THE RELATIONSHIP OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS’ ASSESSMENT PRACTICES TO RATINGS AT A LARGE GROUP ADJUDICATED EVENT

A dissertation submitted to the College of the Arts of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

As more emphasis is placed on student understanding, curriculum, and teacher accountability, assessment becomes an important topic for music educators. Assessment, an ongoing process used to monitor student learning, becomes an important aspect in music education to determine to what degree national, state, and local standards have been met. Simmons (1994) wrote: “Assessment is not something that we tack onto learning; it is an essential ongoing component of instruction that guides the process of learning” (p. 22).

Assessment can also create support for the music program and music curriculum. Hinckley (1998) stated: “Moving toward more accountability through consistent and accurate student assessment is an important step forward for us in music education” (p. 7). If music teachers demonstrate student achievement along a well-structured curriculum, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders will respect the music program and the national standards. Chiodo (2001) reported that, “If we want music to be included in the core curriculum, it becomes an advocacy issue” (p. 17). Nutter (1999) stated: “To maintain the integrity of music education as an academic course of study, assessment methods must be developed that are reliable, valid, and authentic” (p. 29). Keenan-Takagi (2000) believed that assessment builds credibility for the music program and meaningful assessment takes advantage of the rewarding nature of music.
Hanzlik (2001) stated:

An important rationale for assessment in education is to help students learn and to improve the quality of instruction. Assessment is a natural part of the academic process; and if music educators in the future wish to improve the security of arts in education, we need to establish and maintain an academic status. (p. 2)

Testing student knowledge and understanding, which is an implied element of assessment, is a necessary part of the educational process. Campbell (1998) wrote: “With the increase in public concern for school effectiveness, the instruction and assessment practices of classroom teachers move into center stage” (p. 14). With clearly defined objectives and lesson plans, assessment can become a significant part of the daily course of study. Gardner (1999) stated:

All skilled practitioners (including teachers) are involved perennially in assessment, and such experts find that assessment can often be a rewarding experience. For instance, they discover problems and are able to invent solutions on their own, and over time they can observe their own increasing skills. On this perspective, students ought from the first to be introduced to assessments; assessment ought to be a regular part of education; and as soon as possible, students should themselves join in the processes of (self-) assessment. (p. 38)

The value of assessment’s effectiveness in music teaching is at the foundation of scholarly articles and studies aimed at better understanding the effectiveness of instructional methods and assessment strategies (Chiodo, 2001; Hanzlik, 2001; Keenan-Takagi, 2000; Kotora, 2005). Music educators continue to examine methods of assessment to strengthen their teaching methods and strategies. With the focus on assessment of every child, music education must strive to better prepare students in the classroom and on the performing stage. With careful thought and preparation, assessment can have many positive effects on students, teachers, and music programs in the schools.
An important issue within the assessment milieu is how to effectively assess student musicians when much of the thrust of the music class is preparation for performance. Kotora (2005) found that assessment is being done in high school choral music, but with little research being conducted to support assessment practices. With the possibility of future implementation of proficiency testing in the arts, it seems necessary for music education to provide a solid foundation through assessment to better prepare students for testing as in other subject areas.

Assessment and the National Standards

With the passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which established a framework in which to identify world-class academic standards (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2007), and the 1994 publication of the National Standards for Arts Education (Music Educators National Conference, 2007), music educators recognized the importance of their teaching methods and a new level of accountability for effective student learning. MENC (2008b) reported: “The standards movement has altered the landscape of education substantially by bringing assessment to the center of the stage and giving it high visibility.” Regarding the National Standards in music education, Shuler (1996) stated: “The standards are expanding the envelope of assessment strategies in music. They are doing so by encouraging music educators to teach and evaluate in content areas—such as improvisation, composition, and musical quality—that many teachers had hitherto neglected” (p. 87).
Nutter (1999) stated:

Ideally, each school district has established academic objectives within its music program that are based on the National Standards for Music Education, and these objectives are reflected in the school curriculum. To determine whether students are meeting these objectives, each school district must also develop assessment methods that will identify exactly what students have learned in their music class. (p.27)

The enactment of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation, the “Elementary and Secondary Education Act” signed on January 8, 2002, increased public awareness in each state requiring that states have standards and tests to determine if students are meeting the standards. In Ohio, aligning academic content standards and assessments was intended to promote better teaching and learning for all students (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Assessment became more than just providing a grade on a grade card; rather, it became a measuring tool for student learning.

Within the definition of core subjects in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the arts were included as one of the core academic subjects. Music Educators National Conference (2007) stated: “The term ‘core academic subjects’ means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.” It is up to the arts educators in their respective states to encourage local policymakers to consider state assessments in the arts as part of their accountability systems, developing either state or local standards. Also, to include the arts, as appropriate, in the content standards and assessments similar to math, reading, and science.

An aspect of the *No Child Left Behind Act* emphasizes the teacher requirements necessary to teach core academic subjects under this legislation. What is clear is that the
No Child Left Behind Act defines “the arts” as a core academic subject; however, the law fails to define the arts. In which case it becomes necessary to check with individual states to determine their definition of arts and the requirements that must be met to teach in those areas.

With legislation in place, assessment, as continuous feedback of student learning, should be of primary importance to teachers. Burbridge (2001) referred to assessment as a snapshot of student performance at determined points of instruction. Every day, teachers observe student progress in an informal sense. This type of assessment is subjective and is likely to change between observers and from one day to the next. Well-designed assessment strategies can provide an accurate picture of student understanding. They can also shape teachers instructional methods to best suit each child’s learning needs. This is one of the primary goals of assessment: to generate and communicate useful information for educational decision-making (Fiese, 2001). Hewitt, Kuhs & Ryan (1993) stated: “Assessment in the various domains of the arts is critical because holding students accountable by some measure of accomplishment of learning communicates to students, teachers, and the public the importance and value of studying a discipline” (p. 7).

Although not a new concept to music educators, assessment is now a part of what music educators do to provide balanced and successful instruction that supports the National Standards. Since the Standards are consensus statements about what an education in the arts should contain, they can provide a basis for student assessment (Music Educators National Conference, 2007). As music educators develop assessment strategies, the focus of these strategies shifts towards the National Standards. The efforts
of music teachers to incorporate the standards into their assessment strategies can develop
district-wide and progress into statewide strategies.

A nation-wide effort, the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS), addresses the development of arts education assessment and the
development of assessment exercises that are related to the national standards. It is
designed to assist member states in developing student standards and assessments which
will raise the standards for student performance and reduce the cost and time that are
required to develop these assessments (Roeber, 1995). As Sears (2002) stated:

Its objective is to explore the philosophy and practice of large scale and classroom
assessment in dance, music, theater and visual art. It is a collaborative effort
among member states to develop and distribute model assessments in visual and
performing arts. (p. 13)

In addition, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) continually
conduct assessment of America’s students across the nation in mathematics, reading,
science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history. In 1997, the
NAEP arts assessment was designed in conjunction with the nine content standards for
music documented in the National Standards for Arts Education. These nine content
standards for music were grouped into three general themes in the NAEP Framework:
Creating, Responding, and Performing. With an interest among music educators, the
NAEP Framework adopted the philosophy of “authentic assessment” that closely reflects
the experiences that students have in classroom activities. The emphasis was placed on
the student’s written and descriptive responses to music as well as the performance of
music to demonstrate their skills (NCES, 2008).
With increased state and national awareness, assessment and the National Standards are creating an environment of creative teaching methods and accountability in the music education profession.

Importance of Assessment

Although the techniques of assessment involve gathering and analyzing data, much attention must be spent on the specific processes that create a sound educational assessment. Cizek, Fitzgerald, & Rachor (1995) found that “assessment practices were highly variable and unpredictable from characteristics such as practice setting, gender, years of experience, grade level or familiarity with assessment policies in their school district” (p. 159). The authors concluded that many teachers seemed to have assessment policies that reflected individualistic values and beliefs about teaching.

Assessment must be included in teachers’ daily lesson plans. Teachers must develop their instructional goals with assessment as a substantial part of those goals. Cope (1996) stated: “Conscientious and deliberate use of regular assessment can strengthen any program and provide valuable assistance to the student developing the skills needed to form a lifelong involvement with music” (p. 40). It is the responsibility of the teacher to create a learning environment that includes regular assessment in the classroom.

Need for the Study

The importance of assessment has increased since the implementation of the 1994 *National Standards for Arts Education* (Music Educators National Conference, 2006) and
emphasis on proficiency testing of every child in other subjects. Mathematics, history, geography, English, and science are the core subjects with which standardized tests are associated. The arts also have a course of study, which implies the development of tests. Courses are being offered at many levels in music history, music theory, and jazz history in addition to the performing ensembles. These classes have a substantial amount of material on which to assess students in much the same way as in core academic classes. National Assessment of Educational Progress assessments in the arts were developed as a reaction to a growing need among educators and policymakers to gather information on what students know and are able to due in the arts. In turn, the information gathered was needed to create a foundation for a solid arts education in the curriculum of the nation’s schools. With careful planning, music educators can implement assessment strategies in their rehearsals and classrooms to document student learning and understanding.

Due in part to an emphasis on standards and documentation of student learning, assessment has become an important process in learning. Although many high school band directors recognize the importance of assessment of student learning, few have a wealth of information about the various assessment strategies that are being used in the classroom. Recent studies (Dirth, 2000; Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kancianic, 2006) have identified various assessment strategies in instrumental music and have examined the effectiveness of each. Through the current study, music educators will have information on the frequency of assessment strategies being incorporated into the music classrooms and rehearsal rooms, and their effectiveness as measured by performance ratings. As assessment becomes better understood, music educators will develop assessment strategies that evaluate student learning and improve instruction in their music programs.
This study will examine assessment practices and strategies that band directors incorporate into their classrooms and rehearsals. These assessment strategies will be examined and the frequency of each will be calculated. Furthermore, each assessment strategy will be addressed and the most frequently used assessment practices will be further investigated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of specific assessment strategies that band directors incorporated into their rehearsals and the effectiveness of those strategies in preparation for performance at a large group adjudicated event.

Research Question

What is the relationship of in-class musical assessment practices to ratings at a large group adjudicated event?

Synopsis of Method

Phase I of the study was conducted in 3 randomly selected districts from the 17 districts that make up the Ohio Music Education Association. One district represented the Northwest Region, one district represented the Northeast Region and one district represented the South Central Region in the state of Ohio. Contest chairs provided names of directors that had participated in large group adjudicated event in their district. A researcher-developed questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed that asked open-ended questions about assessment strategies used when preparing their ensembles for a large group adjudicated event.
A list of assessment strategies was compiled based on the frequency of assessment strategies reported in Phase I. The assessment strategies that were frequently incorporated into large group preparation were used in the main portion of the study.

Testing of the survey instrument was done in Phase II of the project. The survey was opened on the computers of two university music professors due to the fact that a web survey may look different on the participants screen due to the operating system, web browser and screen (Umbach, 2004). The researcher-developed survey was tested for content validity and reliability as well as clarity of the survey questions.

The researcher-developed online survey was electronically sent to 146 high school band directors during Phase III. This survey examined assessment strategies and the frequency of assessment strategies that high school band directors incorporated into rehearsals to prepare for large group adjudicated events.

Participants

Participants in this study were band directors teaching in public high schools in the state of Ohio. Their home district contest chair provided names of participants from the 2007 spring large group adjudicated event. Participants were instructed at the beginning of the survey that the study was strictly voluntary and anonymous. Approximately one week after the survey was started, all subjects were electronically mailed a reminder asking them to complete the online survey and the importance of their contribution to the study. In order to boost the response rate, participants were given an additional reminder encouraging them to complete the survey.
Measurement Instrument

The participants in this study were asked to complete a researcher-developed survey. Directors were asked to check, from a list of assessment strategies, the assessment methods they have used in-class when preparing for large group adjudicated event. The participants were allowed to check multiple assessment types if appropriate. The lists of assessment strategies in the survey were formed from Phase I of the study.

In the study, participants were selected based on their membership in the Ohio Music Education Association. Participation in the study was based on their participation at a large group adjudicated event in Ohio, which may be similar or very different from other states that hold contests. It is the intent that data collected from the online survey focus on assessment strategies that band directors’ are incorporating in their classrooms and rehearsal rooms rather than the contest format that is established in Ohio.

Each survey collected demographic information about the participants for the description of the sample in the results section.

Collection of Surveys

Participants were electronically sent a letter and instructions to complete the online survey. Approximately one week following the initial survey, all subjects were electronically mailed a reminder asking them to complete the online survey and the importance of their contribution to the study. Umbach (2004) stated: “As with mail surveys, Web-based surveys require researchers to provide follow-up reminders.” In order to boost the response rate, participants were given an additional reminder
encouraging them to complete the survey. Data was collected and secured by the survey website flashlightonline.wsu.edu through Kent State University.

Analysis of Data

Following the collection of data, results were entered into the SPSS 16.0 software program for analysis. Non-parametric techniques were used since data was measured on nominal and ordinal scales (Pallant, 2007). Of particular interest was the frequency count of the types of assessment practices that band directors frequently used in their teaching practices.

A chi-square statistical procedure of assessment strategies that band directors implement during their in-class preparation and the rating at a large group adjudicated event were examined. More specifically, assessment strategies used in-class to prepare their ensembles for a large group adjudicated event and their rating at a large group adjudicated event. Based on percentages, a list of most commonly used assessment strategies through the least used assessment strategies were collected. Those assessment strategies were grouped and presented in the results section of this study.

In addition, logistic regression was conducted to assess how well predictor variables, or independent variables (band director and school demographics), would predict or explain the categorical dependent variable (rating) by assessing ‘goodness of fit’ and provide an indication of the relative importance of each predictor variable or the interaction among the predictor variables.
Demographic information collected included gender, age, teaching experience, education background, and information about the school. The information from the participants was used to describe the sample in the results section of this study.

Differentiation between Assessment and Evaluation

The words *assessment* and *evaluation* are terms used interchangeably by some authors and defined separately by others. In some cases, the use of both assessment and evaluation become synonymous with collecting information on student learning and making judgment on the quality of that learning. Radocy (1995) stated:

While I will leave the task of distinguishing between evaluation and assessment to others, the realization that assessment and evaluation are something more than testing or measuring is important, as is the realization that standards considerably facilitate assessment and evaluation. (p. 20)

Farrell (1997) wrote: “The word assess is derived from ‘assidere’ meaning ‘to sit beside,’ to ‘assist the judge’. It refers to the process of collecting and organizing information or data that make it possible for people to ‘judge’ or evaluate” (p. 2).

McTighe (1994) stated: “Assidere suggests that, in addition to tests and projects, classroom assessments include informal methods of ‘sitting beside,’ observing, and conversing with students as a means of understanding and describing what they know and can do “ (p. 5).

Educators use a variety of techniques for evaluating student performances or teaching effectiveness, with the goal of making well-informed educational decisions. For music educators, evaluation and assessment are necessary to document student learning.
However, for some authors, assessment and evaluation have distinct definitions and roles in education. Colwell (2002) stated:

“Evaluation is distinguished by the making of judgments based on the data derived from measurements and other procedures, while assessment refers to a considerable body of data that has the potential to diagnose and provide clues to causes. Assessment is then used to improve or judge instruction or do both” (p. 1129).

Airasian (1997) stated: “Assessment is a general term that includes all the ways teachers gather information in their classrooms….Evaluation involves judging or deciding about the quality of pupils’ performance or a possible course of action” (pp.3-4).

Boyle & Radocy (1987) define evaluation in a broader sense.

In education, it usually involves or at least implies the use of tests and measurements, but in addition involves making some judgment or decision regarding the worth, quality, or value of experiences, procedures, activities, or individual or group performances as they relate to some educational endeavor (p. 7).

Assessment as quantitative and qualitative is identified when Shuler stated:

I find it useful to help teachers distinguish between ‘measurement’ and ‘evaluation,’ which are two interrelated but different steps in the assessment process. Measurement is the process of gathering objective, often quantitative, data to find out what the student knows and can do. Evaluation, on the other hand, is the process of using data gathered through measurement—often in combination with information of a more qualitative or subjective nature—to arrive at a conclusion about the quality of a student’s work. (pp. 89-90)

Rodriguez (2001) stated: “Evaluation is a part of assessment—that part in which you make a judgment about the evidence you have collected through assessment” (p. 67).

Brady (1997) stated: “Assessment is concerned with measuring pupil and student performance during or following a programme of study” (p.8). Assessment is defined as the gathering of information about a student’s status relevant to one’s academic and musical expectations (Brophy, 2000). And finally, Herbert (1997) stated: “Assessment
includes a variety of tasks, tests, practical activities and observations by teachers and pupils’ peers, as well as the individual pupil” (p. 142).

Elliott (1995) drew a similar distinction between assessment and evaluation. He explained that assessment is the process that gathers information on student learning which provides constructive feedback. In contrast, evaluation is needed in order to provide grading and ranking for student promotion and curriculum evaluation. Elliott (1995) stated: “The primary function of assessment in music education is not to determine grades but to provide accurate feedback to students about the quality of their growing musicianship” (p. 264).

Despite this confusion, the definition for this study reflects the distinction between assessment and evaluation as written by Elliott. For the purpose of this study, assessment will be defined as continuous feedback, through a variety of teaching and learning activities, to support student learning and continued progress without the evaluative processes that are involved with grades.

Definition of Terms

Festival – A musical event open to any instrumental ensemble that meets the festival regulations and guidelines. Events such as these have separate rules and regulations and are not associated with statewide sponsored music organizations.

Large group adjudicated event - The event is open to any instrumental ensemble that is conducted by a music teacher who is a member of the Ohio Music Education Association.

Rating - a score assigned to a group’s performance at large group adjudicated events. The
Ohio Music Education Association Five Rating Plan of Adjudication (2001) defined as follows: (Ohio Music Education Association, 2001)

Rating I: An outstanding performance with very few technical errors and exemplifying a truly musical expression. This rating should be reserved for the truly outstanding performance.

Rating II: An unusual performance in many respects, but not worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects in performance, ineffective interpretation, or improper instrumentation.

Rating III: An acceptable performance, but not outstanding. Showing accomplishment and marked promise, but lacking in one or more essential qualities.

Rating IV: A poor performance showing many technical errors, poor musical conception, lack of interpretation, incomplete instrumentation, or lacking in any of the other essential qualities.

Rating V: A very poor performance indicating deficiencies in most of the essential factors, and indicating that much careful attention should be given to the fundamentals of good performance. This rating should be used sparingly and only when it is possible to cite major faults.

Contest Procedure: The performance of each ensemble consists of three pieces, a warm-up piece such as a march, a piece from the required list, and a comparable select piece chosen by the director. The performance order of pieces is at the discretion of the ensemble director. Following the performance for three adjudicators, the band is led to another performance area for the sight-reading
portion of the event. One adjudicator administers the sight-reading procedure and rates the sight-reading performance. Tabulation of the final rating is computed based on the four adjudicators rating scale as determined by the Ohio Music Education Association (Ohio Music Education Association, 2001).

Frequency - Number of occurrences, such as an assessment, in a given period of time estimated by the participant.

In-class - The regularly scheduled time that a class or ensemble meets on a daily basis within the normal school day.

Response options – a categorical scale, providing attitudinal measures from participants to identify the estimated occurrence of specific assessment types (Creswell, 2005).

Limitations

A limitation of this study stems from the proposed sampling procedure. Large group adjudicated event is strictly a voluntary event. Through the random selection of directors, it may become apparent that directors elected to not participate in these judged events. Some may choose to not participate that particular year or never participate in the event. With the popularity of commercial festivals, some directors’ may participate in other adjudicated festivals not associated with the Ohio Music Education Association. The number of directors who participated in the large group adjudicated event and chose to participate in the study may have a bearing on the sample size of this study, and may therefore bear an influence on the data.

This study was limited to a relatively small number of high school band directors that were members of the Ohio Music Education Association. One of the largest state
music education associations in the United States, OMEA is a federated state affiliate of MENC, The National Association for Music Education (Ohio Music Education Association, 2008). It is difficult to draw conclusions based on the representation of a small number of band directors.

The interpretation and definition of assessment and evaluation by those who participated in the study may be a limitation to this study. It is possible that the participants will not have the same understanding and definition of assessment and evaluation in music. The collection of data reflecting the interpretation of assessment strategies and frequency of assessment strategies may be widespread among the participants.

Participant responses to survey questions asked how frequently they used specific assessment types. The response options corresponded to Never for 1, Once a week for 2, More than once a week for 3, Once a quarter for 4, and More than once a quarter for 5 are not exact measurements but rather attitudinal measures. The response options, a categorical scale, provided attitudinal measures from the participants to identify the estimated occurrence of specific assessment types. An ordinal variable is a special type of categorical variable for which the levels can be naturally ordered (Stats/variables, 2008). It is not possible to measure participants’ responses exactly by the numeric response that they provided. These responses should be interpreted carefully and thus can be related to others as being equal to, greater than, or less than (J. H. McMillan, Schumacher, S., 1989).

The rating assigned to a group’s performance at a large group adjudicated event may be meaningless. Although this rating was used as a measurement for success of
assessment methods/strategies in this study, the primary reason that rating was incorporated in the research was to target a sample of band directors’ that are preparing ensembles for a performance. Due to the subjective nature of judging music contests and festivals, this limitation must be kept in mind and future research must take this into consideration.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of literature will address assessment strategies and the frequency of assessment strategies that high school band directors incorporate into their classrooms and rehearsals. More specifically, types of assessments will be discussed and examined in detail. Asmus (1999) stated:

The need for teachers to document student learning in music has become critical for demonstrating that learning is taking place in America’s music classrooms. Assessment information is invaluable to the teacher, student, parents, school, and community for determining the effectiveness of the music instruction in their schools. (p. 22)

It is from frequent and regular classroom assessment and teacher feedback that students get a sense of what they know and do not know, what they might do about this, and how they feel about it. Understanding the dynamics of classroom assessment is essential for improving education or even for understanding the current state of learning in classrooms (Brookhart & Durkin, 2003). Redding (1992) wrote: “In the old days, our job of validating students’ recall of information was easy. Today, judging their abilities to perform complex tasks requires a totally different type of assessment” (p. 49).

Oliver (2000) stated: “While educational assessment has existed for thousands of years, educational events of the twentieth century have elevated the use of assessment to unparalleled frequencies. Almost every facet of education is affected by assessment” (p. 1). McMillan (2001) viewed assessment as an essential part of instruction to be viewed as a tool not only to document learning but to enhance learning.
Shepard (1989) expressed his concern in creating assessment strategies that only serve the purposes of the policymakers and policy goals and neglect the primary goal of instructing students. He stated:

…assessments designed to support instruction are informal, teacher-mandated, adapted to local context, locally scored, sensitive to short-term change in students’ knowledge, and meaningful to students. They provide immediate, detailed, and complex feedback, and they incorporate tasks that have instructional value in themselves. (p. 7)

McClung (1996) stated: “Assessment in music, as in other learning disciplines, is a matter of determining how successful students are in performing the tasks that represent the desired skills and knowledge” (pp. 77-78).

Identifying student learning through assessment strategies can provide teachers in music education with valuable tools to prepare lessons and evaluate student progress.

Definition of Assessment

The term assessment has many definitions and meanings in the literature. Airasian (1997) stated: “Assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making” (p. 3). Black & Wiliam (1998) had a similar definition: “We use the general term assessment to refer to all those activities undertaken by teachers—and by their students in assessing themselves—that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities” (p. 140). Asmus (1999) wrote that assessment objectively measures acquired knowledge and skills over time but also identifies appropriate future learning experiences that the teacher may offer. Wells (1998) identified assessment as a means to substantiate grades, as a way to meet curriculum goals, and to improve instruction.
Cope (1996) noted four attributes of assessment: (1) a continuous and dynamic process whereby students are helped to learn from their own experiences; (2) multidimensional, using a range of formal and informal measures; (3) collaborative, allowing the teacher to assist learning; and (4) authentic, that is, connected to tasks that have genuine purpose and relate to daily life. There are many thoughts and definitions associated with assessment in the literature.

The definition for this study reflects the distinction between assessment and evaluation as written by Elliott. For the purpose of this study, assessment will be defined as continuous feedback, through a variety of teaching and learning activities, to support student learning and continued progress without the evaluative processes that are involved with grades.

Various Forms of Assessment

The terms student assessment and program assessment appear in the literature and must not be confused. Student assessment involves various teaching strategies to promote student learning and a basis to evaluate student learning while program assessment evaluates a course of study within a music program.

Asmus (1999) recognized two types of assessment: student assessment and program assessment. Student assessment evaluates student learning and provides a basis for planning further instruction while program assessment evaluates a program of study such as a choral program. Through program assessment, the educational program is studied to determine if the student, parent, and community needs are being met.

Researchers and teachers that document student understanding and knowledge over an extended period of time have identified various types of assessments used in the
classroom. Kotora (2005) identified 12 assessment strategies: “(a) videotape recordings, (b) audio tape recordings, (c) singing tests, (d) written tests, (e) independent study/written projects, (f) student portfolios, (g) check sheets, rating scales, and/or rubrics, (h) concert performances, (i) individual performances, (j) student participation, (k) student attitude, and (l) student attendance” (p. 68). Hanzlik (2001) found the following assessment practices were most frequently used by band directors: “playing band music and scales and rudiments; sight-reading music; teacher observation and playing etudes” (p. 121).

In the area of elementary education, four types of assessment strategies incorporated in the classroom were discussed with teachers through interviews (McNair, Bhargava, Adams, Edgerton, & Kypros, 2003). They identified paper-and-pencil tests, observations, checklists, and portfolios as four assessment tools used in their classrooms. In this study, observations were a favorite type of assessment in developing individualized instruction. The data revealed that observations were used to gather information on behavioral issues rather than academic concerns.

In addition, new forms of assessment, such as portfolios, pose interesting possibilities for student understanding. Nierman (2001) explains that a portfolio could be a type of performance assessment in the classroom. Through specific activities, students are able to demonstrate knowledge and skills while the teacher is also able to document growth. With careful preparation, all music students can be successful. Nierman (2001) stated: “With portfolio assessment, goals and objectives can be altered to meet an individual student’s musical needs” (p. 51).

In music education, much emphasis is placed on performance levels of groups and performing ensembles. In spite of that emphasis, it is the responsibility of music
educators to monitor the learning of students by employing appropriate assessment strategies. Although performance achievement is important, rehearsals devoted to improving the technical skills and individual students’ learning must be a priority.

Nierman (2001b) stated:

In music education at all levels—elementary, middle school, high school, college—where group performance has so long been the focus, teachers are beginning to understand that they have an obligation to all students in their classes to monitor individual growth in musical skills. (p. 45)

It is through assessment strategies that music educators can address individual student learning and better prepare their ensembles one student at a time. Music educators continue to focus on effective instruction that combines a curriculum that has the individual student musician in mind and includes assessment opportunities to monitor student understanding. Jackson and Davis (2000) stated: “Effective assessment should connect directly to curriculum and instruction. Simply put, assessments should be perfectly meshed with what we want students to learn” (p. 54).

This study will examine student assessment and the various teaching strategies that provide continuous feedback and support for student learning.

**Purposes of Assessment**

There are many reasons to assess students and the purposes to assess will vary tremendously across learning environments. McMillan (2001) identified several purposes to assess students. First, teachers want to know how much students know before their instruction. Second, teachers want to know how much students are progressing during the instruction. Finally, teachers want to know how much students have learned at the end of a unit of instruction. Tracy (2002) found among choral music educators that assessment
data was most likely to be used for grading purposes followed by evaluation and ensemble selection. Mills (1991) briefly stated: “The point is that the assessment needs to fit the behaviour being assessed” (p. 174).

MENC has suggested that the purposes of assessment in music be: (a) to inform students, parents, and teachers of individual and group progress toward meeting the standards of the school; (b) to demonstrate to students, parents and the community the types of learning and level of achievement sought by the school; (c) to furnish teachers with information on the effectiveness of instruction and thereby providing a basis for improvement; (d) to make possible comparisons involving student achievement across time and, when desired, among school districts or states; (e) to motivate student learning; and (f) to provide information to policy-makers at all levels to aid in the decision making process (Kotora, 2005).

It is imperative that assessment be viewed as a means to improve instruction and learning as well as to improve music education in the schools. Farrell (1997) wrote that assessments must represent significant outcomes for students and are aligned with the goals of classroom instruction. She stated: “Therefore in order to be fair, useful and valid, the assessment goals must match the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that teachers are teaching as well as those which the students are expected to learn” (Farrell, 1997, p. 1).

McTighe (1994) wrote that teachers can use a variety of assessment methods to identify students’ strengths, plan instruction, and provide feedback to students and parents about progress and achievements. He stated: “…we take the position that the primary purpose of classroom assessment is to inform teaching and improve learning, not
to sort and select students or to justify a grade” (McTighe, 1994, p. 4). Goolsby (1995) stated:

Each time a choral or instrumental music teacher rehearses, he or she is engaged in assessing a multitude of performance elements and conducting diagnostic evaluation to determine learning problems and how to address them. In band, choir, and orchestra, then, assessment guides instruction. (p. 40)

And finally, Wiggins (1993) wrote: “Assessment done properly should begin conversations about performance, not end them” (p. 13).

While purposes of assessment provide a solid pedagogical foundation for instruction, supportive and conflicting findings have been reported in the areas of performance and standards. Kancianic (2006) reported that the most important purposes of classroom assessment, considered by high school band directors, were to prepare students for a public performance and provide feedback. In contrast, the least important purposes of assessment were administrator feedback, school or district requirements, and local, state, or national standards. These results support similar findings that assessment of performance skills is important and instruction based on the standards less important.

Providing thoughtful instruction and monitoring student learning are necessary aspects of assessment that teachers must address. Assessment in music education, as in other disciplines has many goals. Teachers want to know how much students understand (J. H. McMillan, 2001). Radocy (1995) wrote that teachers must conduct assessment procedures with a definitive purpose rather than to simply kill time, scare students or have a record of evaluation. Teachers should assess to obtain information on what students are learning and what they can do musically. McTighe (1994) stated: “Without effective classroom assessment, it is impossible for us to know whether our students are
‘hitting the target’—that is, learning what is important for them to learn” (p.28). It is used to guide instruction and choice of teaching strategies (Asmus, 1999; Chiodo, 2001; Cope, 1996; J. H. McMillan, 2001; McNair et al., 2003). Nierman (2001a) stated: “Just as I used the yardstick to measure growth, so assessment, regardless of whatever descriptor modifies it, calls on the educator to measure growth. Has the student made progress in moving from point A to point B?” (p. 40).

According to Foley, there are two reasons teachers assess: to diagnose and address the instructional needs of students and to determine if a student has mastered content or is proficient in a standard. Regardless of the reason, the ultimate goal is to drive instruction forward (Foley, 2001). Fiese (2001) stated:

Assessment must be a part of teaching that continuously documents a child’s progress from week to week. What classroom that child is learning and developing skills in should not be a factor. However, it is important to remember that assessment is not a goal; it is simply a tool. It is the tool by which we make determinations regarding the musical behaviors of our student. (p. 13)

Assessment can be a tool to validate the music program with parents and students and to provide evidence of accountability for student learning (Brophy, 2000). Dirth (2000) responded that: “Some believe the lack of quality assessments in the performing arts contributes to the mindset of a number of people that the arts are a frill. They assume that the discipline cannot be measured and, therefore, cannot be considered part of the academic core” (pp. 4-5). Hill (1999) stated: “Assessment of student success was linked to objectives of the music curriculum and was often required for justification of an effective music program” (p. 1).

Asmus (1999) stated: “It should be understood that assessment is not an add-on to instruction. Rather, it is an integral part of the instructional process, and it can inform
both the teacher and the learner” (p 19). Teachers have a good idea of how well a student is progressing. These informal observations of students are important for teachers because of instructional sequencing and learning outcomes. Fiese et al. (2001) stated: “… teachers do not really need to do anything remarkably or substantially different regarding the process they already do when informally assessing students. Rather, teachers merely need to make formal and explicit, that which they already make informal and implicit. Such formal and explicit information can enhance communication regarding the music education of any teacher’s students” (pp. 13-14).

Teachers in other disciplines must assess students in much the same way. Airasian (1997) stated: “Much of the assessment data teachers gather is used to identify, understand, and remedy pupils’ problems and learning difficulties” (p. 5).

In his conversation with Brandt, Howard Gardner (1987) stated… “Another implication is the realization that while assessment is important, we need to be much broader in what we assess and much more flexible in how we assess it” (pg. 34). In her discussion, Yampolsky (2001) wrote:

To be successful, assessments, regardless of type or sophistication, need to emerge from the culture of the school and accommodate the curriculum and students. Most of all, the classroom environment needs to be nurturing, safe and encourage students to take risks. Misunderstandings and mistakes need to be viewed as opportunities for learning. They are part of the process that promotes musical growth and understanding. (p. 199)

Assessment provides teachers with constant feedback on student progress and difficulties and the opportunity to improve instruction on a regular basis. Zerull (1990) stated: “Without test-and-assessment data, arts educators lack information from which to evaluate the quality of arts instruction programs” (p. 20). Through thoughtful
construction, teachers purpose to assess students in the classroom or rehearsal room can be very beneficial. As Blocher (1997) stated: “The intended purpose of any assessment procedure should be carefully considered before implementation.

Types of Assessment

The types of assessments that music educators incorporate in the music classroom continue to grow. Teachers have numerous strategies to choose from in their classroom to monitor student learning. Herbert (1997) stated: “Assessment includes a variety of tasks, tests, practical activities and observations by teachers and pupils’ peers, as well as the individual pupil” (p. 142). This philosophy in music education is also being studied in the field of education. Campbell (1998) stated: “…preservice teachers made use of a variety of assessment methods when evaluating pupil performance. This is consistent with measurement instruction, that all learning cannot be evaluated in the same way” (p. 58). What was common practice in paper and pencil tests is now expanding to innovative styles such as portfolios and computer-assisted assessment. Cizek et al. (1995) stated:

The list of innovations that have come into nearly all classrooms is impressive: students are preparing portfolios of work to demonstrate complex characteristics like employability skills; teachers are gathering and synthesizing more information about students involving a greater diversity of valuable educational outcomes; schools are rethinking promotion and retention policies and the measures used to inform those decisions; professional associations are promulgating new standards for both content and assessment; and test publishers are incorporating a wider variety of alternative assessment formats into their products. Nationally, the importance of assessment can be seen in the Goals 2000 legislation. (p. 160)
Gates (1997) identified a number of general tips and a variety of assessment strategies which can be incorporated into classroom instruction to improve the assessment goals of the music educator:

- Start small and build gradually.
- Use simplified grading for record keeping.
- Integrate music learning in other classes.
- Post class charts and checklists.
- Use collegial resources.
- Use a seating chart.
- Organize small group/individual assessments within a large group setting.
- Make frequent use of modeling and exemplars.
- Use video and audio recordings.

Several researchers have investigated multiple assessment types used in the classroom or rehearsal room while others have studied a specific type of assessment to document and strengthen student learning. The following sections will expand on assessment strategies or a single assessment strategy that researchers studied based on their teaching situation.

**Multiple Assessment**

Kotora (2005) identified 12 assessment strategies through his review of literature. He found that the top three strategies used by choral directors were concert performances, student participation, and student attendance. Those assessment strategies grouped closely in the middle were singing tests, written tests, student attitude, audiotape
recordings, and individual performances. The final four assessment strategies were videotape recordings, independent study projects, check sheets, and finally rating scales and rubrics. In another choral study, Tracy (2002) found similar results with in-rehearsal observation, attendance records, and individual/small group performance ranked as the top three. Paper-and-pencil tests and rubrics were found in the middle while portfolios and published standardized tests ranked at the bottom of the list.

Kancianic’s (2006) study found the most frequently used assessment methods among high school band directors were: (1) teachers maintains a journal; (2) teachers use a checklist; and (3) teachers use a rubric.

Goolsby (1999) identified four types of assessments used in the instrumental classroom. They include: placement, summative, diagnostic, and formative assessments. Many of these assessments are familiar to band directors as a regular part of their lesson plans and rehearsal techniques. Placement assessment includes auditions, challenges that incorporate seating arrangements within an ensemble. Summative assessment is the performance or final outcome of weeks of rehearsals. This may include festival, contest, or recital performances where learning is publicly being demonstrated to an audience. The next assessment is diagnostic and is already a regular part of daily rehearsals from the podium. A common aspect of diagnostic assessment is error detection. And the fourth assessment that Goolsby has identified is formative. Through formative assessment, music educators are continually monitoring student learning. Also, directors are constantly making their goals and expectations known in each and every rehearsal and students are aware of these goals and expectations. Zerull (1990) had similar thoughts on assessment identified as either summative or formative. He felt that summative
evaluation was not appropriate for arts assessment due to the finality of this type of assessment and the limited nature of the information being collected. In contrast, he felt that formative assessment was the preferred style of arts assessment due to the emphasis on the learning process and ability to monitor progress or difficulties along the way. He wrote: “Part of what makes formative assessment so rich is the dynamic interaction of student and teacher” (p. 20). Black & Wiliam (1998) similarly identified formative assessment as assessment that is used to adapt the teaching to the student needs. Although not a focus of this study, they found that formative assessment can raise standards but with many shortcomings which must be carefully addressed to create the best results.

Reflecting the work of Goolsby (1999), Kancianic (2006) reported in his findings that high school band directors tend to focus on the summative assessments such as concerts rather than the formative assessment such as practice logs. The classroom assessments most frequently used tend to focus on the evaluation of student performance skills and reflect the summative types of assessments.

From these studies, it appears that some directors of choral and instrumental music implement multiple assessment methods in their classrooms. In an exploratory study, McCoy (1988) collected responses from choral and instrumental and categorized them as cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and nonmusic criteria. She found that both used psychomotor and nonmusic most frequently with band directors using psychomotor criteria with significantly greater frequency. The types of multiple assessments depend largely on the teaching situation and goals of the teacher. Meaningful assessment can occur when teachers have clearly defined objectives and goals that result in the assessment.
Portfolios

One assessment strategy incorporated through the Arts PROPEL (Davidson, 1992) project is the portfolio. This type of assessment, piloted by Howard Gardner at Project Arts PROPEL in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania monitored three things: production, perception, and reflection. Production implied doing, not imitating. Perception meant learning to see better, to hear better, to make finer discriminations and to see connections between things. Finally, reflection meant being able to step back from both the students production and perception to ask themselves questions about their progress (Zerull, 1990). Pittsburgh art teachers learned to “read” their students’ growth from beginning ideas to final products (Wolf, 1987).

Davidson et al. (1992) defined a portfolio as… “a dynamic collection that allows students to participate in an ongoing assessment of work, thought, and development over a period of time” (p. 13). “When tapes of the preparation of several pieces are included in a sequenced order, they make up what can be termed a portfolio—a chronologically sequenced collection of work that records the longer term evolution (the macrogenesis) of artistic thinking” (Wolf, 1987, p. 27). Robinson (1995) wrote:

The product/performance portfolio is the ‘class picture’ of the portfolio family. To assemble it, the teacher collects the same product (for example, a written composition or an audiotape of a playing exam) from all students at the same time, allowing the teacher to make judgments regarding overall student progress. (p. 32)

McNair et al. (2003) reported that portfolios, like other assessment strategies are summative rather than formative types of assessment. They found that 95% of teachers in
grades K-2 and 88% of teachers in grades 3-4 used portfolios as a form of assessment in their classrooms. Dirth (2000) stated:

Portfolios look at a student’s actual work or performance over time and in many different ways. They provide qualitative information about a student’s strengths and weaknesses. Because evidence of student accomplishments accumulates over time, portfolios are occasionally described as ‘cumulative’ assessments. (pp. 2-3)

Hewitt et al. (1993) reported: “The use of portfolios typically enables the assessment to be multi-dimensional and to examine change or the development of skills or understanding over time” (p. 7). Zerull (1990) felt very strongly about portfolio assessment in arts assessment. He stated:

These portfolios contain such artistic activity as sketches, tapes, notebooks, journals of reflections, and reactions to artistic exemplars. The teacher and student can examine this data base to see what has been done and what has been learned. Some measures, such as the number and amount of detail in the notebook entries, can be quite explicit (p. 21).

Dirth (2000) stated similar results when he reported using multiple written activities, such as Ensemble Critiques, Ensemble Comparisons, Error Detection Exercises, and Journals to improve the students’ reflective skills and learning. He stated: “The portfolio process is a long evolving process” (p. 147).

Portfolios can offer the music teacher another tool to gather information on individual student learning that otherwise may have only existed in other subject areas. Although student numbers and time constraints can limit the successful use of portfolios, with careful planning and organization, portfolios can be a very valuable form of assessment in the music classroom.
Less common forms of assessment, when used appropriately, can be successful in music instruction. McNair et al. (2003) examined observations as a form of assessment to individualize instruction. They believed that observations were the backbone of a valid assessment system in that it provided ongoing information about a child’s performance in the classroom, on an ongoing basis.

Daniel (2001) suggested self-assessment in performance as another type of assessment in music instruction. He stated: “It would seem that skills in self-assessment are particularly important in tertiary study when students are in an environment where they are encouraged, and able, to develop skills in thinking independently and reflecting dispassionately on their practice and performance” (p. 217). Brasher et al. (1999) felt that assessment methods were successful with secondary-level students that would include individual meetings between teacher and student. They stated: “Self-assessment can work with older students because they are articulate enough to explain what they believe they have accomplished, and they can organize that information into a written narrative or oral presentation” (p. 28).

Simmons (1994) found that teachers and students are often cautious of involving students in assessing their own or their peers’ work. She wrote:

In our research we have found that some teachers and students fear that students do not have the ability to assess themselves. Some students are reluctant to engage in peer- and self- assessment because they feel that such activities are the teacher’s—the expert’s—job and that their own work will ultimately suffer from their own or their peers’ assessment. Yet, we have seen in our work that when students and teachers set forth criteria and use them as a basis for reflection on student work, both groups are often surprised at the positive outcomes. (p. 23)
Wells (1998) wrote that students’ assessments of themselves give teachers an indication of what students know and information to improve instruction. Educators who are continually striving to develop effective teaching methods in their classrooms may find assessment to be a motivating and creative part of their own development as an effective teacher. With continuous work on developing assessment strategies, teachers may find that their own teaching and planning improves and addresses the needs of their students. With this in mind, teachers develop teaching methods to involve students in the assessment strategies that over time will become a normal part of the students’ learning. Elliott (1995) wrote:

To become knowledgeable and independent judges of musical excellence and creativity, students need regular opportunities to reflect on the results of their musicianship and that of their peers. It follows from this that assessment is the joint responsibility of teachers and students. (p. 264)

In addition, students will develop the skills to assess their own work and abilities in the classroom situation. As Wells (1998) stated: “The key is that the procedures for student self-assessment are always evolving and the students are being given the tools for enhancing their capacity to learn” (p. 34). This type of assessment can provide more specialized instruction and offer teachers’ another option for students at this level.

**Interviews and Journals**

Teaching students to talk and write about music is an invaluable tool beyond the music classroom. Allsup & Baxter (2004) wrote:

By equipping students with not only the vocabulary to defend their preferences, but also the thinking and listening skills to make aural distinctions between an array of musical styles and genres, we are providing a service that can benefit students long after they leave our classrooms. (p.33)
Robinson (1995) examined interviews and journals as assessment strategies with ensemble directors who deal with large numbers of students daily. He found that: “Interviews can furnish a rich supplement to the teacher’s knowledge of individual students, enabling the teacher to reach a better understanding of students’ learning styles, interests, strengths, and weaknesses” (p. 30). Furthermore, he stated: “…student journals offer a powerful vehicle for improving student-teacher communication, providing insights into individual attitudes, and assessing students’ understanding of curricular goals” (p. 31). Dirth (2000) reported that initially the students’ disliked a writing assignment in a performing ensemble class. With helpful suggestions on reflective thinking and criteria for a good journal (specificity, terminology, completeness), students’ writing styles and journal entries began to improve as they started to take ownership of their journal. In the same study, an eleventh grade percussionist wrote at the end of the year: “…I am beginning to see why you forced us to do all this stuff this year. I hated it at the beginning of the year (I don’t exactly love writing in these journals even now). But I can see it works.”

With thoughtful preparation, interviews and journals can provide yet another opportunity for assessment that develops the student-teacher communication while improving the teachers’ understanding of individual students’ strengths and weaknesses.

Videotape and Audiotape

Videotape and audio recording can also be valuable forms of assessment. Carlin (1996) identified several reasons to use videotape as a form of assessment in the classroom. These include: (1) a tangible audiovisual record of the learning process and
outcomes; (2) it enables students to participate in their own and peer evaluations; (3) it provides a basis for a longitudinal assessment that can be repeated on several occasions; (4) it provides student-teacher and student-student interaction during the learning process. Prior to videotaping in class, it is necessary to check your school's legal policy concerning the use of videotaping in a classroom. The author stated: “Because of its versatility, video can become a permanent, integral part of the learning and assessment process in the classroom” (Carlin, 1996).

Simanton (2000) found that 60% of directors reported using audio tape for assessment while only 28% used video tape. His findings showed that two out of three band directors did not record individual student performance due to time constraints.

Music educators can use many types of assessment practices to best suit their teaching situation. As directors incorporate assessment into their teaching strategies, they continue to make their students aware of goals and expectations. With students more aware of director expectations, students can assume more of the responsibility of their own progress and learning from day to day. Goolsby (1999) concluded by saying “we must assume that devoting time to assessment will eventually save time in class—time that has been wasted as we have repeated information again and again when preparing musical selections. Our task is to produce musicians, and better musicians will produce better music” (p. 50).

Simanton (2000) reported that band directors did conduct some type of assessments. He found that 82.8% assess performance and 41.7% use paper-and-pencil. While music educators note the importance of assessment and attempt some kind of
individual learning assessment, it appears that few use recording equipment for thorough assessment.

Assessment Decisions

Music educators make decisions on appropriate assessment strategies for classes and ensembles on a daily basis. Just as individual student learning differs so must the assessment types. Teachers constantly integrate musical and non-musical forms of assessment to identify and support individual student understanding.

Kotora (2005) found:

The top three strategies used were concert performances, student participation, and student attendance. Singing tests, written tests, student attitude, audiotape recordings, and individual performances were closely grouped in the middle. These were followed by videotape recordings; independent study projects; and check sheets, rating scales and/or rubrics. (p.70)

In general music, Ting-ting (1997) identified written tests, checking group performance, checking individual performance, and others as assessment strategies. In assessing singing, listening, movement, and notation, she found that teachers spent more time assessing the objectives that were used most frequently. More specifically, over 90% of singing objectives were assessed and only 65.39% of the notation objectives were assessed. Overall, she concluded that the most popular way to assess fifth grade students was through observing group performance.

Hill (1999) examined the following assessment strategies: paper-and-pencil tests, portfolios, sight reading, attitude, attendance, and participation. Although surveyed groups disagreed with the use of non-music assessment strategies, each group recognized its use in determining grades. Hanzlik (2001) found that 74.9% used concert attendance
to assess student learning in band class. Similar findings in regards to non-music assessment were reported by Simanton (2000). He identified factors that band directors were using to grade students. They included: attendance, participation/attitude, performance of band music, technique and/or sight-reading, and others (practice logs and written homework/tests). Although attendance, participation/attitude, and band music performance were most frequently used, few band directors reported basing more than 50% of students’ grades on a single criterion.

McClung (1996) reported data in regards to students perception of assessment procedures. He found that students perceived participation/attitude (84%) and attendance (46%) as the most heavily weighted criteria in determining their six-weeks choral performance grade.

It is evident from these studies that musical and non-musical assessment strategies are being used in music education. The type of assessment employed is dependent on the teacher and type of class or ensemble.

Teacher Training and Assessment

Learning to assess is a complex process that involves training and careful preparation by the teacher. Due to varying levels of teacher training in assessment, thoughtful, well-defined assessment strategies are needed for meaningful assessment. Hanzlik (2001) found that music teachers were often trained as performers and conductors which may reflect why so few assessment practices were implemented. He stated: “Knowledge base learned in instrumental method courses on how to be a band
director does not always include assessment pedagogy and teaching techniques” (p. 132).

Cizek et al. (1995) stated:

Previous research has shown that teachers generally have little interest or training in fundamentals of educational measurement, and few states require demonstrations of competence in this area for either pre-service or in-service teachers. Consequently, the methods that teachers use to gather and combine ever-increasing quantities of more complex information about student performance may be inadequate, leading to inaccurate conclusions about student achievement. (p. 162)

Natriello (1987) stated: “Although little research has been conducted to examine the actual extent to which teachers implement a consistent system of performance evaluation for students, interviews conducted by Natriello (1982) with secondary school teachers suggest that teachers vary widely in their ability to articulate a systematic approach to the evaluation of student performance. Examinations of teacher preparation curricula, which indicate that prospective teachers receive little or no training in the evaluation of student performance suggest that this finding may be widely applicable” (p. 169).

Darling-Hammond (1994) examined assessment reform and proposed several issues that involved teacher training and preparation. She suggested that assessments be used in ways that served teaching and learning rather than sorting and selecting. While supporting the development of teachers along with the organizational development of schools, assessment must be embedded in teaching and learning and promote adaptive teaching to create successful learning for all students.

Assessment in other subjects, as in music, is being examined for effectiveness and application to the learning environment. Borko (1993) conducted case studies with elementary teachers to gather information on their knowledge, beliefs and practices
related to assessment and instruction in reading and mathematics. Although there were
different strengths among the teachers, many of them felt that the activities that were
incorporated during the study became new forms of assessment and went beyond just a
score or number. As one teacher stated: “I think it tells me much more about the whole
student as a learner, as a thinker. [Before] the only think I looked at was if they knew
their facts” (p. 12).

Although not the focus of this study, training in appropriate assessment strategies
must be considered in the education of in-service and pre-service teachers.

**Teachers and Assessment**

With thoughtful preparation, teachers must focus attention on the specific
purposes that create a sound educational assessment. Brookhart and DeVoge (1999)
stated: “The nature of the assessment task and the instructional activities that lead up to it
and thus help define it for students give the classroom assessment event some of its
meaning” (p. 410). Cizek et al. (1995) found that assessment practices “were highly
variable and unpredictable from characteristics such as practice setting, gender, years of
experience, grade level or familiarity with assessment policies in their school district” (p.
159). The authors concluded that many teachers seemed to have individual assessment
policies that reflected their own individualistic values and beliefs about teaching. Similar
results are supported by Tracy (2002) when she reported that personal philosophy about
music assessment outranked time, teacher/student ratio, and training in tests and
measures. Teachers must be careful when determining assessment strategies that
document student knowledge and understanding. A sequential plan must be in place to best assess the students’ understanding of the material.

Lehman (1998) stated: “…assessment for purposes of grading should be embedded within the instructional process and not interrupt or intrude into the process” (p. 40-41). Since time constraints appear to be a common concern from band and choral directors when planning assessments, embedding assessment in the regular class activities can provide feedback on student progress without interrupting instructional time. Keenan-Takagi (2000) stated: “Embedding assessment means locating it within the regular practices of instruction, not outside them” (p. 42). McTighe (1994) wrote that teachers must develop numerous instructional techniques and assessment strategies from which to choose. The choice of the teaching method must be taken into consideration when determining the response to key questions. His key questions in planning classroom assessments include: “Learning outcomes: What do we want students to understand and be able to do? Purpose(s) for assessment: What are we assessing and how will the assessment information be used? Audience(s) for assessment: For whom are the assessment results intended?” (p. 11).

Gates (1997), assisted by the Classroom Music Committee and its subcommittees provided a select list of items that illustrate various assessment tools and templates. He wrote: “Teachers are encouraged to develop additional tools and use this collection as a starting point for a personal file of assessment materials” (p. 19).

With informed decisions, teachers can implement a sequential assessment strategy that provides significant information to the teacher and student. Broadfoot (2002) wrote: “In a ‘learning society’ everyone will need to become, and remain, committed to
learning. If assessment potentially represents the key to achieving this, it also currently represents the biggest single stumbling block. This is the challenge we face” (p. 6).

Assessment and Learning

Brookhart and Durkin (2003) stated: “Understanding the dynamics of classroom assessment is essential for improving education or even for understanding the current state of learning in classrooms” (p. 28). It is important that educators are aware of assessment practices, and how those assessment practices impact learning. “For assessment to be effective, it must be part of the learning process” (Herbert, 1997). There are many of these classroom assessment events in typical classrooms, intertwined together. Through a variety of assessment methods, it is the goal that children feel that they have made progress and want to continue towards a goal. Niebur (1994) stated: “Thoughtful assessment of student achievement can make the magic of musical growth more visible to all” (p. 23).

Presentation of material and testing of students’ knowledge of the material must follow a natural progression that promotes success. In her study, Reid (2005) stated: “Assessments can only be accomplished successfully when students know the goals of the rehearsal, which is often not shared by the music teacher” (p. 17). Brookhart (1997) stated: “A teacher who shares ownership of assessment communicates trust in students and confidence in their abilities to understand and apply performance criteria. A student who shares in the assessment process should perceive more control of and more responsibility for his or her learning, which should increase effort and achievement” (p. 178).
Through teaching methods and assessment strategies, music educators must continually focus on the outcome of the assessment and the students. Marzano, McTighe & Pickering (1993) wrote:

What we now know about learning indicates that assessment and learning are closely and intimately tied. The importance of changing assessment practices so they mirror the learning process becomes more clear when one realizes that students in American schools learn what they know they will be tested on. (p. 11)

Brookhart (1994) stated: “To the extent that classroom assessment provides useful feedback, evaluation will function to enhance perceived competence and foster engagement and learning. Students will behave because their efforts will cause learning, and because enhancing perceived competence is motivating in and of itself” (p. 296).

Music educators must continue to strive for appropriate assessment in instrumental instruction that challenges and creates an attitude toward learning. Wells (1998) states: “Self assessments give students ownership of their own learning and provide them with a means for evaluating their growth and setting goals for the future” (p. 32).

Assessment and Performance

In the area of music education, it is very easy and quite tempting to overlook each student’s unique learning style in an effort to prepare an ensemble for a concert. Loch (1991) stated: “While acknowledging the important contributions of performing groups, the pressure and time of rehearsing for frequent performances and competitions may divert attention from producing some of the desired educational outcomes” (p. 39).
Blocher (1997) added:

Assessment as an active part of music instruction provides opportunities for students not only to receive feedback, but also to participate in ongoing feedback on both music process and product. Assessment—an essential part of the teaching/learning process—is a joint responsibility of teachers and students in a performance setting. (p. 27)

This is an ongoing issue with the emphasis on public performances and the visual nature of the music department. Kotora (2005) received feedback from choral directors:

In a performance based class, I have trouble including my assessments (mostly performance based) in the grading period. It’s difficult to take the time for a written or a singing test when a big performance is coming up. Short class periods, full teaching schedules, large class sizes, and time needed for accurate record keeping were also cited as reasons why the teachers found assessment to be a frustrating task. (p. 75)

This can be seen in the instrumental programs as well. Burrack (2002) stated:

I have observed that instrumental music programs in American schools show strength in the development of performance skills, technical proficiency, and performance experiences…When asked for evidence of music learning, instrumental music teachers often turn to the attendance record, the sound of the concert, the variety and range of music presented, and the frequency with which students perform. (p. 27)

Colwell (1970) has written that teachers are beginning to move away from contests and choosing festivals for their choice of performance venues. It is this attitude that denounces the importance of a flawless performance for a more rehearsal-type performance in a festival setting. Although an honest and realistic look of an ensembles technical preparation is admirable, the absence of assessment to document student understanding and knowledge of the music is apparent.

Colwell (2002) believes there are two types of music programs in the schools and are important in the overall music curriculum. He stated, “Music education can profit from the current interest in assessment only if the profession realizes that there are at
least two distinct programs in the school—a basic program and a performance program. These are so distinct that both the instructional and the assessment concepts differ, often substantially” (p. 1152). The basic music program involves objectives that enhance the performance program and the performance program can enhance understanding of some of the goals of the basic program (Colwell, 2002)

Music educators face issues in their classes and rehearsals that teachers in other disciplines may not encounter in their efforts to assess students on a regular basis. One such issue is that of balancing assessment and ensemble preparation. Kotora (2005) stated:

This preoccupation with student talent and ability in relation to assessment and grading practices is usually not shared by teachers in other academic disciplines where all students are held to the same criteria regardless of talent or ability. It may be that choral music teachers have this concern because they believe the success of their choir courses from semester to semester and year to year, and they are concerned that if a student receives a low grade, he will not elect to continue participation. (p. 75)

McCoy (1991) stated:

Ensemble directors have many demands placed on them and, in the rush to prepare for concert performances, they may feel they have no time to devote to music listening, theory, or history. They undoubtedly find grading by attendance much easier and less stressful than evaluating actual performance. (p. 189)

McCreary (2001) found that instrumental and choral directors were faced with a dilemma of spending time rehearsing a group for a performance or spending time on assessment not related to the performance. Those directors most interested in performance objectives naturally would gravitate towards playing tests and practice time that improve performance quality. Similar data reported by Hanzlik (2001) found
assessment practices such as playing band music (97.4%), playing scales and rudiments (95.4%), and playing etudes (81.1%) reflected assessments taught in the band performance class. Simanton (2000) reported: “Almost 9 out of 10 band directors indicated that they would do more assessment if they had the time (89.6%)” (p. 67).

Furthermore, Burrack (2002) wrote:

Assessing student progress in terms of attendance and technical skills is important, but other assessment possibilities can provide opportunities to observe students’ music learning in a broader context by focusing on higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving and creative thinking. Self and group assessments can serve as vehicles for enhancing music understanding, aesthetic sensitivity, and critical-listening skills. (pp. 27-28)

Colwell (2002) stated: “Ratings at contests and festivals and student satisfaction have been the primary assessment indicators in music; these do not reveal current program strengths and weaknesses and provide only partial answers in any assessment endeavor” (p. 1130). Music educators are challenged daily with opportunities to assess student learning while preparing ensembles for performances.

Assessment and Student Feedback

Burrack (2002) found through student feedback that students developed a more profound music understanding through the assessments than they did without such a process. Brookhart and DeVoge (1999) stated: “Because students use feedback on similar kinds of assessments in the past to predict their performance on current assessments, greater attention might be paid both in teaching and in research to helping students interpret that feedback” (p. 424).

This study will draw on literature that promotes a consistent form of assessment practices that students view as positive and constructive in the classroom and rehearsal
room for their musical growth. Yampolsky (2001) found: “When students are given the responsibility to participate in the evaluation of their own work, both individually and collectively, it then becomes possible for them to begin to think and work as musicians” (pp. 195-196). Research and study in learning psychology shows that assessment properly conducted makes a major difference in student learning and, when incorrectly used, a corresponding negative effect (Colwell, 2002). It is our goal as music educators to assess students in a manner that will encourage them to grow as musicians.

**Assessment and Effective Instruction**

Types of assessment in the music classroom and rehearsal room are continually being studied for their success and application (Chiodo, 2001). Colwell (2002) stated: “To many music educators, assessment is so much a part of instruction-especially in achieving goals in performance-that they do not believe more is needed. Other music educators believe that any assessment is inappropriate as either too quantitative or too mechanical” (p. 1130).

Chiodo (2001) examined ways to manage assessment and suggested starting with one successful assessment tool. She stated: “Choose a successful lesson plan or unit that you already teach and develop an assessment for it” (p. 19). Brophy (2000) identified several assessment tools: “Local district standards/performance indicators, local district curriculum, national standards, state standards, adopted music series” (p. 89). It is necessary that educators choose assessments that enhance their instruction and that they are comfortable implementing. Welch (1994) suggested purposes of assessment when addressing human behavior:
First, the purpose of the assessment has to be clarified. Why make an assessment? The purpose(s) may be to inform planning, to assist in the design of new curricula, to reveal new insights into singing behaviour, to confirm previous findings, to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, to group children for particular singing activities, to select children for special singing programmes, or to provide evidence for teacher appraisal. (p. 7)

The instructional and assessment strategies recommended for the basic subjects are applicable to a basic music program that is focused on understanding music listened to in and out of class. With this in mind understanding music would enable a graduate of the program to listen to music with heightened aural abilities and knowledge of what is occurring in the music, to attend concerts, to be discriminating, and to use music in his or her daily life (Colwell, 2002).

Music educators must continue to strive to develop the musical skills, knowledge, and understanding of the students every day. With that in mind, it is important that teachers continually assess students’ musical skills and knowledge as well. Assessment is the only way in which teachers can determine if students are learning and applying their knowledge in an appropriate way. Fiese and Fiese (2001) stated: “In fact, in the absence of assessment, we are unable to determine if our students are actually improving their musical skills and knowledge about music” (p. 13).

As teachers develop lesson plans and teaching strategies, careful consideration must be given to the inclusion of assessment as a routine part of instruction. It is the teachers’ responsibility to determine short-term as well as long-term goals as lesson plans and assessment methods are developed. Chiodo et al. (1998) stated: “What music teachers always look for is progress, from hundreds of individual starting points, and usually over a period of several years” (p. 37).
Through a variety of assessment strategies, music educators must continue to strive for frequent assessment opportunities from which students’ progress can be monitored and documented. With continued effort, assessment strategies will demonstrate that learning is taking place in the music classroom and that assessment is a continuous process in the development of the student musician.

Summary

The following summary statements can be drawn from the review of literature:

1. Assessment is a continuous process that provides a solid pedagogical foundation for lesson planning and instruction that can inform both the teacher and student. The types of assessment implemented in the classroom or rehearsal room is dependent on the teaching situation and goals of the teacher.

2. Teacher training in assessment must be addressed in order to better prepare in-service and pre-service teachers with appropriate skills to administer meaningful assessment. Through careful thought, teacher decisions on assessment will continually change to best support and encourage individual student learning.

3. With knowledgeable preparation, teachers can implement assessment procedures that do not interrupt the instructional process.

4. Objectives and goals must be clearly stated by the teacher for assessment strategies to promote and encourage student learning.

5. Assessment must become an integral part of developing lesson plans and teaching strategies.
6. In music education, challenges will continue to exist that balance individual student assessment with ensemble preparation.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of specific assessment strategies that band directors incorporate into their rehearsals and the effectiveness of those strategies in preparation for performance at a large group adjudicated event.

Research Question
What is the relationship of in-class musical assessment practices to ratings at a large group adjudicated event?

Synopsis of Method
Phase I of the study was conducted in 3 randomly selected districts from the 17 districts that make up the Ohio Music Education Association. One district represented the Northwest Region, one district represented the Northeast Region and one district represented the South Central Region in the state of Ohio. Contest chairs provided names of directors that had participated in large group adjudicated event in their district. A researcher-developed questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed that asked open-ended questions about assessment strategies used when preparing their ensembles for large group adjudicated event.
A list of assessment strategies was compiled based on the frequency of assessment strategies reported in Phase I. The assessment strategies that were frequently incorporated into large group preparation were used in the main portion of the study.

Testing of the survey instrument was done in Phase II of the project. The survey was opened on the computers of two university music professors due to the fact that a web survey may look different on the participants screen due to the operating system, web browser and screen (Umbach, 2004). The researcher-developed survey was tested for content validity and reliability as well as clarity of the survey questions.

The researcher-developed survey was emailed to 146 participants during Phase III; 12 were returned undeliverable. This survey examined assessment strategies and the frequency of assessment strategies that high school band directors incorporated into rehearsals to prepare for large group adjudicated events (Appendix B). A reminder was sent one week after the initial survey was started. Due to the low response rate of 37%, a final reminder was sent in order to boost the response rate, thereby promoting validity. The number of surveys completed was 59 (44%) from a sample of 134.

Participants

Participants in this study were band directors teaching in public high schools in the state of Ohio. Their home district contest chair provided names of participants from the 2007 spring large group adjudicated event. Participants were instructed at the beginning of the survey that the study was strictly voluntary and anonymous. Approximately one week after the survey was started, all subjects were electronically mailed a reminder asking them to complete the online survey and the importance of their
contribution to the study. In order to boost the response rate, participants were given a third reminder encouraging them to complete the survey.

Measurement Instrument

The participants in this study were asked to complete a researcher-developed survey. Directors were asked to check, from a list of assessment strategies, the assessment methods they have used in-class when preparing for large group adjudicated event. The lists of assessment strategies in the survey were formed from Phase I of the study.

In the study, participants were selected based on their membership in the Ohio Music Education Association. Participation in the study was based on their participation at the large group adjudicated event in Ohio, which may be similar or very different from other states that hold contests. It is the intent that data collected from the online survey will focus on assessment strategies that band directors’ are incorporating in their classrooms and rehearsal rooms rather than the contest format that is established in Ohio.

Each survey collected demographic information about the participants for the description of the sample in the results section.

Collection of Surveys

Participants were electronically sent a letter and instructions to complete the online survey. Approximately one week following the initial survey, all subjects were electronically mailed a reminder asking them to complete the online survey and the importance of their contribution to the study. Umbach (2004) stated: “As with mail
surveys, Web-based surveys require researchers to provide follow-up reminders.” In order to boost the response rate, participants were given an additional reminder encouraging them to complete the survey. Data was collected and secured by the survey website flashlightonline.wsu.edu through Kent State University.

Analysis of Data

Following the collection of data, results were entered in to the SPSS 16.0 software program for analysis. Non-parametric techniques were used since data was measured on nominal and ordinal scales (Pallant, 2007). Of particular interest was the frequency count of the types of assessment practices that band directors frequently used in their teaching practices.

A chi-square statistical procedure of assessment strategies that band directors implement during their in-class preparation and the rating at a large group adjudicated event were examined. More specifically, assessment strategies used in-class to prepare their ensembles for a large group adjudicated event and their rating at a large group adjudicated event. Based on percentages, a list of most commonly used assessment strategies through the least used assessment strategies were collected. Those assessment strategies were categorized and presented in the results section of this study.

In addition, logistic regression was conducted to assess how well predictor variables, or independent variables (band director demographics), will predict or explain the categorical dependent variable (rating) by assessing ‘goodness of fit’ and provide an indication of the relative importance of each predictor variable or the interaction among the predictor variables.
Demographic information collected included gender, age, teaching experience, and education background. The information from the participants was used to describe the sample in the results section of this study.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of specific assessment strategies that band directors incorporate into their rehearsals and the effectiveness of those strategies in preparation for performance at a large group adjudicated event.

Band Director Demographics

Information about the participants included gender, age, highest level of education, professional development or training in assessment, years teaching band, years in current position.

Of the 59 participants, 52 were male (88%) and 6 were female (10%). One participant did not report their gender. The range of participants’ ages was 24 to 62 with the mean age of 39.44; 11 did not report their age.

A majority of the participants earned a master’s degree ($n=34$, 58.6%) while 39.7% ($n=23$) earned a bachelor’s degree. One participant reported earning a doctoral degree. It should be noted that, in the state of Ohio, teachers are required to pursue post-baccalaureate education, which may result in a master’s or doctoral degree. Among the participants, 32.2% ($n=19$) reported having a graduate level education that included assessment training and 32.2% ($n=19$) had professional development or workshop training in assessment. A total of 57 (96.6%) had some form of training in assessment.

The participants’ years of teaching band ranged from three years to 39 years with a mean of 16.17 years (SD=10.665). The number of years at respondents’ current
positions ranged from two years to 28 years with a mean of 8.56 years, (SD= 6.930). A total of 14 participants did not respond to this question.

School Demographics

Information about the school included the geographical setting, the number of students in the high school, number of band directors at the high school, number of concert bands in the high school, number of students in the top band, and the number of times the top band meets weekly.

In response to high school setting, 50.8% \( (n=30) \) described their high school setting as suburban while 39% \( (n=23) \) reported theirs as rural. Among the participants reporting the number of students in their high school \( (n=58, 98.3\%) \), the mean was 1062. Of the 59 participants, 47.5% \( (n=28) \) of band directors at the high school reported having one band director at the high school while 35.6% \( (n=21) \) reported having two. The data revealed that 44.1% \( (n=26) \) of band directors had one concert band in their high school while 22% \( (n=13) \) had two and 22% \( (n=13) \) had three concert bands in their high school. The number of students in the top band ranged from 32 to 110 students with a mean of 58, and the number of times the top band meets weekly ranged from 1 to 6 with a mean of 4.93.

Results

The research question addressed through this study was: what is the relationship of in-class musical assessment practices to ratings at a large group adjudicated event? To answer this research question, additional survey items regarding specific types of
assessment were developed. The remainder of this chapter will deal with participants’ responses to individual survey items, and will contain further analyses of the data.

Table 1 displays the number and percentage of assessment types used for students’ performance in class. Participants were asked to indicate on the survey form the types of assessments they use in their classrooms; they were allowed to check multiple assessment types if appropriate.

Table 1. Number and percentage of assessment type used in class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage of directors who use the assessment type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students play individually</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded rehearsals</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guests/short clinic</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written tests</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape playing</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students create portfolio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students videotape self</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most commonly used assessments were “class participation” \( (n=57, 96.6\%) \) and “students playing individually” \( (n=55, 93.2\%) \). A high percentage of participants reported using these performance-based assessments strategies in class compared to “recorded rehearsals” and “guests/short clinic”.
Participants were asked how often they used specific assessment strategies in class. Table 2 displays the assessment type used in class and the most frequently occurring response.

Table 2. *Assessment type used in class and most frequently occurring response*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recorded rehearsals</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students play individually</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guests/short clinic</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape playing</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written tests</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students videotape self</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students create portfolio</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response options corresponded to *Never* for 1, *Once a week* for 2, *More than once a week* for 3, *Once a quarter* for 4, and *More than once a quarter* for 5. Often categorical variables are disguised as quantitative variables yet the variable is categorical. They are not to be measured as a number yet a natural ordering exists for these categories (Stats/variables, 2008).

The mode, “more than once a quarter”, was the response option represented more than any other in the group. The response options, a categorical scale, provided attitudinal
measures from the participants to identify the estimated occurrence of specific
assessment types.

The response options “once a week” and “more than once a week” reflect a
repeated occurrence in a short period of time whereas once a quarter and more than once
a quarter reflect less regular occurrences over a number of weeks. It is not possible to
measure participants’ responses exactly by the numeric response that they provided.
These responses should be interpreted carefully and thus can be related to others as being
equal to, greater than, or less than (J. H. McMillan, Schumacher, S., 1989). The most
commonly reported response to use of assessment type once a quarter was “students play
individually”, “guests/short clinic”, “audiotape playing”, and “written tests.”

Overall, participants reported receiving 24 I ratings, 27 II ratings and zero III, IV,
and V ratings at a large group adjudicated event. In addition, eight participants did not
provide a rating. Because of these results, III, IV and V ratings were excluded from the
remainder of the analysis. To explore the relationship of the frequency of band directors’
assessment practices to ratings at a large group adjudicated event, the chi-square
goodness of fit test was conducted. This test explores the relationship between two
categorical variables. It compares the observed frequencies in each of the categories with
the values that would be expected if there were no association between the two variables
being measured. Table 3 displays the chi-square value of the assessment types that
respondents identified by frequency of use for students’ performance in class and rating
at a large group adjudicated event. The responses were identified as never, once a week,
more than once a week, once a quarter, and more than once a quarter.
Table 3. Chi-square value of assessment type identified by frequency of use and rating at a large group adjudicated event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment type</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students play individually</td>
<td>2.889</td>
<td>.579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written tests</td>
<td>1.803</td>
<td>.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape playing</td>
<td>3.818</td>
<td>.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded rehearsals</td>
<td>3.263</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guests/short clinic</td>
<td>5.042</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>5.203</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students videotape self</td>
<td>2.040</td>
<td>.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students create portfolio</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>.632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each type of assessment, the significance value was greater than the alpha level (p=.05) concluding that the relationship between frequency of assessment type and rating was not statistically significant. There is not a significant association between frequency of assessment type and rating at a large group adjudicated event at this level of observation.

Analysis of Individual Assessment Types

The following cross-tabulation data reports the percentage of participants’ responses to frequency of an assessment type to the rating at a large group adjudicated event. The cross-tabulated data identifies the most frequently used assessment type and the percentage of band directors that received a I rating or II rating at a large group adjudicated event. The cross-tabulation tables are unsupported by the inferential statistics.
Earlier data revealed that 96.6% of participants reported using “class participation” as a form of assessment in class. Appendix C shows cross tabulation results of “class participation” and rating at a large group adjudicated event.

Appendix C reports that 68.6% (n=35) of participants assessed students through “class participation” more than once a week. The table demonstrates that ensembles in which “class participation” as an assessment is employed more than once a week received more II ratings at a large group adjudicated event. Those who used “class participation” as an assessment type once a quarter or once a week received more II ratings at the event than those who assessed students more than once a quarter or never.

Appendix D reports cross tabulation results of “students playing individually” and rating at a large group adjudicated event. As reported earlier by 93.2% of the participants, “students play individually” was a frequent form of assessment in class. The data reveal that (47%) assess students once a week or more than once a week with the rating received at a large group adjudicated event being equally distributed between a I rating and a II rating. In addition, (35.3%) responded that they assessed “students playing individually” once a quarter with a II rating being reported more frequently.

Appendix E reports cross-tabulation of “recorded rehearsals” and rating at a large group adjudicated event. Table 1 above showed that 71.2% of participants reported “recorded rehearsals” as an assessment type used in class. Appendix E reveals that 41.2% of the participants reported using “recorded rehearsals” as an assessment type more than once a quarter. However, a total of 31.4% of participants reported using “recorded rehearsal” once a week (15.7%) and more than once a week (15.7%). Although the
participants reported identical percentages of I ratings and II ratings, the larger percentage received a II rating at a large group adjudicated event.

Figure 1 shows the frequency of “recorded rehearsals” as an assessment type and the rating of I and the rating of II that were reported for each.

Figure 1. Frequency of recorded rehearsals as an assessment type and rating at a large group adjudicated event.

As shown in Figure 1, the 41.2% of participants that reported using “recorded rehearsals” more than once a quarter as an assessment type received 12 I ratings and 9 II
ratings at a large group adjudicated event. Of the 31.4% of participants reporting that they used “recorded rehearsals” once a week and more than once a week, an equal number of participants received a I ($n=3$) and II ($n=5$) rating for each. The data in the sample reflect that “recorded rehearsals” more than once a quarter may have contributed to improving the rating at a large group adjudicated event.

Appendix F reports cross-tabulation results of “guests/short clinic” and rating at a large group adjudicated event. When identifying “guests/short clinic” as a form of assessment, 56.9% ($n=29$) reported incorporating “guests/short clinic” once a quarter. In contrast, 21.6% ($n=11$) reported never using “guests/short clinic” as a form of assessment. In both instances, ratings at large group adjudicated event were closely distributed between a I rating and II rating. In contrast, 9.8% of participants reported using guests/short clinic as an assessment type more than once a quarter with 7.8% of them receiving a II rating.

Appendix G reports cross-tabulation results of “written tests” and rating at a large group adjudicated event. The data revealed that 47.1% ($n=24$) reported incorporating “written tests” as a form of assessment once a quarter in their preparation for a large group adjudicated event. In contrast, 37.3% ($n=19$) reported that they never use “written tests” in their rehearsal preparations. Although the frequency of “written tests” as an assessment type differs, ratings were similarly distributed in both instances.

Finally, participants were asked for additional assessment methods/strategies that they may have used in class that were not addressed in the survey. A few of the more frequent responses included: sectionals during and after school; chair auditions or chair challenges; challenges available after every concert, and; small group (2-4 players)
assessment. Others reported trouble-shooting projects, listening assignments, composition assignments (in and out of class), music theory workbooks, and SmartMusic technology.

Further Analysis

Additional analysis was conducted to determine relationships between band director demographics and rating at a large group adjudicated event. Logistic regression was conducted to assess how well predictor variables, or independent variables (band director demographics), would predict or explain the categorical dependent variable (rating). The results would provide an indication of the adequacy of the model (set of predictor variables) by assessing ‘goodness of fit’ and provide an indication of the relative importance of each predictor variable or the interaction among the predictor variables.

Direct logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors of band director demographics and their relationship to rating at a large group adjudicated event. The model contained two independent variables (age grouped <=30, 31-47, 48+ and number of students in the top band grouped <=50, 51-65, 66+). The three groupings for age of band director and number of students in the top band represented an equal distribution for each variable. The full model containing all predictors was not statistically significant, $x^2 (2, N =51) = 6.368, p=.05$, indicating that the model was not able to distinguish between respondents who received a I (superior) rating at a large group adjudicated event or II (excellent) rating at a large group adjudicated event. The model as a whole explained between 11.7% (Cox and Snell R square) and 15.7% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance of rating at a large group adjudicated event and
correctly classified 66.7% of cases. As shown in Table 4, only one of the independent variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (age 31-47 years old). The strongest predictor of the relationship of rating at a large group adjudicated event was age (31-47 years old).

The B values indicate the direction of the relationship. For the independent variable, age (31-47 years old), the B value -1.61 indicated that as age increased the chances of receiving an I rating at a large group adjudicated event decreased. The degrees of freedom identified how much data was used to calculate a statistic, usually one less than the number of variables.

The third column indicated values of contribution or importance of each independent variable. The values that are statistically significant are less than .05. The independent variable age (31-47 years old) was statistically significant $p = .041$ indicating a factor influencing whether an ensemble receives an I rating at a large group adjudicated event. Age (<=30, 48+) and number of students in the top band (<=50, 51-65, and 66+) did not contribute significantly to the dependent variable.
Table 4. *Logistic regression predicting rating at a large group adjudicated event*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (&lt;=30 years old)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (31-47 years old)</td>
<td>-1.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (48 + years old)</td>
<td>-.851</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in the top band (&lt;=50)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in the top band (51-65)</td>
<td>.805</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students in the top band (66+)</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.697</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Assessment, an ongoing process used to monitor student learning, is an important aspect of music education. Band directors incorporate various assessment strategies/methods to gather information about individual and group learning in performing ensembles. The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of specific assessment strategies that a sample of band directors incorporate into their rehearsals and the effectiveness of those strategies in preparation for their performance at a large group adjudicated event.

Participants were asked what assessment methods/strategies were most commonly used during class in their preparation for a large group adjudicated event. “Class participation” (96.6%) and “students play individually” (93.2%) were the most frequently used assessment methods/strategies. However, a majority of the band directors’ reported using “recorded rehearsals” (71.2%), “guests/short clinic” (66.1%), and “written tests” (54.2%). These findings reflect band director feedback in Phase I of this study and are supported in the writing of Blocher (1997), and research by Dirth (2000), Simanton (2000), and Kancianic (2006). Appendix H includes a compiled list of assessment methods/strategies that band directors identified as assessments used in their rehearsals as well as assessment methods/strategies identified by researchers that were found to be beneficial to music educators.
Findings were similar to those from a study by Wright (2008) which examined assessment and grading practices of concert band directors. She found that “class participation” was identified by 35.88% of the directors as the most common assessment practice used to determine grades. “Class participation” was reported as the most common form of assessment in the present study to prepare for a large group adjudicated event. Similar findings were reported in studies by Simanton (2000) and Hill (1999).

In the study by Wright (2008), “attendance” (30.06%) was reported as the second most common form of assessment used to determine grades. As reflected in the literature, “attendance” as a form of assessment is commonly used in an ensemble setting due to the size of the ensemble and/or time constraints (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; McCoy, 2001; McCreary, 2001; Simanton, 2000).

Similar findings identifying “class participation” and “attendance” as common forms of assessment in the choral ensemble were reported by Kotora (2005), McClung (1996) and Tracy (2002).

Assessment Decisions

Types of assessments used by band directors may be determined by the purpose of the assessment such as grades or performances at an adjudicated event or festival. In the review of literature, performance-based assessments are being used the majority of the rehearsal time to assess students in a performing ensemble. (Hanzlik, 2001; McCreary, 2001; Simanton, 2000). “Students play individually” was reported by a large percentage of band directors as the most frequently used assessment. This may be due to the fact that band directors participating in the study had prepared ensembles for an adjudicated event.
In this study, 47.5% \((n=28)\) reported that they had one director at the high school. Band directors in this teaching situation may favor performance-based assessments rather than incorporating a variety of assessment strategies when preparing their ensemble. Directors rehearsing a large ensemble may find it difficult to incorporate non-performance based assessments such as written critiques of performances or music theory exercises within the rehearsal. Similar concerns are found in the general music literature in regard to one teacher assessing a large number of students during a music class (Chiodo, 2001, Niebur, 1994). With careful planning, a variety of assessment strategies can be employed that include journals, critiques, error detection, and portfolios in addition to performance-based assessments (Dirth, 2000). With the frequency of only one band director in preparing a performing ensemble, future studies should examine assessment decisions that incorporate a variety of non-performance assessment in combination with performance-based assessments.

Occurrence of Specific Assessment Types

Following the identification of assessment strategies incorporated in class, participants were asked how often they used specific assessment strategies in class. The response options, a categorical scale, provided attitudinal measures from the participants to identify the estimated occurrence of specific assessment types. The response options corresponded to *Never* for 1, *Once a week* for 2, *More than once a week* for 3, *Once a quarter* for 4, and *More than once a quarter* for 5.

Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to determine the degree of internal consistency reliability of items within the survey instrument. The Cronbach’s alpha of .377 indicated
a very low measure of the reliability of the measurement instrument. The low alpha level questions the reliability of the survey scale suggesting measurement error in the data. This result provides cause for concern in interpretation of the data, and is a limitation of this study.

The most commonly reported response in regard to occurrence of assessment type was “recorded rehearsals” more than once a quarter. This response may be due to the fact that “recorded rehearsals” can be beneficial if scheduled periodically throughout the quarter in conjunction with daily rehearsals. These recording opportunities may be regarded as performances while the majority of rehearsals leading to “recorded rehearsals” an opportunity for error detection and teaching technical and stylistic aspects of the music. Responses from band directors’ in Phase 1 of this study suggest that there are a variety of ways to incorporate “recorded rehearsals” into preparations of an ensemble. One director wrote: “On Fridays we record and listen to our selections.” Another director, using “recorded rehearsals” as a form of developing lesson plans and rehearsal strategies stated: “I record all rehearsals and then evaluate them in order to set rehearsal strategies for the next day.” From this study, there appears to be a variety of ways to use this assessment in preparing a performing ensemble.

Assessment strategies that band directors identified as using once a quarter were “students play individually”, “guests/short clinic”, “audiotape playing”, and “written tests”. Results suggest that performance-based assessments are used more frequently than non-performance based assessment. Simanton (2000) reported that most band directors assess performance (82.8%) and paper and pencil assessment (41.7%).
The Chi-square statistic tested the null hypothesis that the frequency distribution of specific assessment strategies observed in the sample was consistent with a hypothetical distribution that ratings at a large group adjudicated event had an equal chance to occur. Although the Ohio Music Education Association uses the Five Rating Plan, it is unlikely that the adjudicators at a large group adjudicated event would award all five ratings equally. Due to the subjective nature of adjudication, the four-judge panel (three judges on the performance stage and one judge for sight-reading) may vary in their distribution of the five ratings to achieve the overall rating. The top three ratings (I=superior, II=excellent, III=good) would be the most commonly strived for ratings at a large group adjudicated event.

The Chi-square test for goodness of fit indicated that the significance value of each assessment type was larger than the alpha level ($p=.05$) suggesting that the relationship between frequency of assessment type and rating was not statistically significant.

Occurrence of Assessment Type and Rating

In earlier data it was reported that the most frequently used assessment types were “class participation”, “students play individually”, “recorded rehearsals”, “guests/short clinic”, and “written tests”. The cross-tabulation results of the frequency of each assessment and rating at a large group adjudicated event was explored.

Cross-tabulation results of “class participation” and rating at a large group adjudicated event revealed that 68.6% ($n=35$) assessed students through “class participation” more than once a week. Of those participants, 35.3% received a II rating while 33.3% received a I rating at a large group adjudicated event. In addition, 23.5% of
participants reported assessing students through “class participation” once a week. Among those participants, 15.7% reported receiving a II rating and 7.8% received a I rating at a large group adjudicated event. It is not surprising that “class participation” be reported as a frequent assessment type in a performing ensemble, with the majority of participants assessing students once a week or more than once a week 92.1% (n=47). In an ensemble, frequent performance-based assessment seems appropriate to assess each student’s playing of selected sections of the music. The method that directors’ hear students’ play and the amount of verbal comments given may affect the benefit and overall improvement that this assessment would offer. Overall, these participants’ ratings resulted in 41.1% receiving a I rating and 51% receiving a II rating.

The cross-tabulation results of “students’ play individually” and rating at a large group adjudicated event accounted for 35.3% of participants’ responses as a form of assessment once a quarter. Also, participants reported 23.5% assess students once a week while 23.5% assess students more than once a week. The data show that these participants earned an equal number of I ratings and II ratings at a large group adjudicated event. The assessment type “students’ play individually” was also frequently reported in Phase I of this study. Band directors’ responses included: students play individually a short passage, individual playing tests on tape, individual pass-offs, and individual performances in class of selected spots in the music. From the feedback in Phase I of this study and through the review of literature, there appears to be various strategies to hear students play individually to prepare an ensemble for a contest event. Additional study of this type of assessment would benefit band directors’ who wish to incorporate individual performance more often through a variety of ways.
As reported earlier, 71.2% of band directors reported using “recorded rehearsals” as an assessment type in preparation for a large group adjudicated event. When asked how often they incorporated “recorded rehearsals,” 41.2% reported more than once a quarter balanced fairly equal between a I rating (23.5%) and a II rating (17.6%). With the improvement and availability of recording technology, band directors have opportunities to make use of recordings for director and student evaluations in preparation for performances. Data collected in Phase I of this study revealed that those directors also included student critiques of recorded rehearsals to improve themselves and the ensemble. One director stated: “Students listen to recordings of the full ensemble and give two positive and two constructive comments on themselves and the whole ensemble.” Despite the majority of band directors incorporating “recorded rehearsals” with some regularity, it was noted by one director “because of rehearsal time, I don’t use this as often.”

The majority of band directors (56.9%) reported having “guests/short clinic” once a quarter compared to 21.6% reporting that they never had “guests/short clinic.” However, data revealed that ratings were distributed fairly equal between a I rating and II rating in both instances. Kancianic (2006) found that teachers in larger schools reported the use of guest conductors to assess student learning in their class more frequently. These schools may have budgets that allow guests conductors more frequently. In addition, the larger schools may be in areas where guest conductors are more readily available to critique and rehearse performing ensembles for their performance at an adjudicated event.
The cross-tabulation of “written tests” and rating at a large group adjudicated event revealed that 47% used this form of assessment once a quarter. In contrast, 37.3% of band directors reported never using “written tests.” Although the use of “written tests” as a form of assessment varies, the ratings at a large group adjudicated event were quite similar. Of the 47% of band directors’ that used “written tests” once a quarter, 21.6% received a I rating and 25.5% received a II rating at a large group adjudicated event. The 37.3% of band directors that never used “written tests,” 15.7% received a I rating and 21.6% received a II rating at a large group adjudicated event. Due to the performance nature of the ensembles, directors may choose to omit written test or quizzes due to time constraints and the large number of students in the ensembles (Kotora, 2005; McCoy, 2001). Rather than tests or quizzes other types of written work may be used in class for assessment. As one band director added: “We also incorporate a music theory workbook.” This form of assessment could supplement the ensembles performance preparation.

Further Analysis

Additional analysis was conducted to determine relationships between band director demographics and rating at a large group adjudicated event. The age of band directors (31-47 years old) contributed significantly to the overall band rating. Although the age of the band director may suggest that experience as a band director and experience preparing an ensemble for a large group adjudicated event increase the chances of receiving the top rating, the data suggested different.

There are many variables that must be considered in the process of preparing an ensemble for participation in a large group adjudicated event. Appropriate literature must
be chosen that meet the requirements of the Ohio Music Education Association Large Group Adjudicated Event. Proper instrumentation, technical demands and knowledge of appropriate musical style of each piece must be studied. The amount of time in the daily schedule to properly prepare the ensemble for such an event should be taken into account. With those considerations, age of the band director would seem to reflect positively in overall rating when preparing an ensemble for a large group adjudicated event. Data from this study did not support those conclusions. The negative B value indicated that as age increases the chance of receiving a I rating at a large group adjudicated event decreases.

Results may suggest that band directors, age 31-47 years old, may focus more attention on individual student improvement and progress than on performance expectations and attaining a particular rating at an adjudicated event. In addition, band directors in this age group may favor a variety of performance opportunities in the community or festivals rather than an adjudicated event. With the visibility of the music program, other performance opportunities may be scheduled to promote the music program within the school community.

Caution must be taken in generalizing the data to the population due to the range in age of the participants and the small sample size. Early in a band director’s career, teachers are often concerned about success at an adjudicated event as an index of generalized success, and about receiving positive evaluations by supervisors. Young band directors may be aggressive in pursuit of a I rating at an adjudicated event, if only to provide a measure of self-validation. Later in a band director’s career, better and more thoughtful means of assessing the band director may have occurred and receiving a high rating at an adjudicated event may be less important.
Additional research questions should explore the band directors’ experiences as a high school music student and whether they participated in an ensemble that performed at a large group adjudicated event while in high school. It may be hypothesized that these experiences contribute to directors’ motivations in choosing for their ensembles to perform at adjudicated events. In addition, pre-service training and student teaching experiences may or may not allow future band directors’ the opportunities to experience a large group adjudicated event before directing a band of their own. Prior knowledge of a large group adjudicated event and experience participating in such an event would positively reflect on a band directors’ skills when directing a band of their own and preparing for a large group adjudicated event.

Implications for Music Teaching

Band directors need to be aware that there are many ways to assess students in an ensemble setting with careful and thoughtful planning. Although it may be difficult to incorporate certain assessment strategies such as written tests, journals or portfolios, it is important to search for new ideas to assess students in a performing ensemble.

With the importance of meeting the National Standards in the Arts, it is our obligation as music educators, to continue to improve teaching strategies that document and identify individual student learning through assessment. MENC (2008a) reported:

The Standards were never intended to reflect the status quo but rather to provide a vision for the future. They seek to set forth the long-term goals of society for what music education ought to be. They are based on the best practices within our profession and are grounded in the collective judgment of our professional colleagues.
Recent studies on assessment (Dirth, 2000; Hanzlik, 2001; McCreary, 2001; Sears, 2002; Simanton, 2000) and books (Blocher, 1997; Brophy, 2000) as well as the *Spotlight on Assessment in Music Education* publication through MENC should be examined further.

As the National Standards for Arts Education provide the goals and expectations of music curricula, portfolio assessment should be further explored as a teaching tool for individual student progress and learning among students in an ensemble. Portfolio assessment incorporates many types of learning that may be more challenging in an ensemble type setting yet could be beneficial among students in a performing ensemble. Students would be able to collaborate to form small ensembles, write music to perform, seek feedback from teachers and other students, discuss and evaluate musical performances while working at their own pace. As Goolsby (1995) wrote: “Portfolio assessment would allow students to progress at individual rates, provide teachers with evidence of student progress, and provide an outlet for motivated students who wish to achieve beyond the standards” (p.43). Introducing portfolio assessment as a teaching tool could benefit students at all ability levels and offer band directors another option for student assessment.

Music educators should further examine interviews and journals as forms of assessment in the music classroom and rehearsal room. Listening to and talking about music is a daily activity of students yet many students have a difficult time verbalizing what they like or dislike about the music when asked. The music classroom is an ideal setting to further develop students’ ability to discuss and describe the music they like to listen to as well as the music that they are studying in class. Although issues of large numbers of students in performing ensembles can be difficult to successfully monitor,
teaching students how to talk about the music with respect to music terminology, composers, and theoretical aspects of the music will benefit the student beyond the music classroom (Robinson, 1995). Allsup and Baxter (2004) stated: “Equipping students with the skills and language to discuss, describe, and defend music they know and like, as well as music that is new and different, is an essential aspect of music teaching” (p.29). As music educators’ continue to strive to meet the National Standards in the Arts, expanding the teaching repertoire to create dialogue with students will encourage students to talk about music and their musical experiences. The benefits of thoughtful discussion may lead to more in depth discussions of the relationship of music to the arts and other disciplines, evaluating music, and music in relation to history and culture.

Communication between music educators and their students can provide learning opportunities that before may not have been considered.

Limitations

This study was limited to a relatively small number of high school band directors that were members of the Ohio Music Education Association and had attended a large group adjudicated event. With the surveys that were completed by voluntary participants, it is very difficult to assume that the data collected represents the target sample. Geographically, phase I of the survey represented three of the seventeen regions that comprise the Ohio Music Education Association districts. The Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) is the principal organization in Ohio promoting music education in elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. One of the largest state music education associations in the United States, OMEA is a federated state
affiliate of MENC, The National Association for Music Education (Ohio Music Education Association, 2008). Again, it is difficult to draw conclusions based on this representation of a small number of band directors completing the questionnaire in Phase 1 and participants completing the researcher-developed online survey in Phase III of this study.

As a result of this study, additional research is needed to include a larger representation of members to better represent the membership of the Ohio Music Education Association. Creswell (2005) wrote: “Survey researchers seek high response rates from participants in a study so that they can have confidence in generalizing the results to the population under study” (p. 367). With the number of surveys that were electronically sent and the response rate of 44%, it is difficult to generalize results to the much larger population that comprises the Ohio Music Education Association membership, or to assume that these results would hold true in other geographic areas. Although the data revealed assessment strategies that are currently being used in preparation for large group adjudicated event, much more research is needed to further explore assessment opportunities in the music classroom and rehearsal rooms that music educators across the state are incorporating.

The data reporting the number of students in the band should be interpreted carefully. First, membership in the band may be based on audition, thereby creating a select ensemble rather than an ensemble that accepts all students regardless of ability. Second, the band may be comprised of students from different grade levels. High schools may represent grades 10 through 12 while others represent grades 9 through 12. The
grade levels of the performing ensemble may vary greatly from participants in this survey.

Although data were collected in the spring, it is not certain that the amount of rehearsal time each ensemble had prior to the large group adjudicated event was similar. Depending on each school’s calendar, the ensemble may have been rehearsing since the start of the school, shortly after the marching band season or at various times prior to the spring event. Individual school calendars and daily class schedules are unique to each school and should be considered in the analysis.

The data should be interpreted carefully due to the fact that membership, grade levels, and rehearsal schedules could impact the ability of the performing ensemble and rating at an adjudicated event. In order to account for variability of these factors, districts in which the schools reside were chosen at random from throughout the state of Ohio.

Band directors may not have completed the survey due to the confusion over the definition of assessment. As reported in the review of literature, the interpretation of these terms by each participant and the confusion with the term “evaluation” would be difficult to identify and report in this study (Airasian, 1997; Colwell, 2002; Elliott, 1995; Herbert, 1997).

In addition, surveys may not have been completed due to the wording of the survey title. Participation at a large group adjudicated event is voluntary and those band directors’ that are new teachers or participated in the large group adjudicated event may not have felt comfortable completing the survey as well as those that participated and simply chose not to complete the survey. As one director stated: “We do not participate
for ratings in district large group. If I go, and I chose not to this year, it’s always for
comments only, regardless of the level of the students.”

The rating assigned to a group’s performance at a large group adjudicated event
may be meaningless. Although this rating was used as a measurement for success of
assessment methods/strategies in this study, the primary reason that rating was
incorporated in the research was to target a sample of band directors’ that are preparing
ensembles for a performance.

Participants in this study reported receiving a I or II at a large group adjudicated
event. The five rating plan of adjudication that the Ohio Music Education Association
follows suggests a non-normal distribution of ratings when ensembles are striving to
receive the top rating. The Ohio Music Education Association (2001) states in their
definition of the V rating: “This rating should be used sparingly and only when it is
possible to cite major faults” (p.20). The data of this study represent a very small group
of participants that received one of the top two ratings, and fail to represent directors who
may have received the other possible ratings or that participated in the large group
adjudicated event for comments only.

Due to the subjective nature of ratings received at adjudicated events and the
non-normal distribution of ratings, this limitation must be kept in mind and future
research must take this into consideration.

The response options, a categorical scale, provided attitudinal measures from the
participants to identify the estimated occurrence of specific assessment types. The
response options corresponded to *Never* for 1, *Once a week* for 2, *More than once a week*
for 3, *Once a quarter* for 4, and *More than once a quarter* for 5.
Following the collection of data and analysis, it is possible that the response options reported from participants may have been flawed due to the language used. The occurrence of assessment types more than once a week for 3 and more than once a quarter for 5 were not necessarily clear in their wording. The intended order of response option and number may have caused confusion to the participant resulting in flawed data. Krosnick (1999) stated: “Respondents report being more satisfied when more rating-scale points are verbally labeled and validity is maximized when the verbal labels have meanings that divide the continuum into approximately equal-sized perceived units” (p. 544).

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on this study, additional questions come to mind that continue to explore assessment and its application in music education and in the preparation of performing ensembles at a large group adjudicated event.

Further study on assessment could be explored at the middle school band and beginning band levels (Sears, 2002). Assessment opportunities through playing tests, written tests, small group playing and technology should be examined to encourage individual student improvement and group progress that will be developed and continued into high school.

From the feedback in Phase I of this study and through the review of literature, there appears to be various strategies associated with hearing students play individually as a means to prepare an ensemble for a contest event. Additional study of this type of assessment would benefit band directors’ who wish to incorporate individual student
performance in rehearsals more often to prepare for concerts, festivals or contest performances.

While many assessment methods/strategies are performance-based, how can non-performance based assessment be more frequently used to prepare students in the theoretical aspects of the music? Can the use of technology be utilized to better balance performance-based assessment with non-performance based assessment? One participant stated that they were… “in the beginning stages of assessment with SmartMusic.” These are questions that could be explored further with the software programs that are available.

The data revealed that 56.9% of band directors reported having “guests/short clinic” at least once a quarter compared to 21.6% reporting that they never had “guests/short clinic.” Further exploration of this data may show that some directors may not feel comfortable having other directors listen and critique their ensemble, schools may or may not have budgets that allow guest conductors or the availability of other band directors or college professors may be limited in their area.

Further research is needed to explore types of written assessments that can supplement the performance-based assessments that are frequently used. In the rush to prepare for concert performances, band directors may feel they have no time to devote to music listening, theory, or history (McCoy, 1991). With public performances throughout the school year and contest and festival performances, performance-based assessment will continue to be an important aspect of music programs.

Pre-service training and graduate training/workshops could be further examined for possible improvements in assessment of performing ensembles. Although this study revealed that 96.6% of band directors had some form of assessment training, further
research could explore the training that band directors had and the curriculum that prepared them for the preparation of performing ensembles. Simanton (2000) reported that there were trends between director’s with bachelor degrees and those with master’s degrees and their assessment and grading practices. He stated: “This finding suggests that changed emphasis in higher education may initiate changes at the high school level” (p.68).

Further research in assessment of a larger population of music educators, statewide or nationally, to study assessment strategies of music educators are needed. With the National Standards in place, all music educators must continue to explore opportunities to incorporate assessment into their daily lesson plans and music curriculum.

Although not a common form of assessment identified in this study, portfolios as a form of assessment should be explored further for benefits in music education. Piloted by Howard Gardner, the Arts PROPEL project may be beneficial for band directors of performing ensembles that wish to include perception and reflection into a curriculum that is primarily based on production. The study by Dirth (2000) can provide a resource for implementation of portfolio assessment in the performing ensemble as well as other music classes.

Finally, assessment in all areas of music education should continue to be examined and studied for the continuous development of student musicians in class settings as well as ensembles. MENC (2008b) stated: “Developing and implementing standards-based curricula and finding effective ways to assess student learning in music may be the supreme challenges facing music education at the end of the twentieth
century.” Whereas this study examined the relationship of high school band directors’ assessment practices to ratings at a large group adjudicated event, assessment should continue to be studied and applied to all classes and levels in the music education curriculum.

Conclusions

1. The relationship between frequency of assessment type and rating was not statistically significant.
2. “Class participation” and “students play individually” were the most commonly used assessment used in preparation for a large group adjudicated event.
3. Participants reported incorporating “recorded rehearsals” most frequently in class. The most common response to using “recorded rehearsals” was more than once a quarter.
4. The age of band directors (31-47 years old) contributed significantly to the overall band rating. Although the age of the band director may suggest that experience as a band director and experience preparing an ensemble for a large group adjudicated event increase the chances of receiving the top rating, the data suggested otherwise.
5. Performance-based assessments are most commonly used in preparing an ensemble for a contest event. Although non-performance based
assessment are incorporated, time constraints hinder their use in preparing for performances.
Appendix A – Phase I Survey Instrument

Dear High School Band Director,

I am the band director at Southeast High School and presently working on my doctoral dissertation at Kent State University. My topic is assessment in secondary instrumental music and I would like to get some feedback from you. Please provide as much information and detail as possible in describing your present in-class assessment strategies at the high school level.

In each box, please describe one assessment strategy that you incorporate in your in-class rehearsals in preparation for large group concert band adjudicated event. Thank you for your help!

Type of assessment: __________________________________________
Explain.

Type of assessment: __________________________________________
Explain.
Type of assessment: __________________________________________
Explain.

Please provide additional assessment strategies not directly related to large group adjudicated event, and any other information concerning assessment that you would like to share. Again, thank you very much for your time. Joni Stoll
Appendix B-Online Survey Instrument

Welcome! This survey is designed to provide information about the frequency of specific assessment strategies that band directors incorporate in their rehearsals and the effectiveness of those strategies in preparation for performance at a large group adjudicated event. Please complete only one survey per school. You will not be asked to provide your name on this survey and your answers will be kept completely anonymous. There are few risks associated with this researcher, and it has been kept as short as possible to avoid fatiguing you or taking too much of your valuable time. By completing this survey, you acknowledge that you are aware that this survey is anonymous, that you are aware of the minimal risk involved, and you authorize the researcher to use your answers as part of the data collected, and possibly in a scholarly publication. Please complete this survey on or before March 20, 2008. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

1. Gender
   Male
   Female

2. What is your age?

3. How many years have you been teaching band?

4. How many years have you been at your current position?

5. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
   Bachelors
   Masters
   Doctoral

6. Have you had any professional development or training in assessment?
Undergraduate
Graduate
Professional development
Workshops

7. How many students are in your high school?

8. How many concert bands are in your high school?

9. How many students are in your top band?

10. How many band directors are at the high school?

11. How would you describe the geographical setting of your high school?
    Urban
    Suburban
    Rural

12. Do students get academic credit for participating in concert band?
    Yes
    No

13. Do students receive a grade for band?
    Yes
    No

14. Does your top band rehearse during regular school hours?
    Yes
    No

15. How many times does your top band meet during the week?

16. How many minutes does your top band meet each week?

17. Which type(s) of assessment do you use for students' performance in class?
    (check all that apply)
    Students play individually
    Written tests
    Audiotape playing
    Recorded rehearsals
    Guests/short clinic
    Class participation
Students videotape self  
Students create portfolio

18. Which type(s) of assessment do you use for students' performance outside of class? (check all that apply)
   - Audiotape playing
   - Students videotape self
   - Students create portfolio
   - Practice log/journal
   - Prepare a part
   - Concert participation
   - Self assessment
   - Student interviews

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<th></th>
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<th>Once a quarter</th>
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<td>20. Written tests</td>
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<td>21. Audiotape playing</td>
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<td>25. Students videotape self</td>
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<td>26. Students create portfolio</td>
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How often do you use the following assessment methods/strategies outside of class?
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<tr>
<td>28. Students videotape self</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Students create portfolio</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Practice log/journal</td>
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<td>31. Prepare a part</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Concert participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Self assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<td>34. Student interviews</td>
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<td>35. How often are individual students' assessed in rehearsal/class?</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. How often are individual students' assessed outside of rehearsal/class?</td>
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37. What other student assessment methods/strategies do you use in your class?

38. What rating did the top band receive at the 2007 district large group adjudicated event?
   - I
   - II
   - III
   - IV
   - V
Appendix C-Frequency of class participation as an assessment cross-tabulated with rating

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<tr>
<th>Frequency of class participation as an assessment</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
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<td>More than once a quarter</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
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Appendix D-Frequency of students play individually as an assessment cross-tabulated with rating

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>Once a week</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
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<td>9.8%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Once a quarter</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
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<td>More than once a quarter</td>
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<td>15.7%</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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Appendix E-Frequency of recorded rehearsals as an assessment cross-tabulated with rating

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>15.7%</td>
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Appendix F-Frequency of guests/short clinic as an assessment cross-tabulated with rating

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Appendix G-Frequency of written test as an assessment cross-tabulated with rating

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<td>More than once a week</td>
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<td>Once a quarter</td>
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### Appendix H-Phase I and Researcher Assessments

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References


Ohio Department of Education. (2007). Take the test event. from www.ode.org


