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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FREQUENCY, METHODS,
OBJECTIVES, AND APPLICATIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN
MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOMS

presented by

Kristy Elaine Talley

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OBJECTIVES, AND APPLICATIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN
MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOMS

By

Kristy Elaine Talley

A THESIS

Submitted to
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Department of Music

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FREQUENCY, METHODS,
OBJECTIVES, AND APPLICATIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN
MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC CLASSROOMS

By

Kristy Elaine Talley

With the intent of improving music instruction, the purpose of this research was to
examine the use of assessment in the elementary general music classroom: (1) How
frequently do Michigan music teachers use assessment by grade level? (2) What methods
of assessment are used at each elementary grade level in Michigan? (3) What student
skills or content knowledge do elementary general music teachers in Michigan assess at
each grade level? (4) How do elementary general music teachers in Michigan apply the
results of their assessments? Of the 200 surveys sent to elementary general music
teachers in Michigan, 35 surveys (18%) were returned and provided data. Many of the
respondents did not frequently assess their students, and some did not assess the students
at all. Respondents did not use commercially available achievement tests and did
minimal aptitude testing. The most frequently used teacher-constructed tests included
rating scales or rubrics, checklists, personal communication, written tests or worksheets,
and individual performances. The following music content areas or skills were assessed
most frequently but not necessarily at every grade level: beat competency, singing voice
development, matching pitch, rhythm, recorders, identifying treble clef note names,
instrument families, reading rhythms, and reading pitches. Respondents were motivated
to assess their students in order to adapt and individualize instruction and to provide
validity for the inclusion of music education in the general education curriculum.

This thesis is dedicated to Mom, Dad, and Keith for their unceasing support

and encouragement in my studies of music education.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The development of the National Standards for Music Education (1994) has affected the nature of music education. Music teachers who are engaged in creating or reforming music curricula at local levels will often refer to the National Standards to create district curricula that are in alignment with those standards. Following the development of music curricula, teachers must determine appropriate methods of assessment to measure student achievement of curricular goals. Many music educators believe that there will be a stronger emphasis placed on the role of music assessment in the years to come (Foley, 1999). "Creating sound assessments will be central to teaching music in the 21st century. As curriculum is shaped by achievement standards, the demand for tools to assess these standards will be greater than ever" (Foley, 1999, p. 17).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the frequency, methods, objectives, and applications of assessment in the elementary general music classroom. Many factors motivate teachers to assess their students. These motivating factors can be educational. Assessment allows teachers to monitor the progress of students and their musical growth (Abell, 1993; Brophy, 2000; Niebur, 1997). Assessment also provides information for the teacher that is useful when making decisions about future instruction (Abell, 1993; Brophy, 2000; Fiese, R.K., & R.E., 1999; Niebur, 1997). Assessment can positively affect the motivation of students and can provide diagnostic feedback to inform students of their progress (Farrell, 1997; Hill, 1999; McClung, 1996; Niebur 1997).

Accountability can also motivate assessment. Teachers should be prepared to communicate the progress of their students to others (Abell, 1993; Niebur, 1997). Music

1

programs are less likely to be cut if teachers can show evidence of student learning and progress towards educational standards (Brophy, 2000; Niebur 1997). Brophy (2000) claims that assessment at regular intervals can help teachers support the importance of the music program in their schools and may also provide evidence for parents who question the teacher's choice of which students are selected to participate in auditioned groups. Farrell (1997) states that government, business, and local authorities are asking educators to demand excellence from students. They want assessment to show evidence of that achievement.

Music teachers do not necessarily agree on their individual motivations for the use of assessment in the classroom. However, most music teachers agree that it is important. Although teacher attitudes are positive towards assessment in the classroom, many choose not to implement it (Kotora, 2001). What is the danger in not evaluating student learning? R.K. and R.E. Fiese state, "In the absence of assessment, we are unable to determine if our students are actually improving their musical skills and knowledge about music" (1999, p.13). For those teachers who do assess, many factors influence their use of assessment. Research has shown that teachers are far more likely to make decisions regarding assessment based on personal choice than on influence by local, state, or national guidelines or standards (Kotora, 2001).

By recognizing the reasons for becoming a music teacher, one can identify his/her motivation for believing assessment is important (Brophy, 2000). However, in the process of becoming an effective teacher, the processes and products of learning are often ignored because of the teacher's focus on the process of teaching. According to R.K. and R.E. Fiese, "If you believe what you teach is important and how you teach is important,

then what and how you assess what you teach is no less important because it is all one process" (1999, p. 13).

Part of assessment in the classroom is measuring student skills and content knowledge. What methods of assessment are appropriate for and effective in measuring the progress of musical learning? Music teachers commonly rely upon the use of informal assessment – teacher observation with no recorded data – to determine what their students know and are able to do (Brophy, 2000). However, Brophy (2000) believes that, due to the advent of higher standards of learning in music education, informal teacher observation cannot be the primary strategy for student assessment. He believes a new set of assessment strategies need to be developed and used.

Music educators have devoted a great deal of effort to the development of formal tests that effectively assess students' musical achievement. Formal tests are measurement tools that provide written documentation of a student's achievement progress towards an objective. However, many teachers are no longer accepting the use of tests that are designed to measure content knowledge or students' musical behavior in a manner that is inauthentic. In order to paint an accurate picture of student learning, tests that are intended to measure a student's skill at a particular task need to be administered in a method and context that most accurately represent the environment in which students typically complete that task. This is often referred to as authentic assessment or performance assessment.

One method of administering authentic assessment occurs when teachers record students' behaviors on cassette or video tape and make brief notes while the students are involved in the learning activity (Brophy, 2000). Playing or singing tests are considered

authentic performance-assessments and are commonly used by educators (Kotora, 2001; Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; McClung, 2000). Farrell (1997) states that authentic assessment strategies stress more than the product of learning. They also focus on the process of learning. Process and product assessment are both necessary strategies to gain an understanding of student knowledge.

Nierman (1996) established three guidelines to which performance assessments should adhere: (1) requires active participation – it requires more knowledge because students are not only performing something, they are creating it; (2) demonstrates knowledge or skills and shows the process involved; (3) directly reflects intended outcomes. Brophy (2000) provides another criterion for authentic or performance assessment when he states, "Authentic assessment occurs when assessment aligns with curriculum, teaching, and a student's developmental trajectory" (p. 17). It is possible for teachers to use these guidelines when developing appropriate assessment strategies.

Another method of assessment is alternative assessment. Alternative assessment is conducted within a context other than that in which the musical learning occurred (Brophy, 2000). Examples of alternative assessment strategies include writing about music in reflective journals or learning logs, concept mapping, group presentations, and student portfolios (Brophy, 2000; Farrell, 1997). Portfolios are a collection of student-generated products. They combine a variety of assessment strategies and track student progress over time (Farrell, 1997). Portfolios provide broad and rich evidence of development of student learning.

Music educators still support the use of more traditional assessment methods like written tests to measure facts, dates, vocabulary, notation, and listening skills, among

4

other concepts (Abell, 1993; Hamann, 1999; Simanton, 2000). However, Farrell (1997) states that music teachers often test students for what they know rather than what they understand. Recall of facts does not necessarily indicate the students' understanding of them. She states that the processes that students engage in as active learners cannot be accurately evidenced on a norm-referenced, numerically-scored written test. Those activities need to be assessed using one of the authentic methods discussed previously.

Music teachers encounter many problems when using assessment in the music classroom. Measurement of a student's progress in music is difficult because large numbers of students make it difficult for teachers to gather assessment data (Abell, 1993; Brophy, 2000; Kotora, 2001; McClung, 1996). It is also difficult for teachers to find the time in short class periods to implement assessment (Kotora, 2001; McClung, 1996, Shih, 1997; Simanton, 2000). Classroom management becomes difficult in large classes when teachers attempt to assess students individually (Kotora, 2001; Shih, 1997).

Music teachers also must combat student and parent apathy toward assessment in music courses (Kotora, 2001). Many in the public still view success in the arts as dependent upon the amount of talent an individual has. Music teachers are concerned about the perceived gap between the educational value and status given to core academic subjects versus the value and status that is afforded music classes. They believe that perception can be positively changed through assessment practices (Hill, 1999; McClung, 1996; Taggart, 2002). Music teachers also feel that they do not receive support and understanding from the administration (Kotora, 2001). They believe that they lack the proper training necessary to implement successful assessment in the music classroom

(Kotora, 2001). They indicate that their undergraduate music teacher methods courses do not prepare them to assess student achievement.

In spite of the numerous articles and books that are available to teachers that provide guidelines for using formal assessment in the music classroom, many music educators state that there should be more guidelines to follow in developing and implementing student assessment (Abell, 1993; Kotora, 2001; McClung, 1996). Music teachers feel they have difficulty developing an assessment system that will hold students accountable for achieving course objectives and classroom requirements (Kotora, 2001; McClung, 1996). Many teachers still resort to using a student's behavior, attendance, and participation as the primary means to assess their students (Brophy, 2000; Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; McClung, 1996; Simanton, 2000).

Many methods of assessment have been developed for use in music and are in use by teachers. Kotora's (2001) survey of Ohio choral music teachers found the frequency of assessment strategies from most used to least used in the high school choral music classroom were as follows: performing at concerts, student participation, student attendance, singing tests, written tests, student attitudes, audiotape recordings, individual performances, videotape recordings, independent study or written projects, check sheets/rating scales/rubrics, and student portfolios. Responses from his assessment survey indicated a substantial increase within the last two years for every assessment strategy when compared to the years prior to that (Kotora, 2001). However, Simanton (2000) found that assessment strategies among high school band directors have not changed much within the last decade.

What content knowledge or musical behaviors do music teachers believe are important to assess? In general, teachers place a high level of importance on assessing student performance abilities (Hanzlik, 2001; Kotora, 2001; McClung, 1996). Assessing performance abilities includes measuring the students' abilities to sing or play correct notes and rhythms as well as demonstrate correct playing or singing techniques. Teachers also reported assessing student knowledge of music symbols, terms, and music theory concepts, as well as student knowledge of a piece's historical or background information.

Music education literature suggests that written tests, check sheets, rating scales and rubrics, individual projects and performances, audiotapes, and portfolios are useful tools in measuring student performance. However, many teachers rate these techniques as less useful than assessing student attitude, student performance, and student attendance (Kotora, 2001). Kotora suggests that this discrepancy indicates that what teachers say is important is different than what they do in practice.

The extent to which music teachers at every grade level use assessment in the classroom has not been clearly determined. The majority of researchers examining the use of assessment in music have studied assessment in the secondary-level music classroom (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kotora, 2000; McClung, 1996; Simanton, 2001). Studies focusing on assessment in elementary general music have done so within parameters that investigate the use of assessment as it relates to other instructional goals or within parameters that examine a small number of teachers with the intent of gathering highly contextualized information (Abell,1993; Niebur, 1997; Shih, 1997). Their objectives were not to gain an understanding of the current assessment practices within a

7

large number of elementary music classrooms as they relate to the frequency,

methodology, content understanding, and applications of assessment.

Statement of Purpose and Problems

With the intent of improving music instruction, the purpose of this research is to examine the use of assessment in the elementary general music classroom. The specific problems of this study are as follows: (1) How frequently do Michigan music teachers use assessment by grade level? (2) What methods of assessment are used at each elementary grade level in Michigan? (3) What student skills or content knowledge do elementary general music teachers in Michigan assess at each grade level? (4) How do elementary general music teachers in Michigan apply the results of their assessments?

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, formal assessment is defined as measurement tools that provide written documentation of a student's aptitude or achievement toward an objective. Informal assessment is defined as teacher observation of student learning with no recorded documentation. This study focuses on the participant's use of formal assessment in the elementary general music classroom.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Research

Most of the related research regarding the use of assessment in the music classroom targets secondary-level music classes. However, there are a few studies that investigate assessment practices in the general music classroom. The studies are either limited to case studies of a few teachers and provide rich contextual information or relate assessment practices to curriculum alignment.

Abell (1993) conducted a qualitative study to develop a more comprehensive view of student evaluation strategies used in the elementary general music classroom. She studied the program philosophies, instructional goals, concepts of evaluation, and planning for evaluation strategies of three experienced teachers. Data were gathered through written documents, personal interviews, videotapes of classes, and teacher reflections on the video tapes of their classes. The study focused on the evaluation of students in grades one and five. However, assessment practices at additional grade levels were also discussed in the personal interviews.

The teachers stated varying philosophies of assessment. One teacher reported assessing first grade students' participation efforts and ability to follow directions. She evaluated second grade students by group observation and minimal written work (this information was given by the teacher's self-report and was not observed by the researcher). Individual performances and written tests provided her with assessment information for her third grade classes. Fourth and fifth grade students were evaluated based upon individual performances and blackboard work.

Another teacher stated that she does not believe in the use of standardized tests or teaching to a test. She did not use written testing for evaluation, only for control of the classroom and maintaining student focus. She did not apply the results of those tests in any manner and threw them away. She also never planned for testing or evaluation in her lesson plans. However, informal assessment was built into her teaching techniques.

The results of this study were consistent with those of related studies. Methods of assessment included individual and group performances, written work, blackboard work, peer evaluation, and verbal questions and answers. The targets of these assessment strategies included recorder playing, singing (voice development, singing on pitch), rhythm performance, melody, harmony, form, tone color, instruments of the orchestra, meter, movement to music, notation reading and writing, and composition of rhythm accompaniments. The teachers applied the results of their evaluations to determine what the students had learned, to prepare future lessons, to communicate progress to parents, to provide remedial help, and to assign grades.

Abell concluded that the teachers relied heavily upon informal or formative evaluation strategies. Seventy-five percent of one participant's evaluation of student progress took place through observation and mental record keeping. The researcher also stated that the quality and cohesiveness of student evaluation activities related to the amount of planning time allotted to the teacher. The three teachers focused on process-oriented evaluation, which might have contributed to their minimal use of formal assessment. Abell suggests that the investigation of authentic assessment techniques in the arts might be beneficial. Since she conducted her study, there has been an increase in

music education literature addressing the use of authentic assessment in the music classroom (Brophy, 2000; Farrell, 1997; Foley, 1999: Niebur, 2001).

Abell also concluded that, for each teacher in the study, the district had not required the teachers to have a specific system of student evaluation or compliance with curriculum. The author states that this may account for their "do-as-you-please" style of assessment. Abell believes that informal assessment does not serve the profession or the individual learner and states that programs might be better if "evaluation is publicly and consistently an integral part of instruction" (p. 205). She also states that further research is necessary to gain insight into the written work that elementary music teachers give their students to clarify its content, uses, and value.

Due to the qualitative nature of Abell's study, the results are not generalizable for determining what evaluation practices are being used by a variety of teachers. The participants were all experienced teachers in upper-middle class or upper-class districts that were well-funded. The districts placed a high emphasis on the importance of arts education. Also, this study was conducted in 1992, which was during the development of the *National Standards*. The climate of assessment in the schools has changed considerably since that time. A more recent study of assessment strategies used in a large range of school districts would provide a more accurate representation of current assessment techniques.

Niebur (1997) conducted a qualitative study to explore "how elementary general music teachers who are aware of current developments in both national standards and student assessment attempt to fulfill their instructional expectations and construct a record of progress along the way" (p. 44). The purpose of her study was to create a

representation of standards and assessment in the classrooms of four elementary general music teachers in 1994 and 1995, a time when the *National Standards* were brand new and many general music teachers were not yet expected to make formal assessments of student learning (Niebur, 1997).

Study participants were four practicing elementary general music teachers who had completed a graduate class focusing on the National Standards and student assessment. Data collection was ongoing for two years and consisted of group meetings, classroom observations, shadowing, and interviews. Member checking was used to validate the data. The data were coded and used to create the "story" of each teacher.

The results were reported through the use of literary story telling. Niebur used the information gathered from the various data collection devices to create a story depicting each participant's use of assessment in the classroom. By using story-telling, she was able to provide important contextual information for the reader regarding each individual's teaching environment. The stories offered evidence of teacher motivation for assessment, problems with assessment, opinions regarding the choice of assessments used, the methods of assessment, and the frequency of assessment.

The teachers' reported motivations for assessment varied. One teacher stated that the reason she continued to assess her students, even though it was not mandated by her district, is because she was interested in knowing what the students had accomplished and where they need to go. She also believed it kept her own teaching in check and made it easier to track the developments of the students over time. Another teacher reported that her motivation for assessment is to enhance communication with her parents and administrators. Two teachers claimed that assessment served as validation to other

teachers that they were as much a teacher of a subject area that has curricular merit as the other teachers in the school. Additional motivating factors for assessment included a teacher's report that his students tried harder when they knew that they were accountable for their learning. The participants viewed assessment as a means of keeping music in the districts' curriculum.

The stories of the participants also revealed a variety of perceived problems with implementing assessment. Record keeping was a daunting task for one participant who was responsible for teaching over 700 students. The population of her school was constantly in a state of flux, as students regularly moved both away from and to her school. Short class periods made student assessment difficult as well. Another teacher reported that assessment of some content knowledge and musical behaviors was not appropriate. She stated that there are skills she will not assess. She gives the example of improvisation and asserts that, when she assessed improvisation, it removed the creativity from the task.

After completing an analysis of the participants' assessment techniques, Niebur concluded that all the assessment tools combined would not be able to give an accurate representation of the students' learning. She stated that, even if more effective tools were in place in their classrooms, they would not necessarily have enough time to use them to create a more accurate representation. However, regardless of the problems inherent with the implementation of assessment, Niebur believes that "formal assessments often generate the only archivable evidence of the steps learned in the musical childhood" (p. 226).

An unexpected finding in Niebur's study was the shift in teacher attitudes regarding music assessment. Two teachers admitted feeling guilty about giving up potential music making time for students to write in journals about their first recorder playing experiences. One of them stated, "It's music! It's not writing class! . . . I'm having a hard time with that" (p. 116). Later in the study, she changed her mind about the benefits of using journal-writing and stated that she will use them more frequently.

Another teacher reported that she did not use much formalized assessment. She stated that she made her students judge themselves and ask questions about and analyze what they were doing. She believed that more formalized forms of assessments did not work for her. She also believed that students did not want or like paper-pencil tests; they liked hands-on activities. She defined formal assessment as limited to written objective tests and did not consider assessing their hands-on or performance activities through the use of rubrics or checklists in a formal way. She believed that teachers who used written worksheets, puzzles, and journaling were not using assessment strategies that were relevant to their students.

Niebur delineates assessment methods as formal assessment and cultural assessment (informal, observed assessment). Her stories document the use of a variety of assessment methods. Teachers used scoring rubrics, notes on class lists of group singing performances, peer interviews and assessment, letter-writing and picture-drawing about preference in listening examples, coloring in recorder fingerings on fingering charts, and journaling. One teacher monitored what her students understood and could do by asking questions. She also taught students the criteria for a good performance and had the students measure the quality of their own performances, determine what went right or

wrong, and apply that knowledge into their next performances. She acknowledged that she assessed often without written documentation of the results.

Another teacher reported that, as she had grown more aware of assessment and used it more in her classroom, she had become more selective about what she kept as a written record. She stated that what she wrote down must be worthwhile and must benefit her students. If she felt that she did not know her students' ability levels well, she would document assessment results more often.

Niebur included information regarding the frequency of assessment in the story of one teacher. This teacher stated that she had scaled back documenting a child's progress on three skills during each nine week period to two skills during that period. The next year, she planned to focus on only four goals at each grade level per year. She also reported that a student teacher who had previously worked with her had entered no grades into the grade book by the end of the quarter and still gave each child a "satisfactory" grade with no written documentation of student learning

Niebur's study provides information rich with detail regarding four teachers' use of assessment in their classrooms. However, documentation of assessment of general music on a larger scale would provide a more accurate representation of current assessment practices across the profession.

Shih (1997) examined the nature of curriculum alignment in 5th grade elementary general music in the state of Texas. She investigated the relationship between objectives, classroom instruction, and student assessment through a survey and follow-up interviews with fifteen percent of the participants. The participants' general opinions regarding assessment indicated that they use assessment to gain information for instructional

planning and to determine appropriateness of student placement in specialized programs. They felt that subjectivity in assessment was acceptable.

When asked whether music should be included in state-mandated standardized tests, the teachers responded with several reasons for opposing music's inclusion: (1) the nature of the subject makes the development of an accurate testing format difficult; (2) testing should not be limited to paper-pencil formats (which is typically the case with standardized testing); (3) students would have to learn things that might "ruin music for a lot of students;" (4) teachers should be responsible for determining the assessments they administer to their students; and (5) the level of instruction that students receive varies greatly from school to school throughout the state (pp. 136-137).

Shih also asked teachers to report the state mandated objectives they assess. Over 90% of the singing objectives were assessed. Listening objectives were assessed at a rate of 83%. Just under 80% of the movement objectives were assessed. Notation objectives were only assessed at a rate of 65%. These assessment percentages were related to the reported amount of time teachers spent teaching those objectives in their classrooms. Teachers attributed their not assessing 20% of state-mandated objectives to time pressures and their personal decisions not to assess all the objectives that they teach.

The researcher established that curriculum is not considered aligned when objectives are taught but not assessed, objectives are assessed but not taught, or state-mandated objectives are not taught or assessed. Of the occurrences of non-alignment, 53% was due to objectives that were taught but not assessed. Findings regarding the methods of assessment used are consistent with other studies. For all objective categories (singing, listening, movement, and notation), the most-used method of assessment was

observation during group performances. For singing, movement, and notation, teachers reported using individual performance the most often after group performance. Written tests were also used in assessing listening and notation objectives.

Overall, Shih found that curriculum alignment was 76% and labels this as a relatively low level of alignment. She attributes most of this to less assessment, rather than less teaching of objectives. The researcher identified three factors that accounted for non-alignment due to lack of assessment. First, music teachers had more autonomy than elementary classroom teachers with regards to assessment and instruction. Second, teachers reported that student contact time was limited, making it difficult to assess all objectives. Shih disagrees with this to some extent and states that teachers use this as a reasonable excuse for not teaching or assessing enough. She states, "Curriculum alignment of music seems to be strongly related to the teachers' instruction and assessment judgments and choices rather than how much time they have" (p. 153). Finally, their responses indicated that some teachers did not show a great interest in assessment. Shih concluded that "the lack of an appropriate convincing music assessment system that assesses student learning achievement is the key reason for less assessment in the music classroom" (p. 154).

The study conducted by Shih revealed that teachers do not assess all the objectives they teach. It also provides general information regarding the methods of assessment that teachers use and which general objectives are assessed. However, the results are not specific enough to accurately depict a current profile of assessment practices in the elementary music classroom. Also, the results cannot be generalized to

encompass all elementary grade levels, as the study is limited to the examination of assessment practices at the fifth grade level.

Summary

Despite the studies that were conducted by Abell, Niebur, and Shih, there is still little documentation regarding the assessment strategies that are used on a large scale by elementary general music teachers. Abell and Neibur's studies provided important information regarding the assessment practices of a limited number of teachers. However, the conclusions of their studies are not generalizable. The focus of the studies was too limited to document the use of assessment by a variety of elementary general music teachers.

The results of Shih's study provide information about assessment with regard to curriculum alignment. The primary focus of her study was an evaluation of curriculum alignment at the fifth grade level, and she only discussed assessment as it related to alignment. Additionally, the climate of assessment in the elementary general music classroom has changed considerably since the dates of the studies by Abell, Niebur, and Shih. Information regarding more recent assessment strategies used at every elementary grade level as reported by a larger number of elementary music teachers would be helpful in understanding the current assessment climate.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Design

     The researcher constructed a survey to distribute to elementary general music

teachers in the state of Michigan to gather information regarding the use of assessment in

the elementary general music classroom. The survey responses served as the data for this

study. Upon return of the completed surveys, the researcher analyzed the quantitative

data statistically and conducted a content analysis of the qualitative data. The qualitative

survey responses were coded as themes emerged. Each survey contained in the final

research sample was assigned an analysis code number to ensure confidentiality. Any

additional materials returned with the surveys were coded with the same number assigned

for the corresponding survey. No assessment measures were submitted.

Respondents

     The survey was sent to practicing elementary general music teachers (n=200) in

the state of Michigan who are members of the Michigan Music Educators Association.

Their names were randomly selected from the MMEA list after it was sorted for teaching

specialization, so that surveys were only sent to elementary general music teachers. A

participant code number was assigned to each return envelope as a method of maintaining

confidentiality for each participant when viewing survey results, while also making it

possible to determine whether the subject had returned his/her copy of the survey.

Survey Development

The survey was constructed with consideration of past and recent assessment strategies and research. Its design incorporated both closed-ended responses as well as more descriptive, open-ended responses. A pilot study of the survey was conducted to determine the clarity of the instructions and comprehensibility of the questions. The participants of the pilot study were twelve music educators who were pursuing graduate degrees at Michigan State University and had experience teaching in the public schools. They completed the survey and supplied the researcher with comments regarding its construction. The survey was revised in light of the comments made by the participants in the pilot study.

Description of the Survey Instrument

The *Elementary General Music Assessment Survey* (see Appendix A) was designed to examine the four research problems as well as to collect demographic information. To encourage completion of the survey, participants were asked to indicate whether they would like to receive a copy of the research findings. The first section of the survey consisted of items that were designed to gather personal information regarding the participant's current teaching responsibilities. The second section consisted of one multi-part question that was designed to determine how frequently music teachers used assessment. The third section asked the respondents if they used commercially available assessment tests and at which grade levels they used them. The fourth section asked the music educators what methods of assessment they used and what student skills or content knowledge they assessed. The fifth section was a multi-part question that asked whether

the respondents' school districts required assessment in elementary general music and, if so, what the requirements are. The sixth and final section consisted of one multi-part item asking the music educators the purposes of assessing their students and how they applied the results of assessment. An additional space was also provided for respondents to offer other comments.

Procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) to conduct the study. In March 2005, the researcher sent a cover letter (see Appendix B), a copy of the survey (see Appendix A), and a large self-addressed, stamped envelope to each of the respondents in the study. The respondents were asked to return the survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. The cover letter thanked the respondents for participating in the survey. It also asked them to provide detailed and descriptive information about their assessment processes and to be as accurate as possible in their reporting to enable the study to be as accurate and meaningful as possible, as this will enable teachers to improve music instruction in the future.

The respondents were given two weeks to complete and return the survey. However, after two weeks, a sufficient number of surveys had not been completed and returned. Therefore, the researcher mailed a follow-up letter to the participants who had not returned their surveys. The follow-up cover letter extended the return deadline another two weeks and included another copy of the survey. The letter and survey were sent together with a return envelope containing the participant's code number.

Data Analysis

Once the researcher received the returned surveys, percentages were calculated for response choices to aid in the examination of the assessment practices of professional music educators. For question one, the researcher calculated the number of respondents who taught each grade level, the range of reported class time per week at each grade level, as well as the mean weekly class time for each grade level. The range of total students per grade level and the mean of total students per grade level were also calculated. In addition, the researcher calculated the range and mean of total number of elementary students per teacher.

For each frequency of assessment category in question two, the researcher calculated the number of respondents in each category for each grade level. The range of assessments in any of the grades was also determined. For question three, the researcher calculated the percentage of respondents who administered commercially available assessment tests by test and grade level.

Question four asked the respondents to report by grade level the musical content or skills that they assessed as well as the assessment tools they used. Based upon their responses, the researcher created categories for the content they measured and calculated the percentage of teachers at each grade level who measured students' knowledge in that content or skill area. The measurement tools used by the respondents at each grade level were also compiled. The results indicated each assessment method's frequency of use within the total number of assessments administered reported at that grade level.

Open-ended survey questions were coded for content and identification of trends.

For question five, the researcher calculated the percentage of respondents who reported that their school districts do not require music assessments as well as the number of respondents who stated that their school districts do require music assessments. The answers stating the specific district requirements were coded and categorized based upon content. The percentage of respondents who stated answers in each category was also calculated. For question six, the researcher coded and categorized the answers the respondents gave with regard to their purposes for assessment as well as how they reported applying the results of their assessments. For each category identified, the researcher determined the percentage of respondents who provided answers in that category. The final open-ended section provided an opportunity for the respondents to offer additional comments. Their answers were coded for content and analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Interpretations

Return Rate

A total of 44 of the 200 surveys were returned, resulting in a return rate of 22%. Of that number, eight surveys were returned not completed but were accompanied by notes or e-mail messages from respondents explaining that they were no longer teaching elementary general music because they had retired, that they were teaching a different grade level, or that they had become administrators. One respondent declined participation in the study, because the respondent is not allowed by his/her school to assess the students, a decision that was made without the teacher's consent. Thirty-five surveys (18%) were used as data for this study. This was a low response rate. However, its results might provide a baseline understanding of current assessment practices in elementary general music.

There are many possible reasons that may account for a low survey return rate. The length of the survey is one potential explanation. Potential respondents may have felt that the survey would take too long to complete. The questions on the survey required the respondents to track their assessments from September to March, which may have seemed a daunting task. If their record keeping was not complete, these questions may have been difficult to answer. However, for the purposes of this research, the questions were necessary and provided valuable information regarding the current climate of assessment in music education.

The fact that the surveys may have arrived at a busy point in the semester may be another possible explanation for the low return rate. Additionally, some survey recipients

may not have been teaching elementary general music at the time and did not mail the surveys back as a result. The low return rate may be indicative of the current state of assessment in the schools. As previously discussed in the related research, music teachers feel conflicted about the role of assessment in music education. Assessment strategies and philosophies are not consistent throughout the profession. With regard to this, potential respondents may have felt insecure about their assessment practices and might not have wanted to share them with others on a survey.

Based upon the responses of a few respondents, many music teachers implement informal music assessment. Informal assessment constantly occurs in any classroom but does not provide written documentation of student achievement. Since this survey focused on formal assessment strategies, the potential respondents may have felt that their assessment practices did not coincide with the requests of the survey and therefore did not complete it. Additionally, potential respondents might not philosophically agree with the practice of assessing elementary general music students, as one respondent indicated with his/her responses. If they did not philosophically agree, they might have chosen not to participate in the study.

Demographics

The purpose of the first question was to gather demographic data. Tables 1 through 4 show information regarding the teachers' amount of contact time per week by grade level as well as the teachers' total number of students per grade level. Approximately the same number of respondents reported teaching kindergarten (30), first (32), second (31), third (33), and fourth grades (30). Fewer respondents reported

teaching fifth grade (25). The numbers of respondents teaching pre-kindergarten (11) and sixth grade (10) were a great deal less than those teaching other grade levels.

TABLE 1

Grade Levels Taught by Respondents (N = 35)

Grade Level	Number at grade level	%
Pre-Kindergarten	11	31%
Kindergarten	30	86%
First Grade	32	91%
Second Grade	31	89%
Third Grade	33	94%
Fourth Grade	30	86%
Fifth Grade	25	71%
Sixth Grade	10	29%

The second portion of the first question established each teacher's amount of contact time per week at each grade level. In Table 2, the range of contact time is given in minutes per week from high to low as well as the average amount of contact time per week. The grade level with the highest reported amount of contact time per week was sixth grade. First through fifth grades averaged approximately the same amount of contact time per week. The least amount of weekly contact time was reported by respondents teaching pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. Respondents who taught fifth and sixth grades indicated the largest range in contact time, with a high of 180 minutes and a low of 30 minutes (a difference of 150 minutes). However, there was only a difference of 8 minutes a week in the range of averages between grades 1 through 6.

TABLE 2
Respondents' Contact Time Per Week – reported in minutes by grade level

	Pre-K	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade
High	90	90	90	90	100	100	180	180
Low	20	20	25	25	25	30	30	30
Average	39	43	58	58	60	60	59	66

Table 3 provides information regarding the total number of students taught per grade level per teacher. The range of students is given in total number per grade level from high to low as well as average number of students at each grade level per teacher. The highest number of students at any grade level was 240, which was reported by a respondent teaching sixth grade. A different respondent reported six as the lowest number of students at any grade level (1st, 3rd, and 4th grades). With a difference of 225 students, sixth grade showed the largest difference in the range of total number of students per grade level. Pre-kindergarten had the lowest average number of students (22) and fifth grade had the highest number of student average (94).

The teaching loads of the respondents varied greatly. The respondent with the largest teaching load reportedly taught 1,386 elementary students. The smallest teaching load was reported by one respondent who taught 73 elementary students. The average teaching load for all respondents was 495 elementary students.

TABLE 3
Respondents' Teaching Load of Total Number of Students by Grade Level and by Total Number of Elementary Students Per Respondent

	Pre-K	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	Total
High	48	175	225	225	225	196	200	240	1,386
Low	10	15	6	8	6	6	20	15	73
Average	22	82	87	93	89	92	94	84	495

One possible explanation for the widely varied responses in relation to the total number of students taught at each grade level, the amount of contact time per week, and

each respondent's teaching load is the fact that district configurations of elementary schools vary. Some school districts configure their elementary schools for kindergarten through fourth grade, while others may extend the grade levels to include fifth and possibly sixth grade as well. Another issue related to school configurations is whether the kindergarten classes meet for the full day or only for a half of a day.

There are other potential explanations for the disparity of the respondents' answers. The answers reveal how little uniformity there is within the field of music education across the state of Michigan. The disagreement within the education community regarding the importance of music's inclusion in the general curriculum is reflected in the districts' widely diverse decisions regarding the appropriate number of students for one teacher to teach as well as the amount of contact time that teacher has with his or her students.

Frequency of Assessment

The frequency of student assessment by grade level was established in question two. The teachers were asked to state how many formal assessments they had administered to each grade level since the start of the year (September to March). For the purposes of this study, formal assessment was defined as measurement tools that provide written documentation of a student's aptitude or achievement toward an objective. It did not include informal assessments that teachers mentally record. The following categories were given as options: (a) 0 assessments, (b) 1 to 3 assessments, (c) 4 to 6 assessments, (d) 7 to 10 assessments, (e) 11 to 13 assessments, (f) 14 or more assessments (specify), and (g) not applicable (selected if teachers did not teach that grade level).

Twenty-nine respondents answered the kindergarten portion of question two, and their answers are shown in Table 4. One respondent who taught kindergarten did not complete this section. The most frequent category chosen for kindergarten was *Zero Assessments* (41%). Following is the category distribution from most frequently chosen to least frequently chosen: *Zero Assessments* (41%), *One to Three Assessments* (28%), *Four to Six Assessments* (21%), *Fourteen or More Assessments* (7%), *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments* (3%), *Seven to Ten Assessments* (0%).

TABLE 4

Frequency of Respondents' Assessments (n = 29)
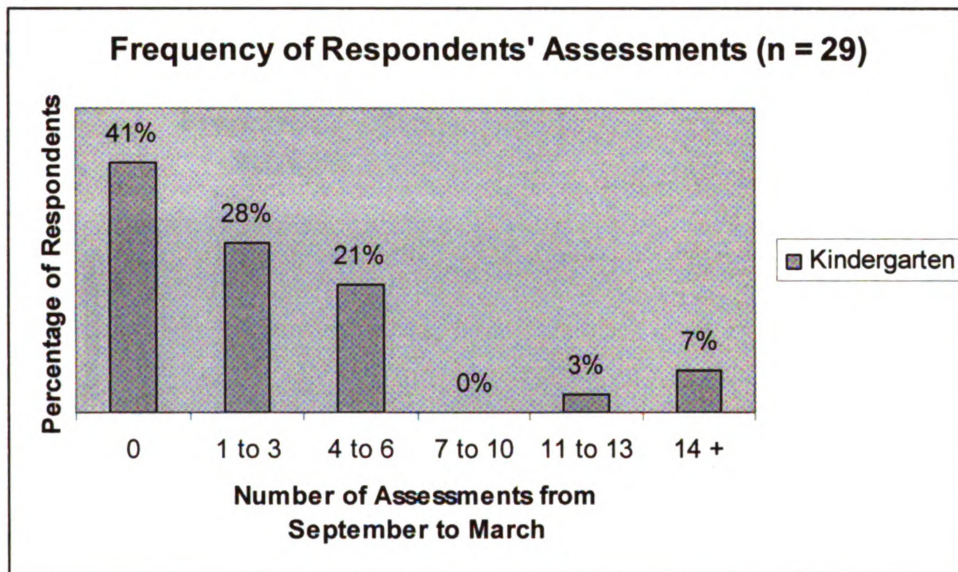
The survey answers indicate that the majority of respondents are doing little assessment in kindergarten. However, the average weekly contact time for kindergarten students was 43 minutes a week. This is at least 15 minutes less class time than the other grade levels' average contact times with a comparatively similar average number of students (82 students is the average total number of students for kindergarten) to the other grade levels' averages. This may account for the low number of assessments at the

30

kindergarten level. Also, the students are young and teachers may want to provide them with more time to learn the content before assessing them.

The first grade portion of question two was answered by 31 respondents. This section was not completed by one respondent who reported teaching first grade. Their answers are summarized in Table 5. The category that was chosen most frequently was *One to Three Assessments* (32%), which was followed by *Zero Assessments* (23%), *Four to Six Assessments* (19%), *Seven to Eleven Assessments* (13%), *Fourteen or More Assessments* (13%), and *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments* (0%).

TABLE 5

Frequency of Respondents' Assessments (n = 31)

One respondent who taught second grade did not complete the second grade portion of question two (n = 30). The most frequently chosen category (see Table 6) was *One to Three Assessments* (33%), followed by *Four to Six Assessments* (23%), *Fourteen or More Assessments* (17%), *Zero Assessments* (17%), *Seven to Ten Assessments* (10%), and *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments* (0%).
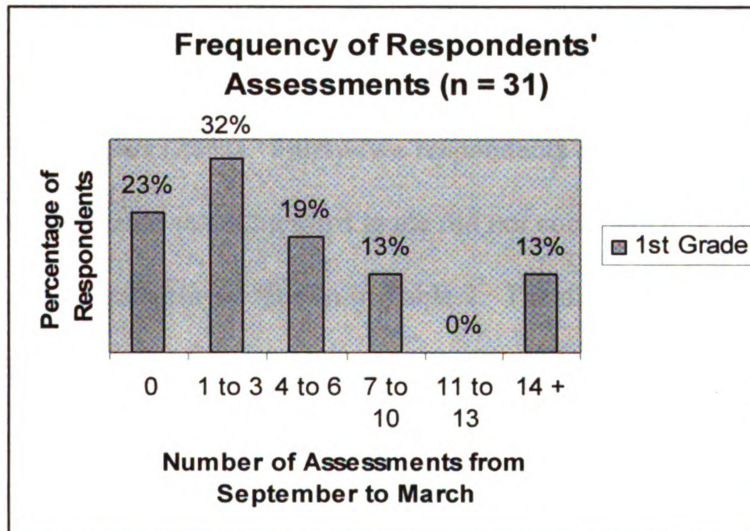
TABLE 6

Frequency of Respondents'
Assessments (n = 30)
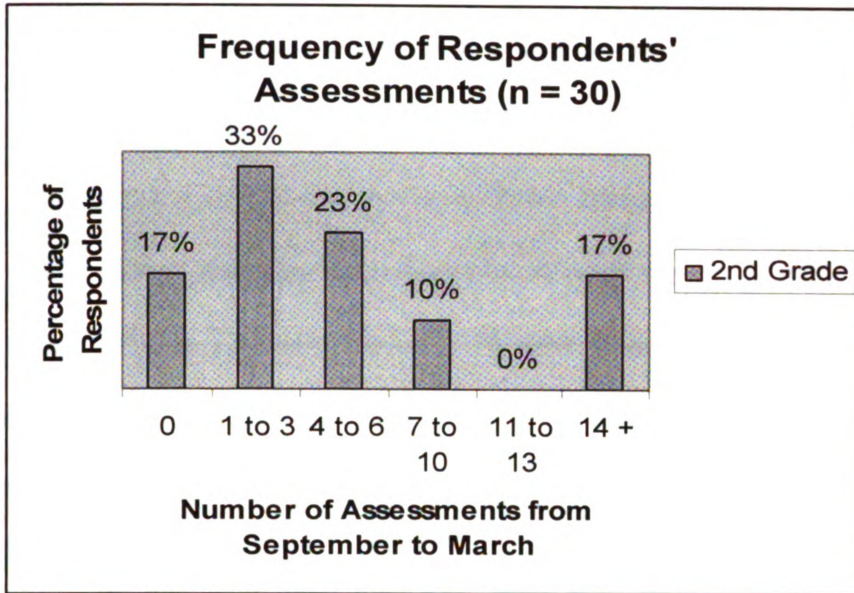
For third grade, the most frequently chosen category was *One to Three*

Assessments (28%). Thirty-two respondents completed this section. Again, one teacher

who reported teaching third grade did not complete this part of the survey. A summary

of their answers are shown in Table 7. The distribution of the other categories was as

follows: *Four to Six Assessments* (22%), *Zero Assessments* (22%), *Fourteen or More*

Assessments (16%), *Seven to Ten Assessments* (6%), and *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments*

(6%).

TABLE 7

Twenty-nine respondents completed the fourth grade portion of question two. One respondent who reported teaching fourth grade did not complete this part. Table 8 shows that *Four to Six Assessments* was most frequently chosen category by respondents (31%), which was followed by *One to Three Assessments* (21%) and *Zero Assessments* (17%). Three categories were chosen by an equal number of respondents (10% each): *Seven to Ten Assessments*, *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments*, and *Fourteen or More Assessments*.

TABLE 8

Twenty-five respondents completed the fifth grade portion of question two. Thirty-six percent chose the category *Four to Six Assessments*; this category was chosen most frequently. Table 9 shows their answers. The remaining responses were distributed as follows: *One to Three Assessments* (24%), *Zero Assessments* (16%), *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments* (12%), *Fourteen or More Assessments* (8%), and *Seven to Ten Assessments* (4%).

TABLE 9

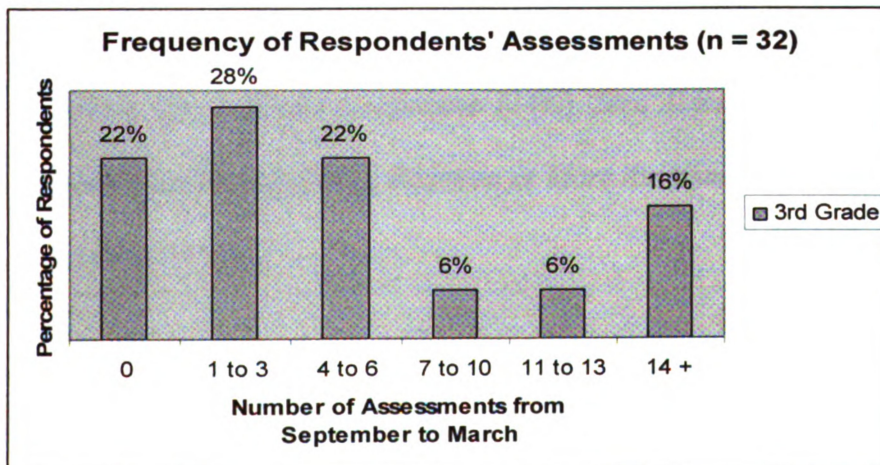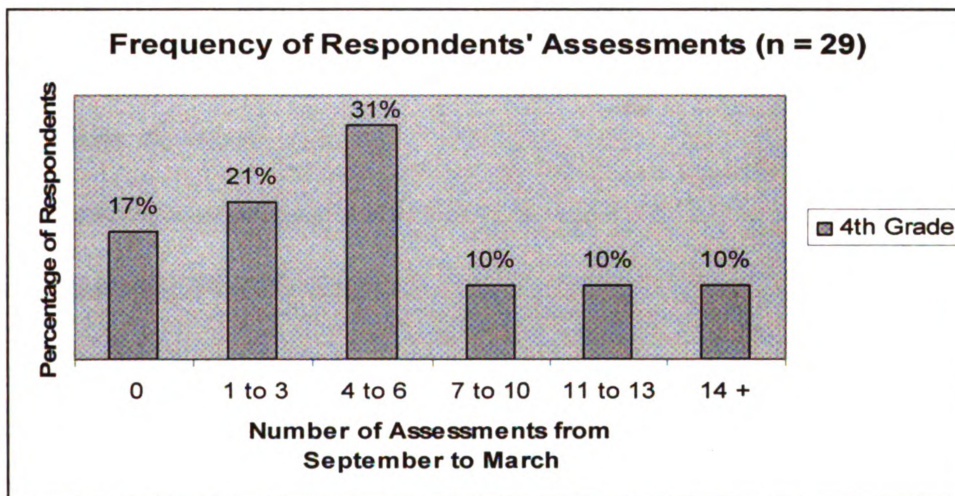**Frequency of Respondents' Assessments (n = 25)**

The sixth grade portion of question two was completed by ten respondents. All of the respondents who reported teaching sixth grade answered this question, and their responses are shown in Table 10. *Zero Assessments* was chosen most frequently (30%) by teachers, which was followed by *One to Three Assessments* (20%), *Four to Six Assessments* (20%), *Fourteen or More Assessments* (20%), *Seven to Ten Assessments* (10%), and *Eleven to Thirteen Assessments* (0%).
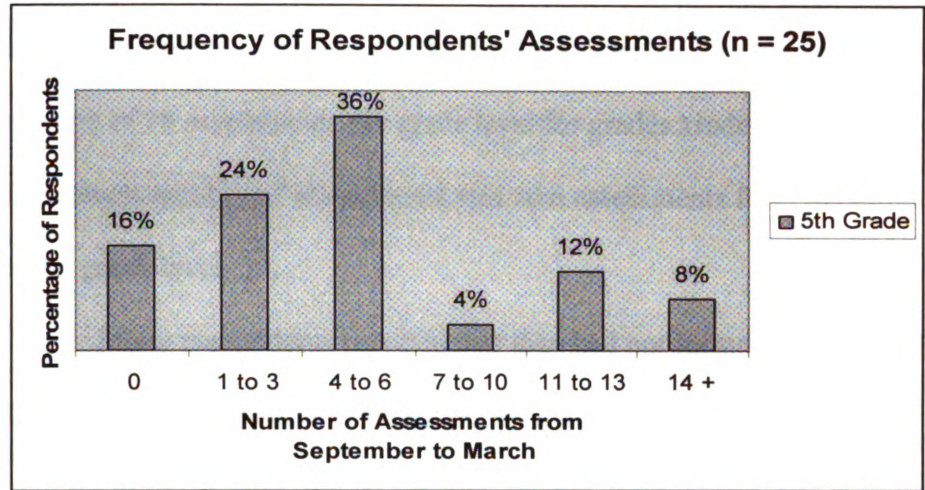
TABLE 10

Frequency of Respondents' Assessments (n = 10)
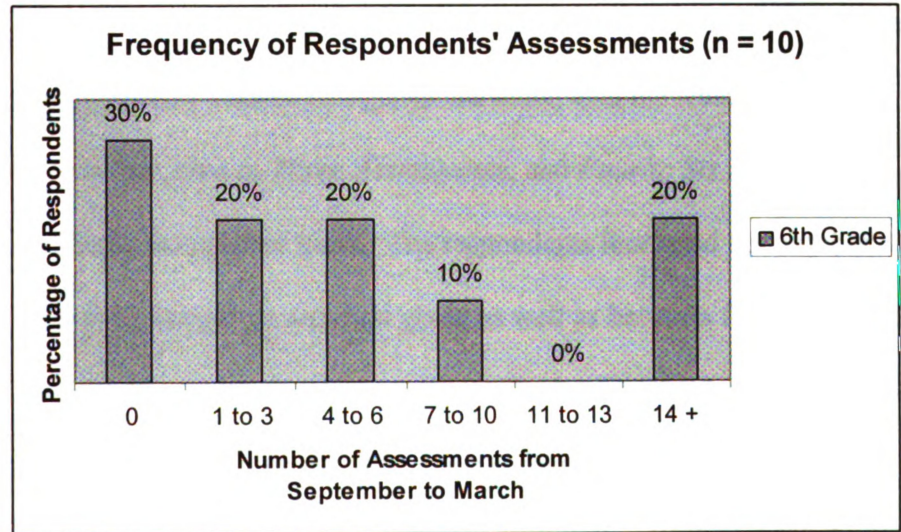
In addition to the categories represented for each grade above, more specific data were gathered regarding the frequency of assessment. The highest number of

assessments done at any grade level from September to March was 37 assessments completed by one respondent at the third grade level. This respondent completed an average of 28 assessments per grade level for grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The lowest number of assessments was zero assessments from September to March for every grade level.

Many respondents reported that they had not formally assessed their students. The number of respondents who reported *Zero Assessments* was located somewhere within a range of 16% to 23% for first, second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. The number of respondents who did not assess their students was even higher for kindergarten (41%) and sixth grade (30%). Elementary music teachers have less contact time with their kindergarten students, which may account for the high number of respondents who did not assess their kindergarten students. It is also possible that their kindergarteners were not developmentally ready for formal assessments. It is unclear why sixth grade students were assessed very little or not at all by some respondents.

When comparing the occurrences of assessment across grade levels, the three most frequently chosen categories are those with the least number of assessments: *Zero Assessments*, *One to Three Assessments*, and *Four to Six Assessments*. The researcher also identified another trend. The respondents increased the number of assessments between kindergarten and first grade as well as between first grade and second grade. One possible reason for this increase is the increase in the amount of contact time from kindergarten to first grade. The average contact time per week in kindergarten was 43 minutes, whereas it was 58 minutes in first grade. With increased contact time, music teachers may have more time to allot to assessing their students. It is also feasible that

the respondents' believe that as the students get older and more accustomed to formal music instruction, assessment becomes more possible than at younger ages. Another possible reason for this increase in assessment is that, as students' abilities to read are developed, teachers assess them more frequently, as written assessments are possible.

Use of Commercially Available Tests

In question three, the respondents were asked to report which commercially available tests that they have used from September to March as well as the grade levels at which they used them. Eleven respondents (31%) reported using commercially available tests in their music classrooms. However, one respondent's answers were not used in the data reporting due to a suspected incorrect completion of this question. The respondent reported using almost every test listed in the question at nearly every grade level, which would be impossible in the instructional time reported by the respondent. Therefore, the responses from that survey were excluded from the study. The remaining ten respondents' (28%) responses were used as the data for this question. Table 11 indicates which tests the respondents used as well as the grade levels at which each test was used.

TABLE 11

Frequency of Respondents' Use of Commercially Available Tests by Grade Level

(N = 35)

Commercially Available Assessment Tests	Percentage of Respondents	Use by Grade Level
Primary Measures of Music Audiation	11%	Grades K, 1, 2, 3
Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation	8%	Grades 3, 4, 5
Music Aptitude Profile	5%	Grade 4
Selmer Music Guidance Survey	5%	Grades 4, 5
Audie	3%	Kindergarten
Am I Musical?	3%	Grades 2, 3
Advanced Measures of Music Audiation		
Singing Voice Development Measure		
Measure of Creative Thinking in Music		
Thinking Creatively with Music		
Musical Achievement Test		
Iowa Tests of Music Literacy		

Commercially available music assessments were not used with high frequency by the respondents. Of the various types of published tests, the respondents used aptitude tests the most. *Primary Measures of Music Audiation* was used by the highest percentage of respondents (11%). They reported using it to determine the music aptitude of students in kindergarten, first, second and third grades. *Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation* was used by 8% of the respondents for grades three, four, and five. The *Music Aptitude Profile* (MAP), an aptitude test, and the *Selmer Music Guidance Survey*, each were used by 5% of the respondents. MAP was used to test the aptitude of fourth grade students. Students in both fourth and fifth grade were given the *Selmer Music Guidance Survey.* Three percent of respondents reported using the aptitude tests *Audie* and *Am I Musical?* Six tests were not used by any of the respondents: *Advanced Measures of Music Audiation, Singing Voice Development Measure, Measure of Creative Thinking in*

Music, Thinking Creatively with Music, Musical Achievement Test, and the *Iowa Tests of Music Literacy*.

It is encouraging that a portion of the respondents reported using aptitude tests, all of which were developed by Edwin Gordon. Aptitude tests are difficult to construct due to the complicated process of establishing construct validity. They must be supported by research, which also makes them difficult to create. Many of the aptitude tests are easy to administer in a relatively short amount of time and have appropriate process validity for the age levels being tested. They provide the music teacher with valuable information regarding the music potential of their students, allowing for individualized instruction and assessment. Therefore, it is not surprising that aptitude tests were the type of tests that was most frequently used by the respondents. It is surprising that they were not used more widely.

Respondents also used the *Selmer Music Guidance Survey* in grades four and five. As students prepare to select and study an instrument, teachers often like to guide their selections in the hopes that the students will be happier with their instrument choices and therefore improve the retention rate of instrumental ensembles. It is not surprising that a few respondents reported using this test, probably to identify students for their instrumental music programs and to aid their students' selection of instruments.

As was expected, the respondents are not using standardized achievement tests in their classrooms. This coincides with the conclusions from the related research discussed in Chapters One and Two. The teachers in those studies felt that standardized tests are expensive and time-consuming to administer. They believed that the constructs underlying standardized music tests do not correspond with the performance nature of

music. They also believed that achievement tests should be developed by the individual teacher, because content validity for achievement tests is difficult to establish with no standardized curriculum in music. Therefore, it is difficult for music teachers to establish whether the content of tests relates to what they have been teaching.

It was not surprising that the more lengthy standardized tests are not being used. One possible explanation for the minimal use of standardized tests is that music teachers may not be aware of the existence of these tests. Also, music teachers may not want to sacrifice the limited amount of classroom time they have with their students to administer lengthy tests. However, since many aptitude tests are relatively time-efficient, it is surprising that a larger percentage of teachers are not using them to identify students who would benefit from individualized instruction based upon their aptitude results.

Teachers could benefit from the diagnostic information provided by aptitude testing. The diagnostic information allows the teacher to know the strengths and weaknesses of each student in both the tonal and rhythm domains. Developmental aptitude testing can also be beneficial in that it informs teachers if the music environment that they are creating in their classrooms is being effective in raising developmental aptitude.

Teacher Constructed Assessments

In question four, respondents were asked to indicate the types of non-published, teacher-constructed assessment methods that they used to measure student achievement. They were also asked to identify the specific skills or content knowledge by grade level that they have assessed from September to March. Seven respondents (20%) did not

complete this section of the survey for any of the grade levels. Of those seven

respondents, five stated that they do not formally assess their students. One of the

respondents stated that he/she does not believe in assessing students in music. The

remaining respondent left this section incomplete without stating a reason.

The first portion of question four focused on the assessment methods used by the

respondents. Tables 12 through 18 illustrate how frequently each assessment method was

used. The percentages reflect how frequently each assessment method was used within

the total number of assessments identified. Of the twelve assessment methods that were

identified for kindergarten (see Table 12), the five most frequently used methods were as

follows: *rating scale or rubric* (46%), *checklist* (13%), *individual performance* (12%),

written tests or worksheets (8%), and *personal communication* (7%). *Personal*

communication refers to the use of oral exams, interviews, conferences, and

conversations. The remaining seven tools were each used 3% or fewer times.

TABLE 12

Frequency of Assessment Tools Used in Kindergarten (n = 90 total assessments)
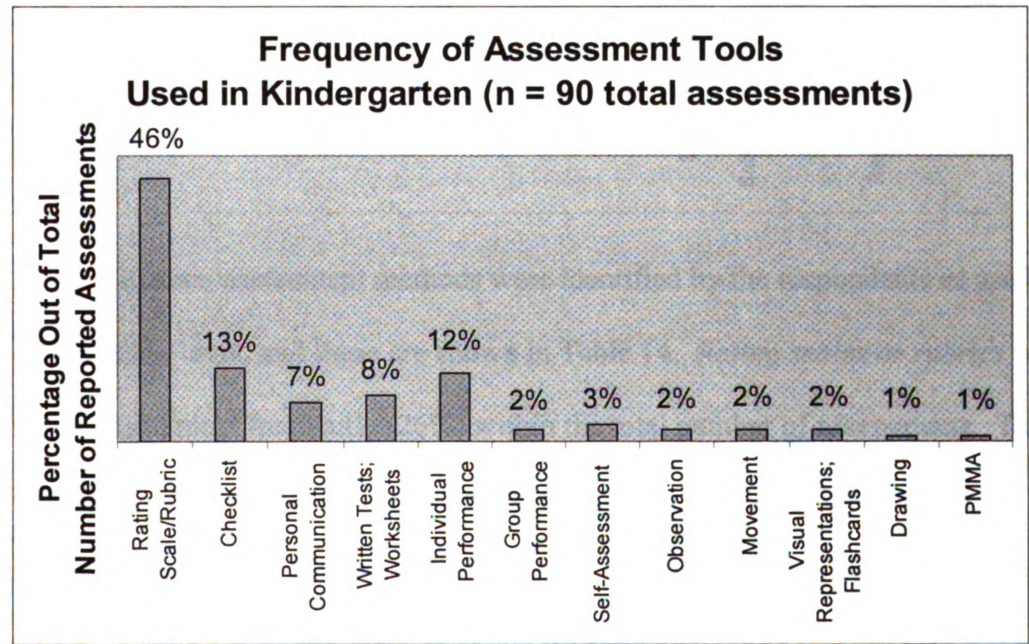
Table 13 shows the 17 assessment tools used by respondents in their first grade classes. Again, the method used most frequently was *rating scale or rubric*, which constituted 54% of the assessments. The next four most frequently occurring measurement techniques were *individual performance* (9%), *written tests or worksheets* (8%), *checklist* (7%), and *personal communication* (6%). The remaining twelve methods were each used 2% or fewer times within the total number of assessments.

TABLE 13

Frequency of Assessment Tools Used in 1st Grade (n = 156 total assessments)
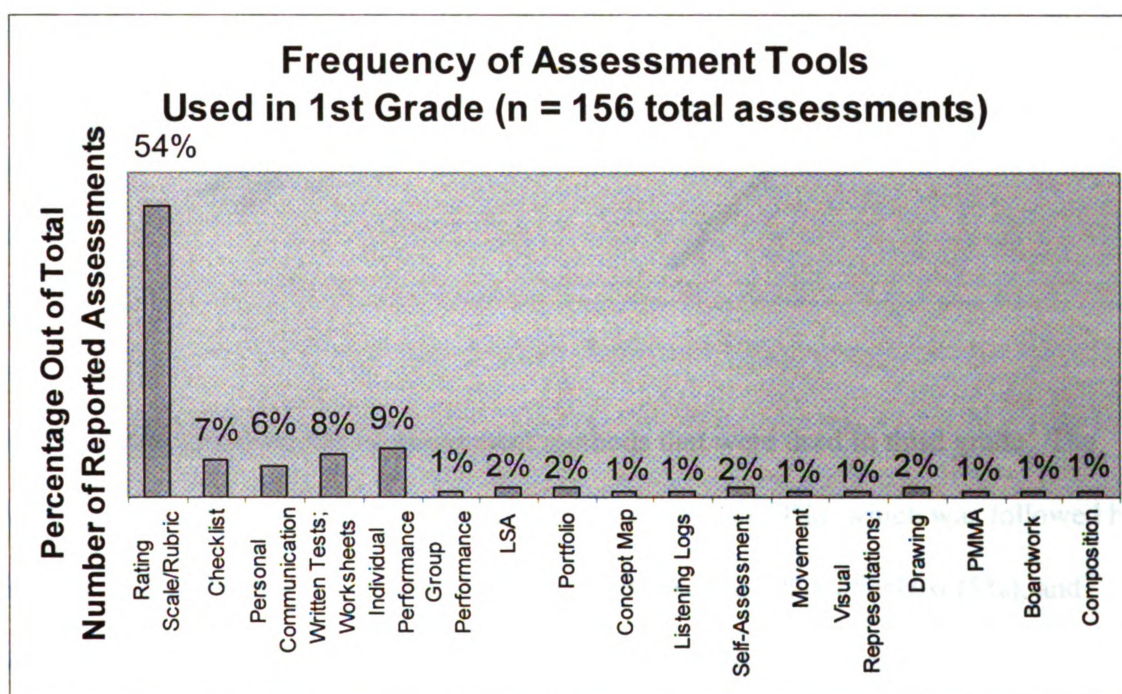
Eighteen assessment methods were identified by the respondents as used at the second grade level, and these are shown in Table 14. *Rating scales or rubrics* was the method used most frequently (26%) within the total number of assessments. This method was followed by *written tests or worksheets* (18%), *checklist* (12%), *personal communication* (8%), and *individual performance* (8%). The remaining thirteen methods were each used 4% or fewer times within the total number of assessments.

41

TABLE 14

Frequency of Assessment Tools Used in 2nd Grade (n = 121 total assessments)
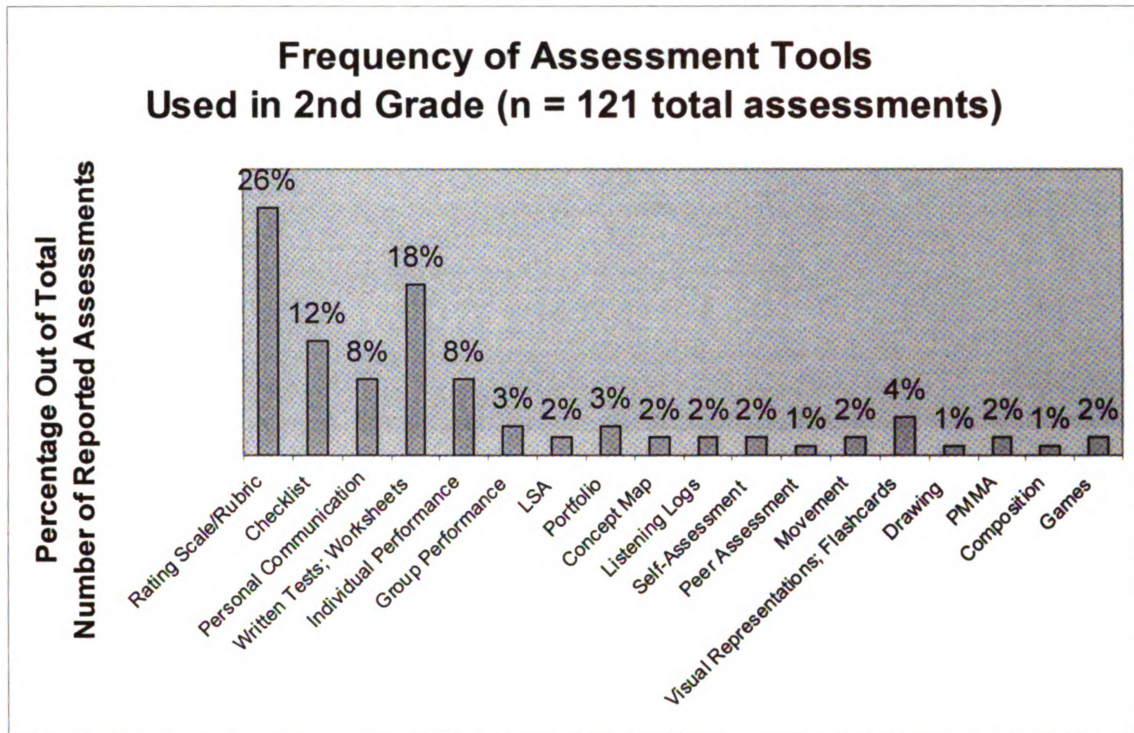
Table 15 shows the 18 assessment methods that were used in third grade. The most frequently used method was *rating scales or rubrics* (29%), which was followed by *written tests or worksheets* (22%), *individual performance* (9%), *checklist* (8%), and *personal communication* (7%). The remaining thirteen assessment methods were used 4% or fewer times within the total number of assessments.

TABLE 15

Frequency of Assessment Tools Used in 3rd Grade (n = 129 total assessments)
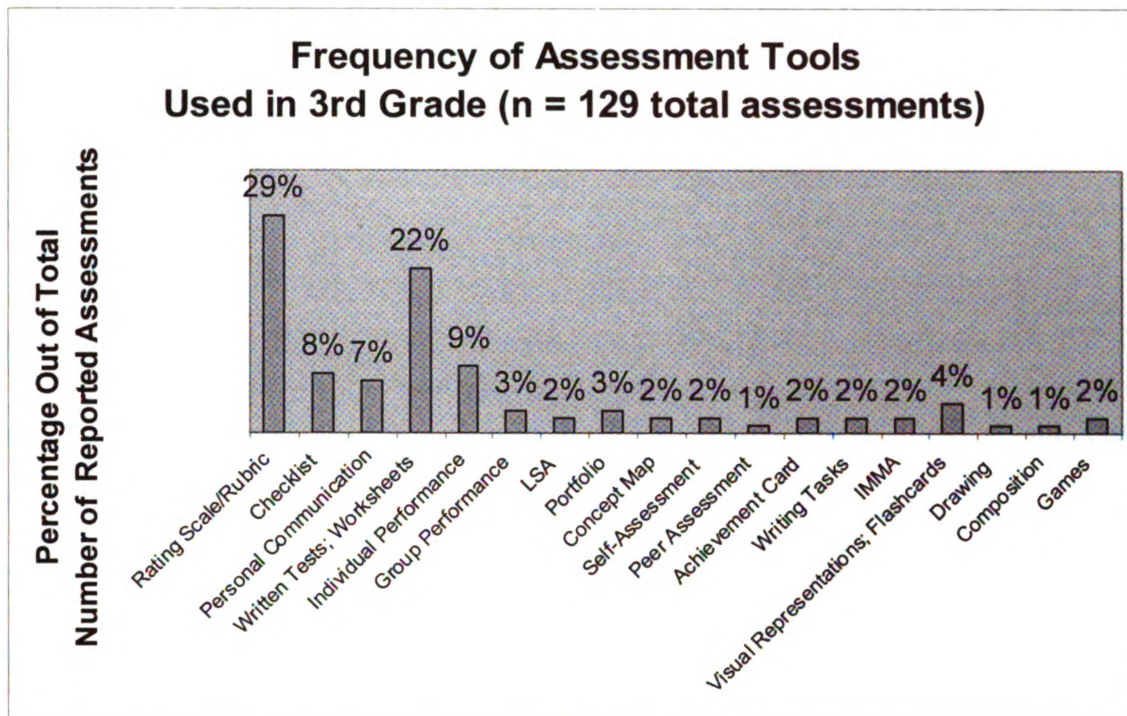
Eighteen assessment tools were also identified by respondents who teach fourth grade. These tools are shown in Table 16. The most frequently used method was *written tests or worksheets* (25%). Twenty-one percent of the assessments were measured with *rating scales or rubrics*. *Checklists* and *personal communication* were each indicated 8% of the time. Six percent of assessments were *individual performances*. The remaining thirteen assessment methods were each used 5% or fewer times.

TABLE 16

Frequency of Assessment Tools
Used in 4th Grade (n = 145 total assessments)

Percentage Out of Total Number of Reported Assessments

25%
21%

8% 8%
6%
1%
5%
2% 1% 2% 1%
3%
5% 4%
1% 2% 1%
5%

Rating Scale/Rubric · Checklist · Personal Communication · Written Tests; Worksheets · Individual Performance · Video · Group Performance · Portfolio · Concept Map · Listening Logs · Music ACE Software · Self-Assessment · Peer Assessment · Writing Tasks · IMMA · Visual Representations; · Composition · Games

Table 17 shows the 18 measurement tools used by respondents who teach fifth grade. Within the total number of assessments, the five most frequently used tools are as follows: *written tests or worksheets* (25%), *rating scale or rubric* (21%), *personal communication* (11%), *checklist* (7%), and *portfolio* (6%). There were thirteen assessment methods that were each used fewer than 6% of the time.

44

TABLE 17

Frequency of Assessment Tools Used in 5th Grade (n = 119 total assessments)
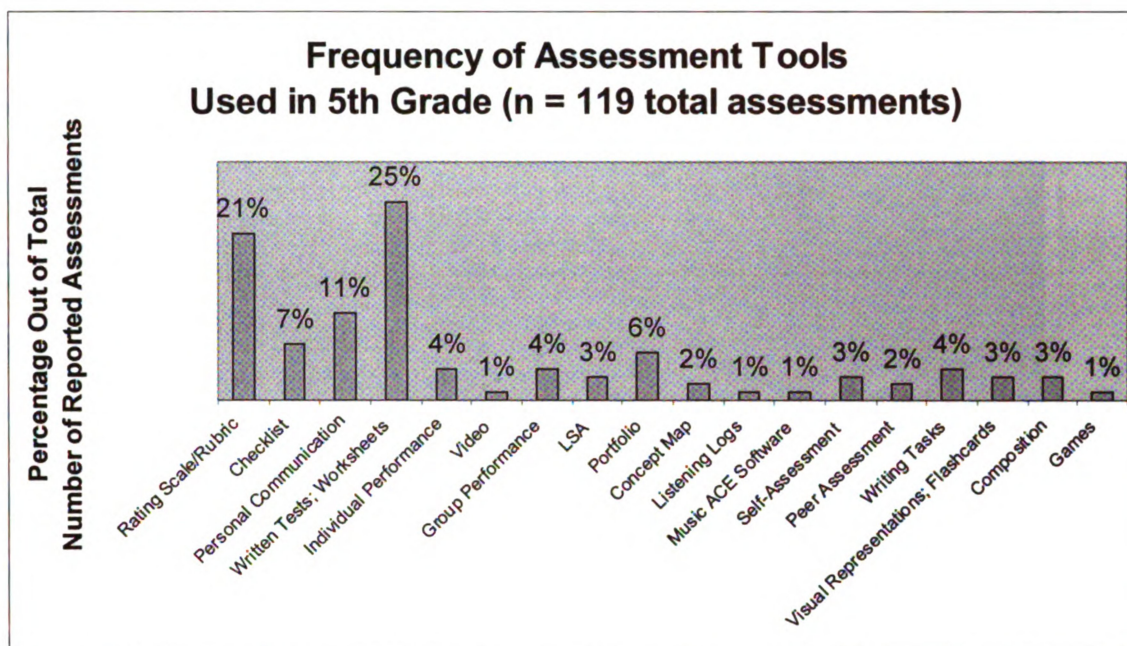
Only seven assessment methods were identified by respondents who teach sixth grade (see Table 18). *Written tests or worksheets* were used 39% of the time, *rating scales or rubrics* were used 18%, and *personal communication* was used 18% of the time. These were the three most frequently used assessment methods. The remaining four were each used 9% or fewer of the times.

TABLE 18

Frequency of Assessment Tools
Used in Sixth Grade (n = 33 total assessments)
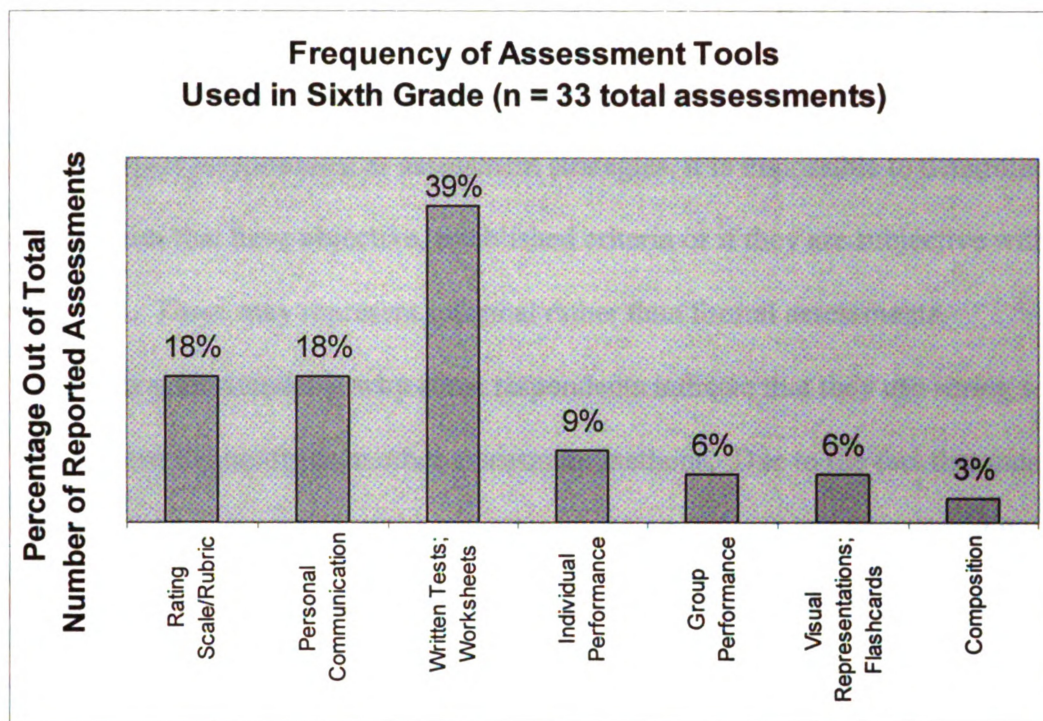
Rating scales and rubrics were the most frequently used method of assessment in kindergarten (46%), first (54%), second (26%), and third grades (29%). Rubrics and rating scales were replaced by written tests and worksheets as the most frequently used assessment method for grades four (25%), five (25%), and six (39%).

For all grade levels combined, a total of 25 different methods of assessments were identified. Of these 25 assessment methods, five were listed as the most frequently used for five of the seven grade levels. These methods were (1) *rating scales or rubrics,* (2) *checklists,* (3) *personal communication,* (4) *written tests or worksheets,* and (5) *individual performance.* Sixth grade teachers did not use *checklists* as an assessment method, and fourth grade replaced *individual performance* with *portfolio* assessment in its five most frequently used methods.

Three of these methods, *rating scale or rubric, checklist,* and *written test or worksheet,* tend to be more objective assessment strategies. Based upon the limited information given by the respondents regarding the nature of *personal communication* and *individual performance* as assessment strategies, it is impossible to determine if these are strategies that have objective, established criteria or if they are subjective with little to no criteria. These may represent informal rather than formal assessments.

It is understandable why some respondents indicate that they use *rating scales or rubrics* more frequently than other assessment methods. Due to the fact that music is a performance-based subject, it is logical for teachers to use an assessment tool that measures the students' musical behaviors and skills as they perform. Once rating scales and rubrics have been developed by the teacher, they are time-efficient and effective means of measuring student achievement during limited class time. They are an authentic type of assessment, because they measure achievement in a music-making environment.

However, in every grade level except first grade, these authentic devices (rubrics or rating scales) were used less than 50% of the time to measure the students' musical behaviors. In fact, in many of these grades, rubrics or rating scales represented fewer than 25% of the total number of assessments. Checklists were used even less, with 13% being the highest frequency of checklists (reported use for kindergarten students).

It is also easy to understand why personal communication was one of the top five most frequently used methods of assessment. On the survey, personal communication was defined as oral exams, interviews, conferences, and conversations. This type of communication can occur regularly between a student and a teacher in the classroom

situation. By choosing personal communication as a means of formal assessment, respondents are indicating that they are collecting written documentation of students' achievement through personal communication.

It is not surprising that the assessment tools *written tests or worksheets* were popular assessment methods among the survey respondents. These devices have a long tradition of measuring objective content information that is not skill related. Cognitive knowledge of musical terms, symbols, musical styles, and historical information is easily measured through written tests and worksheets. They are also time-efficient to administer and easy for teachers to construct.

It was previously established that music teachers relied on written tests and worksheets more as students got older. Teachers of grades four through six used written tests and worksheets more than any other assessment method. There are a few possible explanations for this trend. Music teachers may value knowledge of these musical concepts rather than the development of musical skills at an increasingly higher rate as students get older. It is also possible that music teachers rely on written methods of assessment more as the students mature because students' reading and writing abilities increase.

Upon examination of the data, no other assessment strategies were used frequently within the total number of assessments. Excluding the five assessment methods discussed previously, the most frequently used assessment tool used at any grade level was *portfolio* assessments, and it was only used 6% of the time at the fifth grade level. The remaining assessment methods were used within a limited range of 1 to

5% of the time. Fourteen percent of survey respondents report not using any method of formal assessment at all in their classrooms.

Content Assessed by Teachers

The second component of question four asked the respondents to identify either the specific music content or the specific musical skills that they have assessed from September to March. Tables 19 through 25 show this information by grade levels.

Table 19 shows the content that was assessed in kindergarten from September to March. Thirty respondents reported teaching elementary general music to kindergarten students. Twenty-three content objectives were identified at the kindergarten level. Teachers most frequently assessed *Beat Competency* (50%), *Singing Voice Development* (40%), *Matching Pitch* (33%), and *Rhythm* (33%).

TABLE 19

Kindergarten – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 30)

Kindergarten Content			
Beat competency	50%	Tonal aptitude	3%
Singing voice development	40%	Harmony	3%
Pitch match	33%	Playing instruments	3%
Rhythm	33%	Bilateral/Alternating bordun	3%
High/Low	17%	Identify rhythm instruments	3%
Dynamics	13%	Texture	3%
Movement	13%	Identify voice types	3%
Tempo	10%	Cross-Curriculum	3%
Chanting rhythm patterns	10%	Composers	3%
Singing tonal patterns	7%	Creativity & Improvisation	3%
Resting tone	7%	Class participation	3%
Rhythm reading	3%		

The content areas/skills that the respondents reported assessing in first grade are found in Table 20. Thirty-two respondents taught first grade and identified 34 content

areas or musical skills. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents reported assessing

Singing Voice Development (38%), followed by *Matching Pitch* (31%), *Rhythm* (28%),

Chanting Rhythm Patterns (25%), *Beat Competency* (22%), *Singing Tonal Patterns*

(19%), and *Form* (19%). Other content areas/skills were assessed by 16% or fewer

respondents.

TABLE 20

First Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 32)

First Grade Content			
Singing voice development	38%	Texture	6%
Pitch match	31%	Creativity & Improvisation	6%
Rhythm	28%	Music literature/history	6%
Chanting rhythm patterns	25%	Musical elements	3%
Beat competency	22%	Writing rhythms	3%
Singing tonal patterns	19%	Rhythm aptitude	3%
Form	19%	Tonal aptitude	3%
Reading rhythms	16%	Harmony	3%
High/Low	13%	Tonal writing	3%
Dynamics	9%	Bilateral/Alternating bordun	3%
Melodic direction	9%	Steps/Skips	3%
Tempo	6%	Listening	3%
Identify symbols	6%	Cross-Curriculum	3%
Resting tone	6%	Composers	3%
Pitch reading	6%	Performance	3%
Instrument families	6%	Class participation	3%
Movement	6%		

Thirty-seven content areas or musical skills were identified by the 31 respondents

who taught second grade (see Table 21). The six most frequently identified content

areas/skills were *Rhythm* (35%), *Singing Voice Development* (32%), *Matching Pitch*

(26%), *Reading Rhythms* (26%), *Reading Pitches* (19%), and *Instrument Families* (19%).

TABLE 21

Second Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 31)

Second Grade Content			
Rhythm	35%	Creativity & Improvisation	6%
Singing voice development	32%	Dynamics	3%
Pitch match	26%	Tempo	3%
Reading rhythms	26%	Musical elements	3%
Pitch reading	19%	Using head voice when singing	3%
Instrument families	19%	Rhythm aptitude	3%
Chanting rhythm patterns	16%	Rhythm partwork	3%
Melodic direction	16%	Tonal aptitude	3%
Form	16%	Harmony	3%
Singing tonal patterns	13%	Writing pitches	3%
Identify symbols	10%	Melodic partwork	3%
Beat competency	10%	Chord root playing	3%
Listening	10%	Instruments	3%
Writing rhythms	6%	Bilateral/Alternating bordun	3%
Strong/Weak Beat; Macro/Microbeat	6%	Cross-Curriculum	3%
Resting tone	6%	Composers	3%
Recorders	6%	Composition	3%
Movement	6%	Class participation	3%

Table 22 shows the content assessed by the 33 respondents who taught third grade. The respondents identified 47 content areas or musical skills. Eighteen percent of the respondents assessed each of the following five categories: *Singing Voice Development, Matching Pitch, Rhythm, Instrument Families,* and *Identifying Treble Clef Note Names.* These were the five most frequently assessed content areas in third grade.

51

TABLE 22

Third Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 33)

Third Grade Content			
Singing voice development	18%	Rhythm aptitude	3%
Pitch match	18%	Identify meter	3%
Rhythm	18%	Rhythm partwork	3%
Instrument families	18%	Tonal aptitude	3%
Identify treble clef note names	18%	Harmony	3%
Writing rhythms	15%	Resting tone	3%
Creativity & Improvisation	12%	Melodic partwork	3%
Identify symbols	9%	Singing in parts	3%
Recorders	9%	Singing root melodies	3%
Listening	9%	Singing in tune	3%
Composers	9%	Identify pattern function	3%
Reading rhythms	9%	Chord root playing	3%
Writing pitches	9%	Playing root melodies	3%
Chanting rhythm patterns	7%	Bilateral/Alternating bordun	3%
Singing tonal patterns	7%	Melodic ostinati	3%
Instruments	7%	Movement	3%
Dynamics	6%	Identify musical style	3%
Beat competency	6%	Cross-Curriculum	3%
Singing a scale using solfege	6%	Knowing words of Nat'l Anthem	3%
Melodic direction	6%	Pitch reading	3%
Music history & literature	6%	Time signature	3%
Form	6%	Vocabulary spelling test	3%
Tempo	3%	Overall musicianship	3%
Musical elements	3%		

Thirty respondents taught fourth grade and identified 40 content areas or musical skills (see Table 23). Four categories were assessed by 20% or more respondents: *Recorders* (40%), *Identify Treble Clef Note Names* (33%), *Reading Rhythms* (23%), and *Instrument Families* (20%).

TABLE 23

Fourth Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 30)

Fourth Grade Content			
Recorders	40%	Pitch writing	7%
Identify treble clef note names	33%	Rhythm aptitude	3%
Reading rhythms	23%	Beat competency	3%
Instrument families	20%	Identify meter	3%
Musical elements	17%	Rhythm partwork	3%
Identify symbols	13%	Tonal aptitude	3%
Singing voice development	13%	Harmony	3%
Pitch match	13%	Melodic partwork	3%
Rhythm	13%	Singing root melodies	3%
Creativity & Improvisation	13%	Identify pattern function	3%
Writing rhythms	13%	Chord root playing	3%
Chanting rhythm patterns	10%	Playing root melodies	3%
Singing tonal Patterns	10%	Tone color	3%
Pitch reading	10%	Listening	3%
Dynamics	7%	Multi-Ethnic music	3%
Singing in parts	7%	Music history & literature	3%
Singing in tune	7%	Composers	3%
Instruments	7%	Vocabulary spelling test	3%
Identify musical style	7%	Overall musicianship	3%
Form	7%	Thinking about music (not analyze)	3%

The 25 respondents who taught fifth grade identified 37 content areas or musical skills (see Table 24). Six were assessed by 20% or more respondents: *Identify Treble Clef Note Names* (32%), *Musical Elements* (24%), *Reading Pitches* (24%), *Singing Voice Development* (20%), *Recorders* (20%), and *Reading Rhythms* (20%).

TABLE 24

Fifth Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 25)

Fifth Grade Content			
Identify treble clef note names	32%	Thinking about music (not analyze)	8%
Musical elements	24%	Phrasing	4%
Pitch reading	24%	Beat competency	4%
Singing voice development	20%	Rhythm partwork	4%
Recorders	20%	Tonality	4%
Reading rhythms	20%	Melodic partwork	4%
Instrument families	16%	Singing in tune	4%
Dynamics	12%	Intervals	4%
Rhythm	12%	Identify pattern function	4%
Chanting rhythm patterns	12%	Tone color	4%
Singing tonal patterns	12%	Keyboard playing	4%
Singing in parts	12%	Listening	4%
Creativity & improvisation	12%	Identify musical style	4%
Writing rhythms	12%	Multi-ethnic music	4%
Pitch writing	12%	Using vocabulary correctly	4%
Identify symbols	8%	Spelling test	4%
Pitch match	8%	Performance	4%
Composers	8%	Harmony	4%
Form	8%		

Ten respondents taught sixth grade and identified nineteen content areas/skills that they assessed (see Table 25). The three most frequently indicated assessment objectives were *Reading Rhythm* (30%), *Reading Pitches* (30%), and *Instrument Families* (20%).

TABLE 25

Sixth Grade – Content Assessed by Respondents' from September to March (n = 10)

Sixth Grade Content			
Reading rhythms	30%	Singing tonal patterns	10%
Pitch reading	30%	Melodic partwork	10%
Instrument families	20%	Singing in parts	10%
Dynamics	10%	Intervals	10%
Identify symbols	10%	Recorders	10%
Musical elements	10%	Form	10%
Singing voice development	10%	Writing rhythms	10%
Pitch match	10%	Pitch writing	10%
Chanting rhythm patterns	10%	Identify treble clef note names	10%
Rhythm partwork	10%		

An analysis of the results across the grade levels revealed the following trends. The respondents' answers indicate that they are teaching their students in a more formal manner in first grade than in kindergarten, because they are assessing such skills/content areas as *chanting rhythm patterns*, *singing tonal patterns*, and *form* at a higher frequency. When compared to the most frequently chosen content assessments of previous grades, the answers provided in relation to their second grade students indicate that the respondents may place more value on notation-based content and instrument families than they had in earlier grades by assessing them. There is less agreement among the respondents at the third grade level, as the highest percentage of agreement for any content area was 18% in each of five content areas/skills.

Agreement among teachers was higher among respondents assessing fourth grade students. This is the first grade level that respondents indicate assessing *Recorders* within the highest assessment categories. The study of recorders is usually introduced in fourth grade as readiness for instrumental instruction. In relation to fifth grade students, the respondents added the content area *Musical Elements* as the only new content area.

Due to the small number of respondents who teach sixth grade, there were fewer assessment targets identified and none were new.

When comparing the data for each grade level to each other, the following three content areas/skills were among the highest percentages of areas assessed for kindergarten, first, second, and third grades: *Singing Voice Development, Rhythm*, and *Matching Pitch*. It may seem contradictory that the respondents place a high value on *Singing Voice Development* in their students but do not take advantage of the commercially published *Singing Voice Development Measure* (SVDM) to measure this skill development. However, the SVDM was not available until very recently and is not as authentic as other methods of measuring singing voice development. In relation to kindergarten and first grade, respondents assessed *Beat Competency* more frequently than many other content areas/skills. Beat competency was probably not assessed as frequently in second and third grades because most students have developed that skill by the end of first grade. The data suggest that those four content areas/skills are important to music teachers of kindergarten, first, second, and third grades.

When examining the assessment of third and fourth grade content areas/skills, *Instrument Families* and *Identifying Treble Clef Note Names* were shared among the most frequently indicated content areas/skills. *Recorders* and *Identify Treble Clef Note Names* were shared content areas/skills between fourth and fifth grade content frequencies. For many music teachers, these two concepts are closely related, because if students learn to play recorders while reading music notation, they will have to know treble clef note names. *Reading Rhythm* was identified as an important assessment target across fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Fifth and sixth grades alone shared two assessment targets:

Reading Rhythms and *Reading Pitches*. As evidenced by the data, fourth through sixth grade music teachers place value on music notation.

Respondents assess their students in the most content areas during the middle years of elementary schools. Table 28 shows that the number of content areas/skills that were assessed gradually increased from kindergarten to its peak at third grade then gradually decreased to sixth grade.

TABLE 26
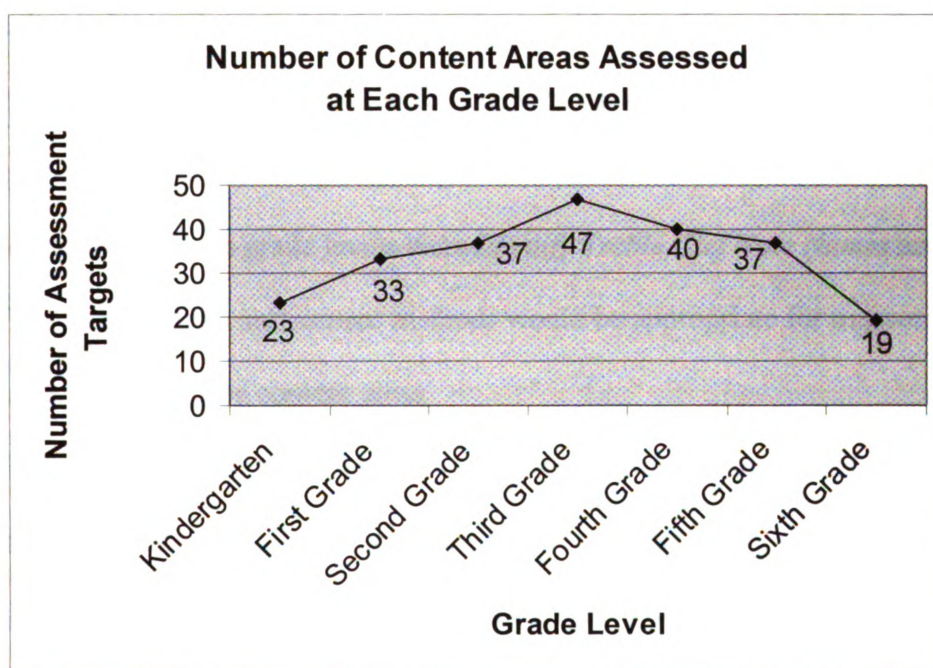
The increase in content areas/skills from kindergarten to third grade may be explained by the fact that, as students age, they engage in an increasing number of activities that introduce new musical content or musical skills. However, the gradual decrease in the number of content areas/skills that were assessed in third through sixth grades is not so easily explained. It may be possible that musical skills are not assessed as frequently in older grades because the students have had several years to solidify those skills. It is also possible that students do not like to perform alone in front of their peers

as they get older. Performance pressures may also decrease the amount of assessment time that is available in the upper elementary grades.

The assessment methods in relation to the content areas/skills that were assessed followed a logical pattern. For kindergarten through third grade, *rating scales or rubrics* were used most frequently in relation to the total number of assessments. The most frequently assessed musical content/skills at those same grade levels are *Singing Voice Development, Matching Pitch,* and *Rhythm*. These concept areas are easily measured using rating scales or rubrics. A similar trend is noted for grades fourth through sixth. *Written tests or worksheets* was the category chosen most frequently for assessment methods in grades four through six. A few of the content areas that were assessed most frequently at those grade levels were *Identify Treble Clef Note Names* and *Instrument Families*. Written assessment methods would be appropriate for measuring a students' knowledge of those content areas.

There is not a high level of agreement between respondents on the assessment methods used or the content area assessed at any grade level of elementary general music. There are several possible explanations for this. As was demonstrated in the respondents' answers regarding the frequency of assessments, the three most frequently chosen categories were *Zero Assessments, One to Three Assessments,* and *Four to Six Assessments*. When respondents choose to assess their students so sparingly or not at all, there is a decreased chance that their assessment methods will align. This alone diminishes the potential for agreement among respondents. Furthermore, music educators have difficulty agreeing on a music curriculum, indicating that they place value

on different aspects of music. This is reflected in their diverse answers regarding the music content or skills that they assess.

District Assessment Requirements

In question five, respondents were asked whether their districts required assessment in music. All respondents answered this question. Of the 35, 25 respondents (71%) stated that their districts did not require assessment. Nine respondents (26%) indicated that assessment was required by their school districts. The remaining one respondent (3%) reported not knowing if his/her district requires assessment in the general music classroom.

The second section of question five asked the respondents to state what the specific assessment requirements are in their school districts. Based upon thirty-five respondents' (100%) answers, six categories were identified and are shown in Table 26. Respondents may have indicated responses that fall into more than one category. The most frequently occurring response states that *assessment requirements are currently in development* (14%).

TABLE 27
District Assessment Requirements (n = 35)

Category	Percentage of Respondents
Assessment requirements are currently in development	14%
District requires certain number of assessments	9%
District sets specific criteria for each grade level	9%
General statement about assessing students	9%
District sets general content assessments by grade level	9%
Does not know district requirements	3%

Question five was included in the survey to provide contextual information for the last research question that asked respondents to identify how they apply the results of

their assessments. Given the large number of respondents (71%) who indicated that their

districts did not require assessments, it is not surprising that so little assessment is

occurring.

Motivation and Application of Assessment

In question six, respondents were asked to state their reasons for assessing

students in music as well as how they apply the results of their assessments. Thirty-one

(89%) respondents provided the answers. The categories that emerged are in Table 27.

The four remaining respondents left this question blank.

TABLE 28

Respondents' Reasons for Assessment & How They Apply Their Results (n = 31)

Category	Percentage of Respondents
To allow teacher to adapt instruction	55%
To assist in assigning student grades	45%
To establish if students understand a concept	39%
To monitor student progress	35%
To identify what needs remediation	29%
To provide validation for the inclusion of music in the curriculum	19%
To communicate achievement to students and parents	19%
To identify and challenge gifted students	16%
To provide teacher accountability	10%
To evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and curriculum	10%
To check students' application of knowledge and performance	7%
To motivate their students	7%
To determine if it is appropriate to move on to new material	7%
To determine students' readiness for the next grade level or band	7%
To monitor achievement in relation to aptitude	3%
To provide opportunities to assess themselves and their peers	3%
To make instructional decisions	3%
Does not philosophically agree with assessment in general music	3%
For personal reasons	3%

It is not surprising that most respondents provided educational reasons for assessing their students. Adapting and individualizing instruction are important responsibilities in teaching, and assessment provides an excellent means to accomplish these tasks. Additional educational reasons for assessment included assigning student grades, establishing if students understand content information, tracking student progress, as well as providing challenges or remediation for students when necessary.

Respondents also indicated that they were motivated to assess their students for accountability purposes. Assessment motivated students and assisted teachers in evaluating their pedagogical techniques. Through assessment, teachers believed that they may validate the role of music in the general education curriculum by providing documentation of student achievement for administrators and parents. This ideology is reflective of current practices in education in the United States, as policy-makers and legislators are relying more heavily on the results of high-stakes testing to verify that learning is occurring within the schools of America.

One teacher did not believe that assessment in general music is a philosophically-sound practice. The respondent stated, "I do not believe in formal assessment for music. The only assessment is whether the students try the given task. It has been my experience that formal assessment makes music just another subject to learn and not enjoy. Assessment has its place in specialized music (band, orchestra, choir) but not in the general music classroom where students may have their first hearing of music beyond their MP3 and IPODs." This belief was stated only by one respondent in this study but may be indicative of a small percentage of general music teachers in the United States. This respondent does not view assessment as a means to evaluate the efficacy of

instruction or to establish what the students are learning as opposed to the notion that assessment in music causes students to think that they should learn in music or causes them to dislike music.

CHAPTER 5

Implications and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to examine the use of assessment in the elementary general music classroom. It established the frequency of assessment, methods of assessment, musical content and skills that are assessed, and applications of assessment through survey responses from Michigan elementary music teachers. The survey responses were analyzed and discussed as themes emerged.

The surveys indicated that many of the respondents did not frequently assess their students, and some did not assess the students at all. Furthermore, respondents did not use commercially available achievement tests and did minimal aptitude testing. Teacher-constructed tests were used more frequently than standardized tests. The respondents used rating scales or rubrics, checklists, personal communication, written tests or worksheets, and individual performances to measure student achievement the most frequently.

Respondents indicated that they assess the following music content areas or skills the most frequently but not necessarily at every grade level: beat competency, singing voice development, matching pitch, rhythm, recorders, identifying treble clef note names, instrument families, reading rhythms, and reading pitches. However, given that the highest level of agreement on any content area/skill was 50%, there was little agreement among the respondents as to the content areas or skills that they believed should be assessed.

While some school districts required assessment in the elementary general music classroom, the majority of respondents indicated that their school districts did not. Of

those respondents who do assess their students, they are motivated to assess their students in order to adapt and individualize instruction and to provide validity for the inclusion of music education in the general education curriculum. However, respondents did not all agree that assessment should occur within the music classroom.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for music educators and music education research. The results provide information for professional music educators regarding the assessment practices of their colleagues. The frequency of assessment in general music varied greatly in the results of this study. Is it possible for teachers to determine what their students know if they do not assess their achievement? How do they adapt their instruction and meet the needs of individual students if they do not establish and document what students have learned? Music educators should consider if their lack of assessment may limit their students' achievement. Furthermore, music teachers should use the results of this study to examine whether music educators are validating the inclusion of music in the general education curriculum when they fail to assess student achievement and offer evidence of student learning.

For those teachers who are not assessing their students, the results of this study will provide them with an opportunity to discover the assessment methods that are used by Michigan music teachers. Teachers who do assess their students but have had difficulty finding appropriate and effective methods to measure their students' achievement will be able to consider the assessment methods that other music teachers use that might differ from their own. Music teachers will also be able to compare the

music content and skills that they assess with the content and skills that other teachers assess. This may promote the unification of a music curriculum that is agreed upon by the music education community.

The benefits of the information gained through aptitude testing are understood by the relatively low percentage of teachers who administer them to their students. For those teachers who do not use aptitude tests, it may prove valuable to investigate the benefits of aptitude testing as well as the relative ease of administration the tests offer. Test developers should invest more time and energy in educating teachers about the value of their products so that music teachers are better able to identify students who may need to be challenged as well as students who will benefit from additional help.

The results indicate that music educators would benefit from additional information about and education in music assessment. Time-efficient, practical assessment tools could provide great assistance to music teachers. More literature needs to be provided to teachers on how to incorporate assessment into their classroom as a daily basis. Teachers would also benefit from attending music assessment sessions offered at music educator workshops. Many music educators may think that assessment causes instruction to shut down or is time-prohibitive. This does not have to be the case if the assessment is implemented in a naturalistic, consistent manner.

The results of this study indicate that we, as a profession, cannot agree on the value and necessity of assessment in elementary general music or we do not understand how we can assess large numbers of students in a limited amount of instructional time. There may be a relationship between this and the fact that few districts have assessment requirements for music. Teachers may not feel the need to assess their students if the

district does not require it. However, music educators need to treat music in a manner that supports its place in the educational curriculum by creating assessment strategies that provide documentation of student achievement within the elementary general music classroom.

Recommendations

Future studies in elementary general music assessment are necessary. A repeat of this survey study with more respondents could provide a more generalizable set of data from which to draw conclusions about the elementary general music community as a whole. Similar studies should be conducted in other states as well. A study that focused completely on the methods and content areas of assessment would yield a wealth of information if the respondents were able to supply the researcher with sample assessment tools that they have constructed.

A study investigating music teachers' attitudes and philosophies toward assessment in general music would be informative. It would also be valuable if researchers would attempt to provide assessment solutions for the perceived problems of too many students with too little instructional time. These problems may be addressed effectively by qualitative studies that document "best practice models" of assessment. Music education can only benefit from the persistent study of assessment methods and issues.

Appendix A
Elementary General Music Assessment Survey

Would you like a copy of the research findings? (circle one)   **YES   NO**

Demographic Information

1. Please check the grade level(s) you are currently teaching, indicate the amount of contact time you have with one class in that grade level per week, and the total number of students you teach at that grade level:

	contact time per week	total # of students per grade level
☐ pre-kindergarten	_____	_____
☐ kindergarten	_____	_____
☐ 1st	_____	_____
☐ 2nd	_____	_____
☐ 3rd	_____	_____
☐ 4th	_____	_____
☐ 5th	_____	_____
☐ 6th & above	_____	_____

Frequency of Assessment

2. This study defines formal assessment as measurement tools that provide written documentation of a student's aptitude or achievement toward an objective. It does not include informal assessment that teachers mentally record. How many formal assessments did you administer to each of the following grades since the start of the school year? If you do not teach the given grade level, please select *not applicable* (N/A).

a. Kindergarten   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

b. 1st grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

c. 2nd grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

d. 3rd grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

e. 4th grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

f. 5th grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

g. 6th grade   ☐ 0   ☐ 1-3   ☐ 4-6   ☐ 7-10   ☐ 11-13   ☐ 14 + (specify) _____   ☐ N/A

Methods of Assessment Used & Objectives Assessed

3. Please indicate which commercially available tests you used to date this year. Also specify the grade level(s) with which you used it by circling the grade level(s).

□ Musical Aptitude Profile	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Primary Measures of Music Audiation	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Advanced Measures of Music Audiation	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Audie: A Game for Understanding and Analyzing Your Child's Music Potential	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Am I Musical? (Music Audiation Games)	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Singing Voice Development Measure	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Measure of Creative Thinking in Music	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Thinking Creatively with Music	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Musical Achievement Test	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Iowa Tests of Music Literacy	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
□ Other _____	K	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. On the following pages, please indicate the type of assessment method(s) you used so far this school year to **measure student progress towards** developing specific skills or content knowledge. You may either refer to the following assessment methods or specify another method if not listed. Please feel free to attach an additional page if you need more space to write.

- Rating Scale or Rubric (scoring guides that indicates more than one level of achievement for one or more criteria)
- Checklist (checks to see if students exhibit one or more criteria)
- Achievement Cards (card for each student tracking achievement of objectives)
- Written Tests (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, short answer)
- Writing Tasks (essay, research papers, journals)
- Personal Communication (oral exams, interviews, conferences, conversations)
- Portfolio/Processfolio
- Videotape/Audiotape
- Concept Maps
- Listening Logs
- Self-Assessment
- Peer Assessment

Example: Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify): _Singing Voice Development_

Assessment Method: ____Individual class performances using rating scale____

Kindergarten

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

First Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

Second Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

   Assessment Method: _____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

Third Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

Fourth Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

Fifth Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____

Assessment Method: _____

_____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

Sixth Grade

a. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

b. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

c. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

d. *Skill or Content Knowledge (please identify):* _____
   Assessment Method: _____

_____

Applications of Assessment

5. Does your district require assessment in the music classroom? (circle one)   YES   NO

   If yes, what are the requirements?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. For what purpose(s) do you assess your students? How do you apply the results of assessments?

_____

_____

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Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

**An Examination of the Frequency, Methods, Objectives, and Applications
of Assessment in the Elementary General Music Classroom in the State of Michigan**

February 26, 2005

Dear Music Teacher:

In an effort to further enhance the field of music education, I am seeking your help in compiling information regarding your current assessment strategies as an elementary general music teacher. As part of my master's thesis at Michigan State University, I am examining the current assessment strategies being used by elementary general music teachers in Michigan. I am specifically investigating the following: (1) How frequently do music teachers use assessment by grade level? (2) What methods of assessment are used by grade level? (3) What student skills or content knowledge do music teachers assess at each grade level? (4) How do music teachers apply the results of their assessments?

To gather data, I have developed a survey based upon the literature and current research regarding assessment. This literature gives information regarding theoretical ideas: strategies of assessment, reasons for implementing assessment, and applications of assessment. However, little is known about what professional teachers actually use in the classroom. The results of this research will be used to establish which assessment strategies are currently being used in elementary general music and will enable teachers to improve music instruction in the future. A copy of the research results will be provided to you at your request.

The study is being conducted for research purposes only and your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. This questionnaire will take approximately twenty minutes of your time to complete. The reporting of results will be confidential and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The validity and accuracy of the survey depend upon answers that accurately convey what you truly do in the classroom.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. **Please place the completed survey in the mail by March 15.** If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Cynthia Taggart, Ph. D., by phone at (517) 432-9678 or by email at taggartc@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph. D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: uchrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Thank your for your cooperation and assistance in understanding the current assessment practices of professional elementary general music teachers. Your participation will contribute to future improvements in the field of music education.

Sincerely,

Kristy E. Talley
Master's Student, Michigan State University
talleykr@msu.edu

Appendix C

When you return your survey, your name will be entered into a drawing to receive FREE instructional materials valued at $72.00.

March 28, 2005

Dear Music Teacher:

In an effort to further enhance the field of music education, would you reconsider your decision to participate in a research study that examines current assessment strategies of elementary general music teachers? Surveys were sent to two hundred participants but the return rate was very low. In order to obtain results that are representative of the total population of Michigan elementary music teachers, the survey return rate needs to be higher. By participating in this study, you will be able to express your beliefs about assessment in general music as well as provide essential information concerning the assessments you use in your classroom. The results of this research will be used to inform the music education community (professional teachers, music education students, professors of music education) about the current practices of professional music teachers in this school climate of heightened assessment awareness. A copy of the research results will be provided to you at your request.

The study is being conducted for research purposes only and your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. This questionnaire will take approximately twenty minutes of your time to complete. The reporting of results will be confidential and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The validity and accuracy of the survey depend upon answers that accurately convey what you truly do in the classroom.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. **Please place the completed survey in the mail by April 6.** If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Cynthia Taggart, Ph. D., by phone at (517) 432-9678 or by email at taggartc@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph. D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: uchrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

By completing this informational survey, you will join other music educators in providing valuable information for the field of music education. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Kristy E. Talley
Master's Student, Michigan State University
talleykr@msu.edu

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