ASSESSMENT AND GRADING PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT BAND DIRECTORS

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ABSTRACT

Carol Hayward, Advisor

The purpose of this study was to examine the assessment and grading practices of exemplary high school concert band directors and to determine if similar methods are used in these successful programs. Eighty-nine band directors from Kentucky and Ohio began a survey consisting of open- and closed-ended questions concerning their grading and assessment practices. The majority of respondents were male and averaged 15.8 years of teaching experience in band. Results of this survey show that directors of exemplary bands from both states use very similar grading and assessment practices. Attendance and participation were given as the highest weighted criterion when determining grades. Other methods such as performance attendance, sectionals, and auditions were said to affect grading and assessments. It could be said that these practices are sufficient because of the high level of achievement in their ensembles.
This thesis is dedicated to my parents, for their unending love and support.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

When the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law on January 8, 2002, it called for increased student achievement in “core academic areas” and encouraged states to improve their education standards. These core academic areas included the arts and music (MENC, 2002). However, the call for standards in these academic areas began much earlier. In 1992, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) asked for voluntary standards and assessments in the “core” subjects of math, English, science, history, and geography. The arts followed closely, creating standards for music, dance, theater, and visual arts. “With the passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the national education reform legislation that includes development of world-class standards, the arts have been recognized for the first time as a fundamental academic subject” (MENC, n.d.a).

Because of the NCEST standards, Goals 2000, and NCLB, emphasis on the assessment of student learning and the implementation of these standards in all schools and in all subjects is currently at the forefront of the education profession. The most common type of assessment is standardized testing. Previously, standardized tests had not measured achievement in the arts. However, according to Philip (2001), as of 1991 thirteen states had or were developing large-scale assessments for the arts. In 1997, the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP), also known as The Nation’s Report Card, assessed eighth-grade students (approximately 6,480 students from all 50 states) in music, visual arts, and theater (NCES, n.d.). Schools participating in the assessment were asked if their district or state required them to follow a curriculum in the arts subjects. Seventy-two percent of schools had a mandated curriculum they were expected to follow and 43% of typical eighth-grade students received
music instruction at least three or four times a week (NCES, 1997). The average music score, in both creating and performing, was 34% (Persky, Sandene, & Askew, 1998).

According to Brophy (2002), as these standards take a more vital role in music education in the United States, music educators will become progressively more accountable for the development and implementation of standards-based assessments. “In the majority of states with standards, officials estimate that music teachers are using the standards ‘somewhat comprehensively’ to ‘quite comprehensively’ in their teaching” (Brophy, 2003, p. 1). Lindeman (2003) suggests that educators should develop and implement methods of assessments that are accurate and efficient. Formative assessment occurs frequently in instrumental classrooms as teachers observe and listen to their students. This ongoing process is a key element to a rehearsal and a characteristic shared by effective teachers. More formal and summative assessments can be of great use to music educators as well (Lindeman, 2003). These types of assessment can be a struggle for educators to accomplish but are also where justification of grades can occur. However, educators may face the problem of finding ways to measure musicianship.

Grading practices of music educators can vary from school district to school district and from teacher to teacher. McCoy (1991) found that the majority of ensemble directors, when giving grades, place the most weight on nonmusical criteria such as attendance, participation, and behavior. She also determined that principals would have placed more weight on the psychomotor aspects of music such as performance technique, ability to perform, and practicing, than on the nonmusical elements. Will (2003) reported that band directors used out-of-school practice time and playing tests as grading methods more often than orchestra or choral directors.

Although these methods can be ways to assign grades, some are ineffective methods of assessing musical achievement and may not provide credible grades or valuable justification for
the course. Demonstrating credibility with grading and assessment may be one of many methods to advocate for music and other arts in the schools. Pontious (2001) stated that grading and assessment are different, but if both can be done simultaneously and effectively, educators could save time, improve their ensembles, and justify music education. Assessment should be embedded into instruction and curriculum as a method for students to achieve mastery as independent musicians. By restructuring assessment and instruction to improve student competence, grading should come rather easily. Teacher focus from “grade-based” education should be shifted to mastery of the standards so students can focus less on the competition of grades and more on intrinsic motivation and achievement of music (Pontious, 2001).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the assessment and grading practices of exemplary high school concert band directors and to determine if similar methods are used in these successful programs. A survey was created and administered online through SurveyMonkey.com, a professional online survey distribution site, to 180 high school concert band directors, from Kentucky and Ohio. I chose these two states based on the Bowling Green State University band faculty recommendation that both have quality band programs. I chose directors from these states whose ensembles received a distinguished rating at the most recent district concert band festival. Respondents were asked to answer questions pertaining to experience, assessment and grading techniques, as well as course alignment with state and national standards.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this survey, assessment is defined as a measurement used to gather information about students’ musical achievement and progress. Evaluation is “the collection and
use of information to make informed educational decisions” (Asmus, 1999, p. 21). Grading is defined as an alphanumerical rating given to the students as a result of an evaluation.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today’s music teachers are working towards developing students’ life-long musical and intellectual skills “because they form the basis of what students will take with them when they leave school” (Duke, 2005, p. 87). In order to ensure the students are developing these skills, assessments must be made. The results of these assessments should also be conveyed to others. Duke describes this process as feedback. One widespread method of feedback is grading. Boyle and Radocy (1987) define grades as “symbols, usually letters or numerals, used to summarize and characterize a student’s performance in an educational endeavor” (p. 264). This chapter is divided into two sections: methods of assessment and grading.

Methods of Assessment

In the instrumental music classroom, teachers have four types of assessment at their disposal for evaluating student learning. These four, as stated by Goolsby (1999), are “placement, summative, diagnostic, and formative” (p. 31). Band directors are very familiar with placement and summative forms of assessment. Placement assessment is used to determine chair placements through auditions and challenges. Summative assessments consist of final concerts, contests, festivals, and other performances where the group’s final result is evaluated as a whole. Diagnostic assessment is second nature to band directors and is most associated with error detection. Instructors identify problems existing during the rehearsal and offer solutions to fix them. These three types of assessment deal largely with the ensemble as a whole. Many directors assume that if the band gets better as a whole, then students are learning as individuals.

Formative assessment is used to monitor individual learning. “In the absence of assessment, we are unable to determine if our students are actually improving their musical skills and knowledge about music” (Fiese & Fiese, 2001, p. 13). Although several articles and studies
have shown that assessment in the band classroom must produce music making, the outcome of learning musical skills and knowledge should be music itself (Burbridge, 2001; Fiese & Fiese, 2001; Schleuter, 1997).

Various types of formative assessment can be used in the band classroom. The terms “alternative assessment,” “authentic assessment,” and many others have been used interchangeably to describe assessment methods that differ from more traditional types of assessment. According to Goolsby (1995) this type of assessment examines “student performance on tasks that are relevant to life outside the school and are therefore considered more valuable than what standardized tests measure” (p. 39). Music educators have a slight advantage over teachers in other subject areas in this type of assessment because students are actually performing music in class to demonstrate their learning (Asmus, 1999).

Assessment is fundamentally “a process of gathering information” (Duke, 2005, p. 53). Duke reports that assessment is related to the goals of instruction and therefore the planning of assessment should begin before any actual instruction. These instructional goals are only significant if a student can demonstrate their success. Therefore, students must be given opportunities to “actively practice applying” (Duke, p. 67) what is taught. Duke goes so far as to assert that “the distinction between the assessments and the substance of instruction day to day should be diminished to the point that the day to day activities of instruction closely resemble the assessments themselves” (p. 67). Although a student may be able to eloquently and correctly write a paper on the way to form a clarinet embouchure, it does not affirm that this student can actually play the clarinet with the correct embouchure. Defining the goals of learning and creating assessments to accurately measure the outcome of those goals should be the first step in teaching.
Many states have created their own set of standards in music, following the creation of the National Standards. Standards-based assessment is a growing trend in music education. MENC: The National Association for Music Education has published *Benchmarks in Action: A Guide to Standards-Based Assessment in Music* (2003) that gives step by step instruction in creating and implementing standards-based assessment. This type of assessment does not compare students with each other. Instead, assessment is “based on whether the student has met specific criteria” (Lindeman, 2003, p. xii). Boyle and Radocy (1987) note that absolute standards might be either too high so that no student can perform at that level, or too low so that while students appear to perform well, they are performing at a standard other educators may consider low. It is the responsibility of the teacher to understand performance realities and various benchmarks in assessment.

Music educators often use rubrics to determine if criteria have been met. Brualdi (2000) defines a rubric as “a rating system by which teachers can determine at what level of proficiency a student is able to perform a task or display knowledge of a concept” (p. 1). Rubrics, according to Burbridge (2001), can also define gradations for each criterion. These types of gradated rubrics may be effective in performance-based assessments. Instead of measuring how much students know about music, students are required to actually make music. “Rubric assessment encourages [music making] by testing the skills and artistry necessary for a musical rendering of a piece” (Burbridge, 2001, p. 8).

Duke (2005) explains a different approach to performance-based assessments. He uses a checklist rubric to assess performances. It is comprised of vital components of a successful performance, is not circumstantial and does not use scaled ratings. Instead, each criterion is measured with a YES or NO. Either the student performed exactly what is expected or did not.
Duke ascertains that “making judgments about what rating to assign requires time and thought but contributes little of value” (p. 75). His list of twenty verb phrases defining fundamental skills allows the students to know exactly what is expected while focusing on the use of knowledge and skills. If one of the criteria is to play correct notes and a student misses only one note, the result on the checklist would still be a No. This should not impact their score because each criterion is weighted equally. “The test is the tangible expression of the goals, which describe the application of knowledge and skills” (p. 73).

Related to the checklist and rubric tests is the musicianship test. Carmichael (2001) argues that the holistic approach of producing music close to the composer’s intent does not address fundamental issues of individual players.

[The holistic way of ensemble assessment] does not allow for a music teacher to account for the individual student’s musical progress as he or she participates in a band program over time. Musicianship tests provide a framework with which one may not only improve the fundamental skills of every player, but also track every student’s musical development. (p. 10)

This type of assessment, which is to be graduated for every year in band, takes a lot of time. The time consuming nature in itself may be discouraging, but keeping track of individual student progress over their entire band career will provide meaningful information to the students, parents, administrators, and teachers while simultaneously improving the ensemble sound. Each level of the musicianship test can only be passed or not passed. Students can take the test as many times as necessary and can pass each individual criterion at different times.

Similarly, Scott (1998) describes a tiered evaluation system (TES) to be an effective way to assess and challenge students at different levels. Each tier offers appropriate requirements of
musicianship for students to achieve. Individuals can select the level of challenge and progress at their own speed. Educators may set up benchmarks for students, such as reaching a certain level before being selected for a higher ensemble. Individual evaluation of each student is necessary, but can be done over time. With this system, teachers will decide which musical selections are appropriate for each level and can change selections as necessary. This program offers flexibility in grading as well. TES may be only one component in the grading structure. The results of musicianship tests or TES level completions can be placed in a portfolio and kept in files for as long as the student remains in band.

Using student portfolios in the band classroom is gaining more acceptance among music educators. Portfolios collect evidence of student work and progress. According to Cope (1996), these types of evidence might include “audiocassettes, journal entries, written quizzes, and reflective interviews” (p. 41). The type of assessment used should accurately measure the knowledge or skill desired. Paper-and-pencil tests cannot accurately measure a student’s sight-reading ability, nor can multiple-choice tests assess a student’s interpretation of a performance. The products of appropriate assessments can then be placed in individual portfolios.

Reliability has become the largest problem facing educators with portfolio assessment. Portfolios rely on the evaluators, mainly teachers, to be highly qualified when making judgments and decisions about student progress (Goolsby, 1995). Certain aspects of portfolio assessment, such as conferences between student and teacher, are often neglected due to time constraints. However, portfolios can be an effective method of teaching students to evaluate themselves and their learning. The compilation of student work is to show different levels of growth. As portfolio assessment typically stands now, the process of accumulating these works allows for the teacher and student to do individual evaluations. But in the end, a third party often judges the
completed portfolios. According to Goolsby, “Elizabeth Hamp-Lyons and William Condon found that the more information contained in the portfolios, the lower their reliability due to the likelihood of outside evaluators finding shortcuts” (p. 42). Instead of assessing all parts of the portfolios, evaluators make their judgments after the first piece and confirm their decision based on the remaining materials.

Products of technological methods of assessment might be included in individual portfolios. For many years, band directors have used recorded tapes as a way to place students in chairs and measure achievement. With growing technological advances, educators have more options to choose from than recorded cassette tapes. Smart Music is a computer-based tool that is used for practice and assessment. It contains over 30,000 accompaniments so that students do not have to practice alone. Aside from the many benefits of this type of practice tool, it also offers scales and other types of exercises that can be recorded, documented and stored allowing students to assess themselves as well as to provide the teacher with evidence of student achievement (SmartMusic, n.d.).

Grading

In her 2006 article, Barrett writes that because music is so multifaceted, a letter grade is insufficient in describing an “evaluation of student learning in music classrooms” (p. 10). After assessing students, teachers should regularly report the results to the students and parents. According to Schleuter (1997), in addition to a letter grade, these reports should also include a more thorough explanation of student progress that cannot be described with only an alphanumerical symbol (Boyle & Radocy, 1987). This progress report would consist of an “evaluation of performance skills and objectives, a diagnosis of problem areas, and a prescription for continuing improvement” (p. 179).
According to Boyle and Radocy (1987), students are often given grades based on their “attendance, participation, and/or attitude” (p. 263). However, these three criteria do not measure any musical skill or knowledge. Boyle and Radocy explain that this type of grading system stems from the reluctance of teachers to take instructional time to evaluate individual students. This becomes more of a problem with larger ensembles. As shown, assessment can be a very time consuming process. Even when directors have time to individually assess students, translating those results into grades can become even more cumbersome.

Pizer (1987) describes different types of grading systems that teachers use in instrumental music classes. The first is a process he calls “teacher recall.” With this method, teachers sit at their desks and speculate what grade to give each student. The estimate could be based upon a student’s ability or even a literal guess. A second type of grading method is the “deportment record.” Like the teacher recall method, this system is just an estimation of student behavior. Both of these methods make it very difficult to justify any given grade.

According to Schleuter (1997), “instrumental music teachers often get in trouble with program accountability when grades are based primarily on attendance and/or student attitude” (p. 181). When students are graded in this way, parents, students and administrators will think that showing up to class is most important and demonstrating musicianship is not. McCoy’s study (1991) asked band and choir directors about their grading practices and then compared the results to principals’ suggestions for grading systems. McCoy found directors used mostly nonmusic criteria to determine grades, but that principals would rather that directors utilize grading systems based on performance technique.

Lehman (1997, 1998) argues that using nonmusical criteria for grading is inappropriate and even goes as far to say in his 1997 article that it is “dishonest and fraudulent” (p. 58).
Although he concedes that attendance may be important to the learning experience, it is still unfair to base a letter grade on that criterion. Barrett (2006) disagrees slightly. Instead, she maintains, “a balance of musical and extra musical factors may be justified on the premise that student contributions to an ensemble are integral to its overall success, and therefore require regular, active participation” (p. 14).

According to Lehman (1997), “the only justifiable basis for grades is student progress in learning specific skills and knowledge in music, as outlined in applicable standards (national, state, or local) and made explicit in a written curriculum guide” (p. 58). His proposed model of grading suggests that grading reflect the standards-based curriculum and should therefore be standards-based itself. The use of progress reports, instead of traditional grades, can be more specific in relating student progress to parents, students and administrators (Lehman, 1997). This model would also allow for individual success. The problem with this type of grading methods, and most all other performance-based models, is the time commitment. MENC’s *Performance Standards for Music* (1996) offers suggestions on assessment and grading techniques. This reference book provides an assessment strategy “for each achievement standard appearing under the nine voluntary national content standards for music” (MENC, n.d.b). Also included are benchmark responses for three levels of comprehension.

Another issue plaguing music educators is that the main concern of traditional grading is the grade itself and not the mastery of music. Pontious (2001) explains that even grading students on performing, a music making process, can have unintentional results. Students may focus on getting a good grade instead of making good music. They may be more extrinsically motivated to play but will most likely play it safe without focusing on improvement and musicianship.
CHAPTER III: PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the assessment and grading practices of exemplary high school concert band directors and to determine if similar methods are used in these successful programs.

Selection of Respondents

A cover letter with a hyperlink to the survey (see Appendix A) was sent by postal service and e-mail to 180 high school band directors in the Commonwealth of Kentucky \((n = 104)\) and the State of Ohio \((n = 76)\) who received a distinguished rating at the spring of 2007 concert band festival or contest. A representative of the Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) sent me a list of Kentucky teachers and schools who met this criterion. The September/October 2007 Reference Issue of *Triad* contained a list of bands and directors who participated in the state adjudicated concert festival (OMEA, 2007). In order to participate in the Ohio state festival, bands must have received a distinguished rating at their respective district festivals. However, not all who received this rating chose to participate at the state level. Therefore, the recipients in Ohio do not represent all bands that met the criterion for selection. Lastly, only directors who are still at the same school received the cover letter.

Components of the Survey

For the purpose of this survey, assessment was defined as a measurement used to gather information about students’ musical achievement and progress. Grading was defined as an alphanumerical rating given to the students as a result of an evaluation. Surveys were administered online through Survey Monkey.

The first page of the survey was a cover letter designed to familiarize the respondents with the subject of the survey, to assure their anonymity and to obtain consent. The second page
asked for information pertaining to the respondent’s personal background. Pages three and four requested information about current city and school demographics.

The fifth page consisted of closed-ended questions about the ensemble that received the distinguished rating. Page six contained questions about grading and page seven included questions about assessment. The eighth and final page of the survey allowed the respondent to reflect on their grading and assessment practices in both closed- and open- ended questions.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Although 89 educators from Kentucky and Ohio began the survey, only 74, a return rate of 41%, completed it. Therefore, the numbers of respondents vary for each question. The first four questions were mandatory and all 89 respondents answered. The responses to Question #1 indicated that 87.6% of the respondents were male and 12.4% were female. Question #2 indicated that the average age of the respondents was 39.47 years. According to the results of Question #3, the respondents have been teaching band for an average of 15.82 years. The average teaching experience in Ohio is 18.59 years. However, in Kentucky, the average is only 12.64 years. Question #4 revealed that respondents have only been teaching at their current position for an average of 9.33 years. In Ohio, the average is higher at 11.20 years and lower in Kentucky at 6.92 years. Question #5 asked respondents to indicate their highest completed level of education and degree. Fifty-three respondents (63.85%) have received Master’s degrees (79.4% of Kentuckians and 59.09% of Ohioans), 26 (31.32%) have received Bachelor’s degrees (49.9% of Ohioans and 20.5% of Kentuckians), 3 (3.61%) indicated they have received Rank 1 certification, and one (1.20%) has received a Doctoral degree. In Kentucky, completion of 30 hours of graduate work after a Master’s degree or fifth-year program and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification qualifies as Rank 1 certification.

Question #6 asked the respondents in which state they teach. Of the 83 who answered this question, 39 (46.98%) teach in Kentucky, 44 (53.01%) teach in Ohio. Seventy-four respondents answered Question #7 indicating that the average population of the cities in which they teach is 30,800. The 81 responses of Question #8 show that the each city has an average of 2.26 high schools. Question #9 asked the teachers to indicate the number of students in their school. Eighty-two responses resulted in an average of 1,089 students.
Question #10 asked how many concert bands were in each respondent’s school. Eighty-three respondents answered with an average of 3.17 bands. However, two responses of 49 and 66 are highly implausible. With those two responses removed, the average number of concert bands in each school is 1.73. Question #11 asked how many students are in the entire band program of each respondent’s school. The average of 83 responses was 116. The average number of band teachers at each school, including the respondent, is 1.80, according to the 83 who answered Question #12. Eighty-three respondents of Question #13 indicated that most students begin playing band instruments at an average grade of 5.98.

The remaining questions pertained only to one band, which received a superior rating at concert festival, and will be referred to as the top band. Question #14 asked how many students are in the band. Eighty-two respondents answered with an average of 56 students.

Question #15 asked the average grade level of students in the top band. With one of the 81 respondents giving an answer of 912, the average grade level was 21.75. However, after removing the implausible answer from the calculation, the average grade level of the top band is 10.49.

Question #16 asked the respondents to give a percentage of students who take private lessons. Eighty-two responded that an average of 18.15% of their students take private lessons. Question #17 asked respondents to give a percentage of students who participate in Solo and Ensemble Festival. The average of 82 responses was 47.17%.

Question #18 asked if the top band was an auditioned band. Thirty-nine (47.6%) of all respondents answered yes and 43 (52.4%) said no. In Ohio, 31 (72.1%) have auditioned bands while in Kentucky, only 8 (20.5%) do. Question #19 asked if students received academic credit for participating in concert band. All 82 (100%) respondents answered yes. Question #20 asked
if the top band rehearsed during regular school hours. Eighty-one (98.8%) respondents said yes and one (1.2%) respondent said no.

Question #21 asked each respondent how often he or she participated in the state regional or district concert festival or contest. Seventy-eight (95.10%) said every year, 2 (2.40%) said every other year, zero answered never, and 2 (2.40%) said other and offered an explanation. One of these two respondents said they participated two years, 2006 and 2007. The other respondent said they participated in district every year and have only qualified for state regional the past three years.

Question #22 asked how often each respondent applies for outside performances at music conferences such as state conventions and the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. Nine (11%) respondents apply at least once a year, 29 (35.4%) apply once every few years, and 44 (53.7%) never apply. Question #23 asked if respondents used state or national standards when planning curriculum or lessons. Of the 82 who answered, 53 (64.6%) do use standards when planning and 29 (35.4%) do not. Forty-one respondents gave open-ended responses explaining how they plan curriculum and lessons (see Appendix C for selected responses).

Question #24 asked respondents to give their opinion for five statements using a Likert scale as shown in Table 1.
### Table 1

**Opinions of Directors on Aspects of Their Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition is an important part of the band program.</td>
<td>29.3% (24)</td>
<td>45.1% (37)</td>
<td>17.1% (14)</td>
<td>6.1% (5)</td>
<td>2.4% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are eager to participate in class and outside of class.</td>
<td>40.2% (33)</td>
<td>54.9% (45)</td>
<td>3.7% (3)</td>
<td>1.2% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are excited to audition for chairs.</td>
<td>18.3% (15)</td>
<td>45.1% (37)</td>
<td>22.0% (18)</td>
<td>12.2% (10)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>2.4% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are worried about their grade in band class.</td>
<td>16.0% (13)</td>
<td>25.9% (21)</td>
<td>34.6% (28)</td>
<td>17.3% (14)</td>
<td>6.2% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students take band because of an “easy A.”</td>
<td>1.2% (1)</td>
<td>9.8% (8)</td>
<td>24.4% (20)</td>
<td>43.9% (36)</td>
<td>20.7% (17)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Question #25, 100% of 82 respondents give grades for concert band.

Question #26 asked respondents to estimate the percentage of students who receive each grade in band for a typical grading period. Figure 1 shows that 88.14% of students receive an A grade.
Figure 1

*Grade Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>88.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #27 asked respondents to indicate how they calculate grades by giving the percentage value used in weighting grades for each of the following categories: attendance, participation, playing tests, written exams and quizzes, papers, practice logs, and other. As shown in Figure 2, participation is the leading determinant of student grades, receiving 35.88%, followed closely by attendance with 30.06%.
Question #28 was an open-ended question asking respondents to elaborate on other ways they determine letter grades. The most common criterion given was performance. Selections of responses are found in Appendix C.

Question #29 asked how often individual students’ performances were assessed in class. Table 2 indicates that 34.2% of directors assess performances on a weekly basis. Other responses are found in Appendix C. Question #30 was an open-ended question asking respondents to describe in-class assessment practices (see Appendix C).
Table 2

*Frequency of In-Class Assessments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #31 asked if the in-class assessments counted toward students’ letter grades. Seventy-two (91.1%) answered yes, 6 (7.6%) answered no, and one (1.3%) respondent said that it was not applicable because no letter grade is given for the class.

Question #32 asked how often individual students’ performances are assessed outside of class. Table 3 indicates that the majority of respondents (25.3%) selected other (see Appendix C for responses). Eighteen respondents (22.8%) indicated they assess students on a monthly basis outside of class. Question #33 was an open-ended question asking respondents to describe out-of-class assessment practices (see Appendix C).

Question #34 asked if the out-of-class assessments counted toward students’ letter grades. Fifty-seven (72.2%) answered yes, 20 (25.3%) answered no, and 2 (2.5%) respondents said that it was not applicable because no letter grade is given for the class.
Table 3

*Frequency of Out-of-Class Assessments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #35 asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with their current grading and assessment practices. Table 4 shows that 74.0% of respondents are satisfied with their current grading practices and 68.2% are satisfied with their current assessment practices.

Table 4

*Director Satisfaction with Current Grading and Assessment Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Extremely Dissatisfied</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Grading</td>
<td>12.3% (9)</td>
<td>74.0% (54)</td>
<td>9.6% (7)</td>
<td>2.7% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Practices</td>
<td>6.1% (4)</td>
<td>68.2% (45)</td>
<td>18.2% (12)</td>
<td>6.1% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.5% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions #36 through #38 were open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Question #36 asked respondents to describe how their grading and assessment practices work together. Question #37 asked how respondents assess musicianship. Question #38 asked if respondents give grades for musicianship and how they justify that grade.

Question #39 asked if respondents were mandated by their administration to supply written documentation of student work. Sixty-one (85.9%) answered no and 10 (14.1%) answered yes. Descriptions of compliance from those directors who are mandated to show documentation of student work are found in Appendix C.

Questions 40 and 41 are open-ended questions and select responses are found in Appendix C. Question #40 asked directors what would change if they could change their school or school district’s policy on grading and assessment. Question #41 asked respondents to express any other views of assessment and grading they may have that may be beneficial to the music education profession. Some respondents were generous and offered excerpts from or a link to band handbooks.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the assessment and grading practices of exemplary high school concert band directors and to determine if similar methods are used in these successful programs. Results of the survey are discussed in two sections: demographics and assessment and grading practices. Implications for music education and suggestions for future research are also included in this chapter.

Demographics

The answers to questions in the first section of the survey indicate that most of the respondents are male high school band directors. Directors in Ohio tend to be older, with an average age of 42.23, and have more teaching experience, averaging 18.59 years, than directors in Kentucky (36.31 and 12.64, respectively). Also, directors in Ohio have remained at their current position longer (11.20 years) than those in Kentucky (6.92 years). More experienced teachers may have developed better systems of grading and assessment. One respondent explained that they had been teaching for eight years and had tried eight different grading and assessment methods to find the best one. However, because directors in both states responded similarly about their grading and assessment practices and in-depth studies of individual practices were not conducted, it is unclear as to if any specific respondent has better practices than another.

It was surprising to find that 79.4% of the respondents in Kentucky have a Master’s degree or higher, compared to only 59.09% of Ohioans. In fact, all post-masters work and Doctoral degrees are held by directors in Kentucky. Far more directors (49.9%) in Ohio hold only Bachelor’s degrees than in Kentucky (20.5%). Some experienced teachers may have been able to continue teaching by receiving continuing education credits instead of obtaining a
Master’s degree. Perhaps more directors in Ohio teach longer before starting graduate work and continue to teach during graduate school, as opposed to Kentuckians. It is now a requirement in both states to obtain a Master’s degree, or an equivalent, within ten to twelve years in order to continue teaching.

Although average city populations are larger in Kentucky, demographics about the actual band programs, such as the size and number of directors, are very similar in both states. However, in Kentucky, 79.5% of the bands are not auditioned. In Ohio, it is almost exactly the opposite with 72.1% of bands being auditioned bands. Larger band programs may have more bands and therefore need to audition students to create the best instrumentation. Students in the top auditioned bands are usually the highest achieving players. One Kentucky respondent of Question #41 said that grade distributions of students in the top band are “wildly different” from those of students in other bands. In the lower bands, students may receive C’s and D’s “but aren’t as driven or motivated by grades” (see Appendix C).

Assessment and Grading Practices

Questions regarding participation in concert festival and music conferences were asked to gain an understanding about the director’s performance goals for his or her students. All respondents were chosen because of the high performance level of their bands at concert festival. Participation in these events signifies a commitment to enhanced learning by the directors through outside evaluations. Only 11% of all respondents indicated they apply for music conference performances every year. The majority (53.7%) never apply for these types of performances. However, in Question #28, directors specified performance as one of the criteria used in determining grades, and in Question #33 they defined performances as a way of assessing students outside of class. Yet most directors do not apply for extra performance
opportunities. If performances are a way of assessing students and determining grades, then directors should consider providing more opportunities for students to perform. Not only would the students gain experience and improve in performing, but directors would also have more opportunities to assess.

Question #23 asked if the directors use state or national standards as guides when planning curriculum and lessons. Standards based assessment, although not a new idea, has been recently gaining prevalence in music education. The majority of respondents (64.6%) use standards when planning. Many said that the National Standards are incorporated into the state standards. One Kentucky respondent said the standards “serve as a constant reminder to add activities to [their] lessons that require students to notate, create, [and] evaluate.”

Since the advent of the standards, many resources are now available for teachers to use when planning curriculum and assessment. Books, such as MENC’s *Performance Standards for Music* (1996), give strategies on how to assess the standards. Teachers are no longer on their own when creating assessments for their students. Yet, 35.9% of respondents do not use the National Standards.

Several respondents suggested that band literature is used as the basis of their curriculum. One Ohio respondent indicated he chooses music based on the level of students in the ensemble. He also teaches “style, history, composers, and composition techniques” through the repertoire and that when this is accomplished, “many of the State/National Standards have already been touched upon.” However, this respondent also stated that grades come mostly from attendance and participation and that students are assessed based on “spot playing, sectionals, attendance, participation, and progress made.” It is unclear how he assesses the students on “style, history, composers, and composition techniques.”
Question #24 asked for directors’ opinions on certain aspects of their band programs. Most agree that competition is an important part of the band program, that students are eager to participate in and outside of class, and that students are excited to audition for chairs. Competition may also allow for additional opportunities for assessment and grading in places such as band auditions and chair placements.

With only small demographic differences, grading and assessment practices tend to be similar in both states. The highest percentages of criteria in determining grades were participation and attendance. Considering the availability of literature about grading in performance groups, it is interesting to note that current teachers are still using non-musical criterion when calculating individual grades. Yet according to the results of Question #35, directors are satisfied with their current practices of grading and assessment. Directors may be aware of the validity problem of grading based on non-musical criteria, but according to the results of this survey, few have made changes from emphasizing attendance and participation in grading. Grades could motivate students to attend and participate in class, but may not encourage high levels of musicianship.

Question #36 asked directors to convey how their grading and assessment practices work together. Many said they use rubrics when assessing and then base the grade on the result of the rubric assessment. Some said that it is difficult to grade performances because it is unfair to put a number on talent. Yet, some respondents do grade based on the ability level of the student. One Ohio respondent said, “An average playing assignment receives a C for average.” Grading individual performance seems to be one of the largest problems directors face when creating a grading and assessment strategy. Time constraints and size of the ensembles make it difficult to hear individuals on a regular basis.
Respondents’ answers to Question #37 centered around the idea of students playing the intrinsic musical qualities of what is “on the page” during ensemble and individual performance as a way of assessing musicianship. Yet, determining a grade from those assessments can be difficult. Most respondents said that musicianship is included in other parts of evaluations, such as on a rubric, and therefore included in that grade. Other respondents honestly answered that they do not give a grade for musicianship.

The results of Question #39 show that only 14.1% of respondents are required to show written documentation of student work. Seven respondents from Kentucky and three from Ohio indicated they are required. Most of the Kentucky directors and one in Ohio assign written assignments for use in a portfolio. Some Kentuckians and one Ohio respondent also suggest written examinations as a way to document student work. However, written assignments are not authentic assessments for performing ensembles. What musical concepts can be measured? Written assignments may establish if students can define musical vocabulary, but as one respondent suggests, they do not evaluate students’ ability to perform an allargando or ritardando. Literacy and writing skills are important, but is it the responsibility of the music teacher to refine those skills, or as one respondent suggests, to improve writing scores on the Ohio Graduation Test?

However, most respondents of Question #40 would not change anything about the school or school district’s policy on assessment and grading and are satisfied with the current policies. One Kentuckian did not want to be required to give writing assignments.

Results of this survey show that directors of exemplary bands from both states use very similar assessment and grading practices. It could be said that these practices are sufficient because of the high level of achievement in their ensembles. Grading is an example of feedback
from the directors but is not specific enough to encourage individual improvement. One respondent suggested that someone should “design an easy way to assess individual student achievement in the group setting that is not time consuming to implement.” Through effective assessment and feedback of individuals, ensembles can improve.

Implications for Music Education

Based upon the results of this study, the following ideas may be useful for band directors to consider:

1. Attendance and participation are still widely used criteria for determining grades. Directors should develop ways of assessing and grading students in which musical concepts and skills are being evaluated.

2. Teachers need to become aware of the vast resources on assessment. While some of the resources may not be specific to large performing ensembles, becoming current with new ideas and opportunities might aid in developing a new grading or assessment system.

3. Assessment in large ensembles takes a lot of time. Teachers must invest in their students’ musical growth and find ways to assess efficiently. Finding the best way to do so also takes time and effort.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based upon the results of this study, the following suggestions for further research seem warranted:

1. A study on grading and assessment at the beginning level where more time may be spent on individuals in homogeneous band classes. It might also be beneficial to see how this grading and assessment paradigm changes from middle school to high school.
2. Comparison of teacher education programs and how assessment and grading are taught to instrumental music education students.

3. A look at requirements for state certifications in relation to the years a director stays at one school and how that might affect assessment and performance.

4. Comparison of assessment and grading techniques of exemplary band programs with band programs that are struggling to achieve higher state standards.

5. An in-depth case study of grading and assessment practices.

REFERENCES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A:

COVER LETTER SENT TO DIRECTORS
Dear Ensemble Director,

My name is Courtney Wright, and I am currently a Masters Degree seeking student at Bowling Green State University. My thesis will be looking at the current assessment and grading techniques of high school concert band directors. In order to create an honest and up-to-date thesis, I am asking you to complete a voluntary survey regarding your current practices. You have been selected because your ensemble(s) received a distinguished rating in a previous concert festival in your state. Potentially, the results of this survey may benefit the music education community by serving as a reference for current assessment and grading practices. I realize that completing a survey may be time-consuming, but I sincerely appreciate your willingness to do so, especially during this time of year. This survey should only take fifteen to twenty minutes. It is voluntary and completely anonymous. The survey will be completed online and you will not be asked to submit your name or any other identifying information. However, you are free to withdraw at any time. Not participating will not impact any relationship you may have to Bowling Green State University or any other institution.

To find the survey, please visit this link:


Your completion of this survey implies consent, and information generated from the survey may be used in my thesis. Thank you for your consideration. Please complete the survey on or before January 9, 2008.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please feel free to contact my project advisor, Dr. Carol Hayward, or myself at any time.

If you have questions or concerns about participant rights, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716.

Sincerely,

Courtney N. Wright
courtnw@bgsu.edu

Dr. Carol Hayward, Project Advisor
chaywar@bgsu.edu
APPENDIX B:

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING PRACTICES SURVEY
Assessment and Grading Practices Survey

For the purpose of this survey, assessment will be defined as a measurement used to gather information about students’ musical achievement and progress. Grading will be defined as an alphanumerical rating given to the students as a result of an evaluation.

Background Information:

1. Gender:  M____ F____ Other____
2. Age: _____
3. How many years have you been teaching band? _____
4. How many years have you been teaching at your current position? _____
5. What is your highest completed level of education and degree? ________________

Current City/School Information:

6. In what state do you teach? _______
7. Population of Town: ___________
8. Number of high schools in your town: ___________
9. Number of students in your high school: ___________
10. Number of concert bands in your school: ___________
11. Number of students in the band program: ___________
12. Number of band teachers (including yourself): ______
13. Grade level most students begin playing band instruments: _____

For the rest of this survey, questions will pertain to only one band. Please answer the questions with information as applies only to your top band, which received a distinguished rating in the most recent concert festival.

14. Number of students in this band: _____
15. Average grade level: _____
16. Percentage of students who take private lessons: _____
17. Percentage of students who participate in Solo and Ensemble Festival: _____

18. Is this an auditioned band? Yes or No

Assessment and Grading:

19. Do the students get academic credit for participating in concert band? Yes or No

20. Does this band rehearse during regular school hours? Yes or No

21. In the years at your present school, how often have you participated in the state regional/district concert festival/contest?
   a. ____ Every year
   b. ____ Every other year
   c. ____ Never
   d. ____ Other (please explain____________________________________)

22. How often do you apply for outside performances at music conferences (i.e. Midwest, State conventions)?
   a. ____ Multiple times each year
   b. ____ At least once a year
   c. ____ Once every few years
   d. ____ Never

23. Do you use State or National Standards as guides when planning curriculum or lessons? Yes or No

If yes, explain how:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

If no, how do you plan curriculum and lessons?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
24. In your opinion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition is an important part of the band program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are eager to participate in class and outside of class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are excited to audition for chairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are worried about their grade in band class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students take band because of an “easy A.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Do your students receive grades for concert band?
   Yes or No

26. Please estimate the percentage of students who receive the following grades in band in typical grading period:
   ___ % A
   ___ % B
   ___ % C
   ___ % D
   ___ % F

27. What percentage of band grades currently comes from each of the following?
   ___ % Attendance
   ___ % Participation
   ___ % Playing tests
   ___ % Written exams/quizzes
   ___ % Papers
   ___ % Practice logs
   ___ % Other
28. If you have “other” ways of determining letter grades, please elaborate here.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

29. How often are individual students’ performances assessed in class?
   a. ____ Daily
   b. ____ Weekly
   c. ____ Monthly
   d. ____ Quarterly
   e. ____ Annually
   f. ____ Other (please explain________________________)

30. How do you assess students’ performance in class?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

31. Do these in-class assessments count towards the students’ letter grades?
   Yes, No, or N/A (no letter grade is given for the class)

32. How often are individual students’ performances assessed outside of class?
   a. ____ Daily
   b. ____ Weekly
   c. ____ Monthly
   d. ____ Quarterly
   e. ____ Annually
   f. ____ Other (please explain________________________)

33. How do you assess students’ performances outside of class?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

34. Do these out-of-class assessments count towards the students’ letter grades?
   Yes, No, or N/A (no letter grade is given for the class)

35. How satisfied are you with your:

   Current grading practices?
   Extremely Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Extremely Dissatisfied / N/A

   Assessment practices?
Extremely Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Extremely Dissatisfied / N/A

36. Briefly describe how your grading and assessment practices work together:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

37. How do you assess musicianship?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

38. Can you give a grade for musicianship, and how do you justify it?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

39. Are you mandated by your administration to have written documentation of student work?
   a. ______ No
   b. ______ Yes, please explain how you comply:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

40. If you could change your school or school district’s policy on grading and assessment in your
area, what would you change?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
41. Please express any other views of assessment and grading you have that might be beneficial to the music education profession.
APPENDIX C:

SELECT RESPONSES FROM OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS
Appendix C:
Select Responses from Open-Ended Questions

Selections have been made from each open-ended question. Similar responses have been grouped together and or reduced to represent responses that carry similar themes. Minor spelling mistakes and typos have been corrected from original data. Numbers do not correspond to individual respondents.

Question #23: Do you use State or National standards as guides when planning curriculum or lessons? If yes, explain how. If no, how do you plan curriculum and lessons?

Kentucky

1. I plan my lessons based upon the level of my students and their weaknesses that need to grow and their strengths that can be showcased.

2. Kentucky has a well-structured core content for assessment and academic expectations that outline an arts and humanities curriculum. The National Standards apply in part to every lesson.

3. I try to incorporate the standards that are included in the pieces that I am already playing.

4. I make sure that my curriculum addresses the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment in the Music portion of the Arts and Humanities.

5. They serve as a constant reminder to add activities to my lessons that require students to notate, create, evaluate, etc. Anything other than just rehearsal and performance.

6. I plan my curriculum in order to meet the national standards for music education. By choosing literature that is both meaningful and enjoyable for the students, as well as something that they can learn from.
7. All of our lesson/unit planning has to be based on our curriculum framework (developed locally, but based on state and national standards).

8. My Philosophy is that if you expect your students to perform well, they must have a working knowledge of the standards and content.

9. I try to choose music that fits my band's current level. We try to choose good, legit literature in the grade IV or V area. This gives us a lot of opportunity to teach the things that are found in the “standard”; anyway, even if I don't formally jot it down or plan for it. This also gives me flexibility to teach different things different years (i.e., a few years ago, I focused on FOLK SONGS, as we were doing Ticheli's 'Folk Song Suite.' Last year, I focused some energy on MARCH Forms because we did 'American's We.'

10. Yes, I use the National Standards (including composition) and the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment in the Arts and Humanities is derived from the National Standards. The curriculum is planned from these documents with the aid of repertoire suggestions in Teaching Music Through Performance in Band and Best Music For High School Band.

Ohio

1. Only as a rough guide

2. I use the Standards that are geared toward an intelligently designed HS band program.

3. Yes, I can't tell you which ones they are. But as I read through them once or twice every year, I am hitting them at all levels. In the areas that I see I missed that particular year I make a new strategy and approach differently the next go round. Teach 30 years not 1 year 30 times.

4. I use national standards as a guide to organize rehearsals.

5. Our district curriculum is based on both state and national standards. I have created a curriculum map to insure all students meet these standards.
6. We plan lessons to teach the music we are preparing for concerts. Most of the material taught is on the State Standards.

7. State standards are used. The entire music department wrote curriculum based on the state standards three years ago. We implement the standards in our lesson plans each week. Lesson plans are not turned in to administration but it is understood and adhered to that all teachers must use the state standards.

8. I gauge the strengths and weakness of the group. I choose music according to what I think those strengths and weaknesses are. I look for music that will help strengthen the weakness but not over expose them and I try to find music that showcases our strengths. A combination of these two concepts is pretty hard to find. Through the score analysis, I devise the lesson plans and rehearsal concepts as well as drills, rehearsal techniques etc. I also teach style, history, composers, and composition techniques in the tunes we play. We listen to music as well in order to let them hear what I’m talking about…. I find that by the time I have this accomplished that many of the State/National Standards have already been touched upon. What usually is not touched upon in the Band class is usually met by the Jazz Band class and or the AP Music Theory class. These classes are also made up of all band students - usually the ones that are in the upper band

9. In our school district it is required to use at least 2 benchmarks from the State Standards when writing our lesson plans. As an Instrumental Music department the band directors write out two standards and adhere to them throughout the year. The standards are posted in all band rooms.

10. … I look at what the national standards are asking and implement most of them. We are very performance oriented. We feel the hands on learning is the best approach to our students
learning the important musical concepts. It is a very different thing to know what intonation is.... verses being able to compensate and humor pitches on ones instrument to achieve good intonation.

11. I think of the national standards when planning specific lessons and long term goals for the ensemble; at one time I found the state standards too cumbersome and poorly written, so I honestly do not use them much in planning. Beyond the national standards, I plan according to the ensemble I think I am going to have the next year, of course that sometimes changes days before school begins when the master schedule is finalized.

*Question #28: If you have “other” ways of determining letter grades, please elaborate here.*

Kentucky

1. I also include private lessons, participation in basketball pep band and performance attendance. I give extra credit for honor band auditions and attendance.

2. Daily performance in class (this is an informal assessment of the students' daily/weekly progress)


4. 50% performances as well

5. Students get some points for auditioning for honors bands, taking lessons, playing at solo & ensemble, etc.

6. Playing tests are done via SmartMusic assignments submitted by individual students (all have a subscription); auditions are live.

7. Generally speaking, we use 40% participation (attendance, behavior in rehearsal, having materials, etc) and 60% performance attendance (and behavior). Any additional Papers,
Playing Tests, etc that you have listed above would simply fall into the Participation Average of 40%.

8. Applied Musicianship Projects (credit for Band Clinics, Solo and Ensemble, and similar) and Concert Performances

9. Participation grade is more of an “Improvement” grade. Students get good grades for improving on their instrument

Ohio

1. 40% Performance participation 10% Service Credit 25% Preparation for Class (parts practiced, etc.)

2. Performance Attendance

3. Memorization and performance are tracked depending on the ensemble

4. Our High School program is built differently than most in this area. We continue after school rehearsal for concert band also. If you show up for all events, rehearsals, and performances (obviously there are medical and certain excuses) but you show up and participate you will receive the grade. We are about making the team better. You can't build a football team without the players at practice. Well you can't build a band and/or rehearse one without the players at practice. It is the same concept. Just like a coach. You get the grade if you show up and work hard. If you tank your playing that day you won't get the grade. Now in the middle school we do write papers and have the playing test. This prepares us for this less structured grading process in the high school level. But it takes the team mentality at the high school level.

5. Our grading policy is Musicianship (Attendance, attitude in rehearsals and about the music process, rehearsal preparation) 30% Tests (Written and Playing) 30% Performances 50%
6. Practice records, private lessons, honor groups, solo & ensemble all receive extra credit.

7. Concert critique - must attend a professional performance and write a paper. Senior Project - PowerPoint presentation, written paper, software, or student recital. Musical community service=10 hours. Participation in solo and ensemble, concert band camp, and private lessons

8. Attendance and participation are tied together. Practice logs are used as a means to make up time missed which equals minutes missed. I give 2 points per minute practiced.

9. Teacher observation. Attitude, effort and behavior also play an important roll in determining grades.

10. Sectionals

11. I use a weekly rubric that includes active class participation, and outlines how students receive the maximum points for a week, then have declining point parameters from there. For performances there is also another rubric that is based on how the individual performs, whether they dress appropriately, show up on time, etc. I have found that while these are subjective, they do work well. Students earn up to 40 points per week, we have about 15 after school rehearsals through the year worth 100 points each (with similar expectations for class time), and each performance is worth 200 points each.

Question #29: How often are individual students’ performances assessed in class? If other, please explain.

Kentucky

1. Per grading period. Students are assessed on a packet of music. This is done throughout the 6 weeks.

2. Assessment/sampling occurs as a logical extension of rehearsal.

3. As time allows. Some grading periods it is more often than in others.
Ohio

1. Attendance and participation is assessed daily. Skills, musicianship, improvement are assessed once per quarter in a playing exam outside of class time.

2. Chair placements once a year at the high school level.

3. We do most of this type of formal assessment in the middle school grades. When we get into high school it is handled in a non-formal way. I will know if someone does not know their part. If they don't get their act together they are put on notice and are expected to get their part down. We have after school sectionals everyday during contest (concert band) season and those that fall below the expectation I set will be required to meet with me on another day and I drill them until the part is learned. Kids don't care for this so it is a motivator for them to do their job so I don't have to do it for them.

4. Every other week

5. As needed. There is no set in stone time line.

6. Students are assessed during sectional times after school a few times a quarter. Students are assessed daily in class on posture, participation, rehearsal procedures.

7. Students must “check off” music for directors. This is done in class, during after school sectionals, or individually for the director. They have until the week before the performance to check music off. As long as it is checked off by the deadline they receive full credit regardless of number of attempts.

8. Well daily, but grades are not given often. The focus of feedback given to students in class is for them to be better performers.

*Question # 30: How do you assess students’ performance in class?*
Kentucky

1. By listening to them as a group. I teach all bands from 6-12 without an assistant. I do sectionals with groups that aren't performing at a high level.

2. I have playing exams they record on tape or they perform in front of the class. They are graded on notes, rhythms, tone quality, and musicality (articulation and dynamics).

3. Rubric for playing quiz. This rubric focuses more points toward specific things I am looking for.

4. I have students play individually in class to assessing the following: tone quality-pitch/note accuracy-rhythm-musicianship

5. Either through formal playing assessment or through informal observation (I move around the room often and listen to individual students “close-up” as they play with the entire ensemble).

6. Individual performance, playing tests, holistically

7. Weekly scale and etude exams Bi-weekly playing tests covering material in test Daily “pop quizzes” where the students demonstrate or play something we have immediately worked on

8. Randomly choosing students to perform a passage. They are given 2-3 days notice before a quiz.

9. Students play items from a packet on a P/F basis. The number of “pass” items will determine their percentage grade. In a rehearsal setting, students are assessed by section, or individually as needed. These assessments do NOT count toward their grade.

10. For FORMAL assessment, I usually use the AUDACITY program to record my students.

   Playing tests, seating auditions, scale tests, etc. That way I can grade at my own leisure and
we do not waste time. I have a student aid help with the recording during class, so only 1 or 2
are ever out of rehearsal at a time.

11. They perform in front of the band on Thursdays, when students are preparing for All-State
and Solo and Ensemble, Fridays are used as Master Class were the performing students
receive warm and cool feedback from their classmates.

12. SmartMusic or perform for teacher individually

13. Scales, etudes, district and all-state music

Ohio

1. Listening to sections and individuals in the context of a sectional rehearsal or full rehearsal

2. I try to hear each student individually at least once or more a week. Spot checking, “going
down the line” etc. In addition, we do 2 playing tests per quarter for a grade.

3. Every day. Don't tank don't let the team down. You are part of something greater than
yourself.

4. Playing quizzes both live and recording using Smart Music

5. It's either right or wrong. If their performance is pulling the rest of the group down they do
not have an option to “not succeed”. I assess the progress by observation during the rehearsal
and then apply the pressure and remedial steps necessary to get them on top of their game.
These assessments only negatively affect the grade if they do not fix the deficiencies. You
really should be asking these questions about the middle school level. Much more of this is
taking place at that level and this is where high school bands are made. By the time these
kids get into high school many of the things you are asking about have become less necessary
or time constraints limit their implementation. We do A LOT!! of the things you are asking
about but they occur in 5-8 band. You might want to do another survey asking about that level. My superiors at the high school level are built at the middle school level.

6. Either as part of the rehearsal process, questioning to test the understanding of their parts and/or others, or stop and ask students to play a certain excerpt. At times, some assignments are given where one of the directors will listen to the assignment or taped assignment.

7. Every day I assess the ensembles performance. This does not always result in a graded assignment.

8. By sections playing. Full band performance

9. Spot playing, sectionals, attendance, participation and progress made


11. Personally go down the line and listen to difficult excerpts from the pieces being studied.

Also after school sectional rehearsals students are individually listened to.

12. Students are giving assignments such as “Have that passage prepared for tomorrow” or “Tuesday we will check the g-flat scale” and have students play during the class time. Other is just normal observation

13. Again, back to the rubric idea. They have to be actively engaged in the music making of the ensemble, not looking for their pencil, or getting new reeds, etc. Sometimes, though not often the last two years, I will do sectional quick checks of particular material that students need to be learning. These will be given a certain number of points that are calculated into the students' grades.
Question #32: How often are individual students’ performances assessed outside of class? If other, please explain.

Kentucky
1. Sectionals
2. Most assessment is done inside class. When I feel the need is present, I assess outside of class.
3. Each nine weeks grading period or for special events
4. Performance event
5. If a student is nervous about playing in front of his peers, he may take assessment by himself outside of class. i.e. - Before or after school
6. Periodic SmartMusic assessments; auditions

Ohio
1. Informally, weekly during sectionals
2. Concert attendance
3. Outside the school day rehearsals and performances.
4. Several times a quarter
5. We have a concert at least once every 6 weeks
6. For mid term exam and auditions

Question #33: How do you assess students’ performances outside of class?

Kentucky
1. By their attendance at the various performances.
2. Playing Tests
3. Most assessment is done inside class. If so, the same applies to in-class assignments.
4. Etudes or scales are played for an individual instructor. Tape/cd test are also used for evaluation.

5. Assessment is made using a rubric which resembles the All-State judging system combined with holistic grading that takes into account the individual student's ability and regular progress.

6. Solo and Ensemble Performances

7. By the rating they receive in competition

8. Individual lessons SmartMusic (graded)

9. I really don't do additional out-of-class assessment. This would usually be informal assessment and would be as we are doing the sectional. Attendance and participation would account for the grade (Quest. #34).

10. Solo and Ensemble, Honor Band Clinics (EKU, MSU, Asbury, NKU), All-State, Select Band (All-District).

11. I don't

12. Attendance at practice and performances

13. Public performances such as concerts, athletic events, festivals, etc.

Ohio

1. Seating auditions or playing tests

2. Audition process, solo & ensemble

3. Students record assignments and turn in tape or cd to director.

4. During sectionals

5. We do chamber music as part of our curriculum, so an outside of school scheduled performance is required. Concerts are part of the grade, and occasionally out of class
sectionals may be required. Most of these are participation grades unless a certain criteria and standards were given for the particular assignment.

6. We don't

7. Practice logs - tuning charts

8. Papers, participation in other performance opportunities

9. If you show up on time and put in some effort you get a 100%.

10. We… critique the performance the following day.

11. Attendance, being on time, concert etiquette, performance

12. Written papers, playing tests, taped auditions

13. Concert band auditions performed in front of all four band directors. Primary reason is to establish placement in advanced or intermediate band and also to establish the initial seating order.

14. Through concert performances. Although we have not used it fully yet, we do now have Smart Music and intend to begin using it soon in our program for assessment purposes.

**Question #36: Briefly describe how your grading and assessment practices work together.**

**Kentucky**

1. All assessments contain analytical rubrics that assist me in calculating the score. It also allows the students to see their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Using the rubric for individual testing. Grades are derived from performances, tests, participation and homework or out of class projects.

3. When grading each student, I am not comparing that student to another student (unless chair auditions, of course). I grade each student on where I think they should be on their personal level.
4. The students' grades are based on participation in scheduled events & in-class participation.

5. The assessments are recorded regularly as a numeric value that can be used to report a student’s progress to parents and principal. Since the assessment is recorded as a numeric value the two aspects are merged into one process for grading.

6. Students playing tests count towards a portion of their grade.

7. Assessments determine grade

8. Students are graded daily and for performance events. They have to submit writing portfolio entries.

9. Grades are a reward for the hard work and dedication that it takes to be in band. Students understand the expectations set forth, and the vast majority follows.

10. SmartMusic has allowed me much greater opportunity to hear, evaluate, and respond to individual student performance. The individual assessments form a percentage of each student's grade in band. I am still looking for ways to place more of the responsibility on each individual, rather than using “group participation” as the majority of the grade--I'm on the way, I think.

11. My assessment practices are designed to affect the grades of the students to offer some incentive to continue to practice without affecting their grade so much that students are not willing to take the class because they can't earn a good grade. Perhaps if we had a larger program we could assess or grade “harder,” but we want to encourage participation, not discourage it.

12. Students are assigned the grade based on performance, participation/attendance, and effort based on progress, lessons, and tutoring.
Better grades are earned through adequate preparation, classroom participation and behavior, and attendance/punctuality. Each individual's degree of improvement is factored into grades for playing tests.

Ohio

1. Students have goals related to the assigned music that are expected to be met for each assessment. Points are earned by how well those goals are met and how much improvement has been made since last assessment.

2. Using a point scale, students are assigned a letter grade per evaluation based on: correct notes, rhythm, tone quality, posture, and articulation.

3. Individual playing tests-Example: Scale up and down (15 pts.) Individual playing test-music excerpt (check plus, check, check minus)

4. We have developed a rubric that allows us to properly assess student achievement and grade accordingly.

5. Students receive most of their grade for participating in performances. However, they are expected to be able to perform their individual part for each composition on the concert.

6. I like using assessments so I have something to show parents at conferences, etc. The students can also see how they are progressing.

7. Wind Symphony is an honors course. Curriculum is based on a rigorous set of standards that all students must adhere to. Practice charts and tuning charts are given every other week and students must assess their individual work on these sheets. Students also have projects to complete over the course of the year. This year's project is over Karel Husa and the piece Music for Prague. Community service is a key component. Students teach individual or group lessons to the younger kids 6-8. Students are graded on all performance music.
Students must participate in private lessons (always monitored by the directors), concert band camp, solo and ensemble, and honor band auditions. Concert critiques are required. In class attendance is expected and is not a part of a grade.

8. The grade reflects the level in which a student is playing. An average playing assignment receives a C for average.

9. Each 9 week grading period: 35 points for playing assignments; 35 points concert attendance; 90 points (10 per week) for individual practice; 360 (40 per week) points class participation.

10. Much of my grades are based on how hard the students try. If I know that someone is trying but struggling they will not receive a failing grade. If I know that they should be doing better their grade will reflect that. When playing tests are giving a rubric is used which accurately shows where each student is performance wise.

11. Grades are based on attendance at performances and outside rehearsals, playing tests, and daily grades. Assessment goes hand in hand through recording the band regularly, individual playing tests, and guest conductors.

12. We cannot grade by talent. So grading and assessment is by the student's participation in and out of class. By playing tests and written tests we hope the student grows as an excellent musician. They are used just for tracking purposes.

13. I assign numbers to how well a student performs. Sometimes I am grading more on improvement accomplished by a student. This is especially true in the top band if a passage is beyond technically where a student can perform.... yet the improvement level is substantial.

14. Assessment practices help me to determine playing and attitude grades.

15. Assessments turn into grades based on students’ ability versus particular individual challenges facing the students. The student can then reassess anytime for a better grade.
16. They really don't.

17. Assessment is constant, the band plays, I give feedback, playing usually improves. Grading is a compilation of the individual's active participation in the music making effort.

18. I feel that in a performance group it is very hard to give a really fair grade since a lot of it is based on attendance and performance, especially in a year-long large group situations.

Question #37: How do you assess musicianship?

Kentucky

1. Do they play what is on the page? Do they go beyond what is on the page?

2. By my aural evaluation and their success at competitions.

3. Usually through student's acceptance in honors ensembles.

4. Musicianship is assessed through a combination of a rubric in which certain aspects (the aspects of musicianship which are being studied - such as phrasing, dynamics, tone...) are given a maximum score. During the students' assessment (whether it be a playing test or an informal evaluation) a score is placed within in a pre-assigned range of scores as assigned in the rubric.

5. All-District, Honor Bans, Solo and Ensemble


7. I use a rubric for all individual and group assessments that include tone quality, technical proficiency, and musicality--a combination of subjective and objective criteria.

8. Rhythmic Accuracy, Tone Quality, Dynamic Shaping and observation of Notational Principles that are inherent in a given composition. Craft of composition is considered from composition and improvisation assessments.
9. Through the individual performance assessments. If the student performs the inherently musical elements (style, articulations, dynamic contrast, etc), they will score higher than if they do not perform these elements.

Ohio

1. Performance [with] the correct style, … dynamics, articulations, effective phrasing, etc. are all part of the assessment.

2. Through individual playing evaluations.

3. By using both written and performed assignments

4. A good director knows what quality music sounds like: Good blend, balance, intonation, phrasing, tone quality, dynamics, articulations etc. I just habitually address these issues with my students and hold them to a standard. It eventually becomes part of their performance. I also demonstrate to give them something to aim for. These are informal assessments and corrections that happen as a part of the rehearsal. I do not give a specific grade for this

5. Musicianship is assessed through daily preparation, rehearsal attitude, and participation.

6. Dynamics, phrasing and tone are assessed for my students starting in 6th grade. They understand these are the requirements for performing their parts. If the part is not performed well (in class, sectionals or playing quizzes), then they understand that their grade will reflect their performance.

7. Playing tests in front of the entire band.

8. Through their progression on a long-term basis leading up to a performance.

9. The real answer is I don't.

10. A rubric with musicianship qualities. Circle where the student is on the rubric.
11. As I stated above - We cannot grade by talent. There are different age levels in the HS Band. We do a standardized test at the beginning of each year to track their reading skills and to see if their scores go up as they get older. It is called the Watkins-Farnum Test. It basically tests sight-reading skills.

12. The students receive a daily grade titled “Musicianship” This grade encompasses everything from following rules, attendance, have the needed equipment, music, pencil on stand, three reeds, mutes, attitude towards class, towards music making, towards each other etc.

13. Mostly on a students ability to perform with style and good tone-- showing an ability to make the music come off the printed page

Question #38: Do you give a grade for musicianship, and how do you justify it?

Kentucky

1. I can't grade and justify beyond what is on the page. After all, reading what is on the page is a start and the rest is interpretation.

2. Yes rubric

3. No

4. Yes. Musicianship is a difficult “thing” to specifically grade as it can be evaluated or interpreted in many ways. However, at the high school level, there are certain aspects of a students playing that make for good musicianship. It is those aspects that can be assessed as items within a rubric - but with a holistic point of view in order to truly grade the musical merit of a student's performance. I usually record all of my assessments in order to have something to refer back to in case there is a question about an assessment. Creating music is not like writing a paper or taking a math test. The music only exists at the moment it is
created/performed and must be assessed in the moment. By having a recording of the student's work, a better or more accurate grade can often be assigned.

5. Students who display musicianship will receive higher scores on playing tests.


7. It is a part of the overall rubric; I discuss the criteria and the nature of each (objective and subjective) with students prior to the first assessment. SmartMusic/Impact allows immediate feedback to the student in the form of written and aural response (email and recording of the performance); this really helps the student understand my thinking on the subjective areas.

8. We do not give a separate grade for musicianship. It is part of their overall participation.

9. It is factored into playing tests and can be objectively measured by the student's response to both written indications of musicality and taught interpretive components.

Ohio

1. The musicianship grade is part of the overall assessment. Effective performance can only be achieved if it is musical; therefore, it must be part of an effective and meaningful assessment and can be represented by a level of accomplishment and a grade.

2. Not specifically for musicianship

3. Musicianship is the "complete package" of all of the skills needed to be a competent high school musician. This is graded when they take any type of graded evaluation.

4. Through elements that contribute to a musical performance, like shaping.

5. These items are all defined in our Band syllabus and handbook, and explained at the beginning of the year. It never has been a problem with students as long as they know the expectations of them.
6. Not really.... I try to notify parents where their student is.... Excellent musicianship, below level, etc.

7. We have a rubric for all types of performed music in front of the directors. We have a rubric for scales (students must have memorized all major and harmonic minor scales) book exercises and performance music. Musicianship is part of that rubric.

8. It is incorporated as part of the grade but not only by itself. I really value effort and trying

9. Yes. Because that is the core of our curriculum. Additionally students are ability grouped into one of three concert bands. Assignments are within the reach of students who give full effort.

10. I give more specific grades, like for clapping and counting rhythms and playing specific passages in music

Question #39: Are you mandated by your administration to have written documentation of student work? If yes, please explain how you comply.

Kentucky

1. We do one writing assignment per semester.

2. Small written exams and quizzes, final exam

3. I have created a “Band Portfolio” -- a simple manila folder -- we will occasionally write a journal entry, or discuss a recording, or a recent performance. We will also take tests on Performance Vocabulary (I go through my scores each semester and extract the important terms they should know to perform the piece such as 'ritardando' or 'allargando' or 'caesura'). These suffice.

4. Written assessment that follows the format of concert reviews, compositions, on-demand/real world writings.
5. Each class must submit a written assignment for possible portfolio use by the student. I typically assign either a critique of an outside performance or a self-assessment of one of our concerts.

Ohio

1. For semester exams only.

2. Every class is required to give some sort of written assignment every grading period as we work to improve writing scores on the Ohio Graduation Test.


*Question #40: If you could change your school or school district’s policy on grading and assessment in your area, what would you change?*

Kentucky

1. No change needed

2. I'm satisfied with it.

3. Stop having written assignments.

4. The grading scale is too wide

5. There aren't specific policies for grading in music classes, just overall policies.

6. Nothing at this point. They are flexible enough to allow me to choose what assessment works best in my own class.

7. Pleased with assessment at District Level, the Federal Government needs to radically change NCLB

8. I would allow students to receive Arts and Humanities credit for band.

9. I am not particularly enforced to follow the same guidelines as a regular classroom instructor due to all of the expectations placed upon the participating students.
Ohio

1. Grades are an important part of the assessment and evaluation process. They should not be the only part. Students must have effective feedback from lessons/sectionals/written work/performances if they are to benefit from the process.

2. Nothing

3. I do not need to grade.

4. The only policy that we must adhere to is each student must have a minimum of 9 grades per trimester. The performing arts department sets up all grading and each discipline collaborates to make sure we are doing the same kinds of assessments in our classes.

5. I am allowed to come up with my own grading policy. Therefore, I am constantly looking for new ways to “tweak” the system.

6. Over the years I have thought about this a great deal but cannot come up with a better plan than what we are doing.

7. I would make Marching Band extra curricular.

8. Maybe, have individual sheets of record on each student. Currently it is all grade book and little time for more written notation of student performance. Also, it would be good to assess student improvement by recording improvement on Fussell exercises or technique uniform requirements by recording them, but time does not permit.

Question #41: Please express any other views of assessment and grading you have that might be beneficial to the music education profession.

Kentucky

1. Music students need to be accountable for their individual performance. Rhythm, tone production, good playing habits, and accuracy of the written page. Scales in major and minor.
2. Someone needs to design an easy way to assess individual student achievement in the group setting that is not time consuming to implement.

3. Must have legitimate ways of assigning grades. Random grades do not work.

4. The percentages that I submitted would be wildly different if this weren’t in references to the top band. The students in the other bands frequently make C’s and D’s, but they aren’t as driven or motivated by grades.

5. Individual assessment is a most important facet of grading, and the feedback that should come from that assessment is the most valuable thing a student should receive. Unfortunately, assigning a “number” to such an assessment is often expected (it is here). Trying to find a balance between the things to which you assign a numerical grade and holding students accountable for both individual and ensemble responsibilities are a difficult (and imperfect) task.

6. Each situation is different. In my 8 years of teaching, I have experimented with 8 different styles of grading. I'm getting close to the one I'll probably stick with for awhile. I know some say that you really have to use those grades to get the kids to play and cover their part, but I think that deters participation. We have 2 or 3 in each section that work hard and compete for top chairs, participate in district events, etc, and as for the others, I'm just glad they're participating and experiencing music. If we had a larger band program where we had a competitive “top band” perhaps I would grade harder. With all of the other things that pull kids away from music in our schools today, I certainly don't want to use grades as another excuse for a kid to quit or not participate. With that said, we do hold some standards and grades will suffer if you don't participate or if you don't show up for concerts.
7. It is very difficult to find the time to assess on an individual level. I want to do it more, but all the other requirements of the job do not make it possible.

8. Teach the student to become musician, not to win trophies or self-promotion. If you do your job well, people will notice.

9. Population is key. If you want to have a program where you have an outstanding ensemble, you have to go somewhere with a population. Having led both small and large programs, I believe that students in a larger program are more willing to be assessed with individual assignments because they have a goal to work toward... the top ensemble. At a small school, too much individual assessment can turn students away so you have to be very precise in what and how you assess them individually. It's funny, we have fought so hard to have band accepted as an academic necessity, however, if we were to assess the students as they might be in other courses, we wouldn't have a program to run.

Ohio

1. Grades, evaluations, and assessments must be kept meaningful if the students are to derive benefit from them.

2. We assess daily and constantly. Competition is entirely different from a festival or adjudicated event. I support performing for musical experts for feedback especially in a growing program.

3. I don't think you separate the different elements that we could grade students on into specific assessments. They all function as a whole and should be addressed as a whole. Students should know music terminology, rhythm and scale vocabularies, outside of this isolation I think the rest needs to be approached as a whole not part.
4. Through my own research I have found that there are many ways to assess student learning in music from checks to points to taped playing tests. I believe we must assess students' on a regular basis to formulate our lesson plans weekly, provide feedback to students and provide accountability for our profession/curriculum.

5. SmartMusic is a fantastic assessment tool that I sometimes use at school. I think this is the future for band students and directors. I wish I could make all my students subscribe to SmartMusic and use it all year long.

6. The only personal reflection that I have is that my perception is that many bands do not hold their kids accountable in a music class because there are virtually no assessments taking place in class. This might happen in smaller schools that only have one teacher for band 6-12. Under these conditions teachers need to find ways to have some assessments going on based on their individual situation. Assessment is important.

7. Time for assessment is usually the problem. I do not like using recordings to assess.

8. Always be ready to justify what grade a student has earned. Don’t give all A’s. Come up with a plan that allows kids a chance to earn a grade.

9. It is very hard to grade instrument music students. We all know an “A” in Band is not the same as an “A” in English. We encourage excellent musicianship but it is hard to grade talent. You have a student who plays because mom & dad wants them in band and they will do just enough to get by and then you have the excellent student who studies privately, never misses a performance, and does everything and more to enjoy your class. If they earn a poor grade they will quite band. You want to keep every student you can in band or you will not have a class to teach. I have been teaching long enough to know that the students are in band to play music - how can you put a grade on that!??
10. Try to find a system that rewards and encourages effort ability and attendance, but not so inflexible as to eliminate possible players from your band

11. Students need to learn to care more about their improvement and performance level than some grade at the end of the semester or year. I think I accomplish this by using those rubrics for weekly class performance and concert performances in a fair and just way that students see in the way their grades turn out over time. It is all about them being respectful of the process used to help make them better players and contributing to the band's success.

12. I feel that I am in the minority and that most music teachers give out too many “easy A's” My program is very successful, but I do lose students at times because it's “too much work.”