5　　　6	7　　　8	9　　　10
- Pulse Stability - Metronome Markings	Outstanding tempo. Pulse is steady and strong. Metronome markings are interpreted accurately.	Mostly accurate pulse and metronome marking. Strong performance with a few minor errors.	Tempo and pulse skills are emerging. There are some inadequacies with steady pulse or metronome markings.	Inconsistent pulse. Metronome markings are not interpreted accurately or are inconsistent.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Technique	1　　　2	3　　　4	5　　　6	7　　　8	9　　　10
- Hand Position - Rolls/Rudiments - Posture	Consistently appropriate posture and hand position. Rudiments are accurate and well executed.	Mostly accurate with only minor errors in, posture, hand position, or execution of rudiments.	Technique is emerging but still has some errors in rudiment interpretation or execution, posture, or hand position.	Inconsistent technique and errors in rudiments, posture, or hand position.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Expression	1　　　2	3　　　4	5　　　6	7　　　8	9　　　10
- Style - Phrasing - Dynamics - Tempo	Consistently expressive with accurate style, interpretation, dynamics, phrasing, and tempo.	Expressive performance most of the time with occasional lapses in dynamics, phrasing, style, tempo and interpretation.	Occasionally rigid and mechanical expression. Style elements, correct tempo, dynamics, and phrasing are still emerging.	Inconsistent expression that lacks appropriate style, tempo, dynamics and phrasing.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.

APPENDIX J

Evaluation Rubric - Vocal

Power Standard: Performing

Students will realize artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation to demonstrate the various musical and non-musical components that lead to excellence.

Learning Target:

Mastery Level	Advanced 5 - 11	Proficient 12 - 22	Basic 23-33	Minimal 34 - 44	Not Observed 45 – 50
	Advanced	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Minimal**	**Not Observed**
Tone	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10
- Breathing - Vowel Placement	Open, resonant, and full tone with consistently appropriate breathing and vowel placement skills.	Characteristic tone with only minor lapses in correct breathing or vowel placement in outer ranges and volumes.	Emerging tone quality, but unstable in some ranges due to incorrect breathing or vowel placement.	Inconsistent or weak tone production due to lack of breath support and vowel placement.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructors help.
Intonation	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10
- Breath Support - Pitch Adjustment Skills	Accurate intonation in all registers. Pitch adjustments are made instantly.	Minimal intonation issues. Pitch adjustment skills are usually successful.	Some sense of intonation, but with some notable problems. Pitch adjustment skills are emerging..	Inconsistent intonation with significant problems. Pitch adjustment skills are not successful.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Accuracy	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10
- Notes - Rhythms - Intervals - Pulse	Outstanding accuracy. All notes, intervals and rhythms were performed accurately. Consistently correct pulse.	Infrequent errors. A few minor problems in technical or melismatic passages.	Notes, rhythms, and pulse concepts are emerging.	Numerous inaccurate notes and rhythmic passages. Technical passages and pulse are mostly incorrect.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Technique	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10
- Posture - Diction - Consonances	Consistently appropriate, posture, diction, and consonances.	Technically accurate with only minor errors in diction, posture, or consonances.	Technique is emerging but still has some errors in posture, diction, or consonances during technical or melismatic sections.	Inconsistent technique and errors in posture, diction, or consonances.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.
Expression	1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8	9 10
- Style - Phrasing - Dynamics - Tempo	Consistently expressive with accurate style, interpretation, dynamics, phrasing, and tempo.	Expressive performance most of the time with occasional lapses in dynamics, phrasing, style, tempo and interpretation.	Occasionally rigid and mechanical expression. Style elements, correct tempo, dynamics, and phrasing are still emerging.	Inconsistent expression that lacks appropriate style, tempo, dynamics and phrasing.	Insufficient evidence Student cannot meet minimal expectations even with instructor's help.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Matt McVeigh was born in Stevens Point, WI on March 2, 1981. He attended the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire from 1999-2004 and graduated with a Bachelors of Music Education Degree in 2004. McVeigh taught middle school and high school band, jazz band, and general music at Flambeau School in Tony, Wisconsin from 2004-2006; high school band and jazz band at Kimberly High School from 2006-2009; and middle school band, jazz band, and general music at Woodworth Middle School from 2009-2012. In the fall of 2012, he came to Fond du Lac High School where he currently teaches band, jazz band and music technology.

As an educator, McVeigh is in frequent demand as a clinician and adjudicator. He is the current Vice-President and Northeastern Representative on the Wisconsin Music Educators Association (WMEA) council and has a variety of articles and publications for Wisconsin School Musician, Teaching Music, and the Wisconsin CNAFME Journal. McVeigh was an executive board member and co-founder of the Next Direction for Band Conference for high school music students, and former clarinet coach for the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) Middle Level Honors Band. Additionally, McVeigh was the collegiate representative for the North Central region of the National Associtaion for Music Educagtion (NAFME), and board member for the Wisconsin Advocates for Music Education. Matt and his wife Sarah live in Fond du Lac with their two children, Evan & Anna, and their canine pal, Louie.