

Assessment in the Secondary School Band Programs of British Columbia

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

For many years, the assessment practices of band directors in North America have come under scrutiny. As funding for public education shrinks, the call for greater accountability in schools has focused attention on the assessment procedures of all teachers. This is especially true for arts teachers, including band directors, due to the public's perception of highly subjective assessment practices in arts-based courses. This sequential, explanatory mixed method study sought to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment. The study also sought to discover any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in designing and implementing those assessment procedures.

Using a stratified random sample of band directors from 12 districts across four regions of British Columbia, this sequential, explanatory mixed methods study allowed a

dialectical research structure that connected the empirical evidence of the quantitative survey instrument with the qualitative interview that drew upon the subjects' personal beliefs.

This study found that band directors do assess their students and hold strong beliefs that assessment is fundamental to the teaching/learning process. Despite this, they often use structures in their assessment practice that account for non-achievement, behavioural factors (i.e., effort, attendance, attitude, and participation) rather than musical outcomes. It also became apparent that band directors lacked sufficient pedagogical content knowledge in the early stages of their career that supports broad-based assessment within a comprehensive musicianship context. Why? Band directors noted that their pre-service education in assessment was deficient. Therefore, in addition to other recommendations, this study suggests a tripartite model for undergraduate music education that is more inclusive of assessment instruction and procedures. In other words, music teacher education programs should balance *educatorship*, *musicianship*, and *assessorship*.

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Acknowledgements

Dr. Gerald King ~ for your guidance, mentorship, patience, advocacy, honest feedback, and, not least of all, your friendship. I am indebted to you for your constant encouragement, gentle reminders, and the many opportunities you have given me, far more than I can ever repay.

My Committee ~ This long process has seen many rewrites and sleepless nights. I truly appreciate the effort each of you gave to help me through this experience.

Melanie Spencer ~ My beautiful partner. I am forever grateful for the love and patience you have shown me throughout this process.

My Mom, Elizabeth Keddy ~ For always believing in me and giving me the means to pursue music, even in troubled times. You gave me consistent encouragement throughout my life to pursue whatever my heart desired.

My family, friends & colleagues ~ especially Dr. Dale Lonis for his vision; Jason Caslor and Larry Petersen for the many laughs, support, and encouragement; Regan McLachlan for the constant sarcasm; and Jim and Marian Ferris for their boundless humanity and support.

The band directors of BC ~ Thank you for your participation in this study, your kindness, and for all that you do for students!

All of my former and current students ~ You have inspired me to pursue greater depths of knowledge about what music teachers do on a daily basis. Thank you! and finally,

Starbucks ~ for providing an abundance of coffee, electricity, wi-fi, and ambience that allowed me to work without distraction.

Dedication

For my father, Phillip Keddy.
I wish he were here to see this dream come true.
His selflessness inspired me to become a teacher...
and continues to influence me every day.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What lies at the heart of human existence is the ability to use rational thought—as opposed to intuition—as the basis for decision-making (Isaack, 1978; Hastie & Dawes, 2001). That is not to say that intuition has no part in the decision-making process, just that rationality—communication, reception, processing, and action—is a distinguishing factor between humans and other living species. Meaning is not merely a reactive process, but one of social and intellectual “‘context sensitivity’ that can only come from...culturally relevant meaning readiness” (Bruner, 1990, p. 73). This process of communicating, receiving, and processing ideas underlies the basis for the educational system currently in use throughout North America. In the usual practice of teaching, teachers communicate concepts, students receive and process those concepts, and then perform some form of action in order to demonstrate their degree of understanding of those concepts. It is this element of the educational puzzle—demonstration of understanding, or “assessment”—that continually metamorphoses.

Assessment, as perhaps the most publicly visible aspect of a teacher’s duties, has long been touted as the silver bullet of education (Rea-Dickens & Gardner, 2000). Teachers use assessment for a multitude of purposes: Student learning, determining teaching effectiveness, and reporting to name but a few. However, as a publicly funded institution, education is constantly under the scrutiny of an ever-leery set of stakeholders (i.e., parents, students, taxpayers, and governments) that wish some form of accountability for their moral support and financial commitment. “Assessment is essential to allow individuals to get the educational support they need to succeed, to see

the effectiveness of different educational methods, and to ensure that education budgets are being spent effectively” (Diamond, 2009, p. 2). In response, provincial, state, or national governments responsible for funding education have initiated standardized testing policies as a means of determining student achievement levels in the public school system.

This duality of educational assessment—teacher versus government—is at the centre of the “accountability” debate that has pervaded the North American educational community during the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century. With increasing frequency, government-led, standardized testing has become the means of public scrutiny for schools (Templin, 2008). If a school is not performing up to the public’s perception of achievement, teachers are often chided as being ineffective, at best, or incompetent, at worst. As early as 1974, “the demand for accountability [had] grown with the rising costs of public education and the concurrent dissatisfaction of students, parents, politicians, and lay people with the results of this education” (Labuta, 1974, p. 19). Such demands have been instrumental in creating the standardized assessment culture now seen in many jurisdictions throughout North America. “Assessment has become fashionable, but not because of a school’s need to assess the effectiveness of teaching or to improve learning. Quite the contrary, what schools are confronting is a political crisis in education” (Dorn, Madeja, & Sabol, 2004, p. 47).

As the campaign for accountability and standards in North American education has evolved, the art of teaching has become both easier and more difficult. This effort toward accountability and standards has inundated teachers in all disciplines with increasingly prescriptive objectives for use in structuring curricula and lessons, usually

based on government philosophical bias. For music educators, such structure can provide a means of political capital as they are now able to supply the public with quantifiable assessment data that distribute achievement based on “chunked out” musical ideas,¹ as opposed to what many believe are subjective, and unsubstantiated, grading practices. Colwell and Goolsby (2002) tell us that because of music’s “many subjective judgements, the need for frequent, organized evaluative procedures is great” (p. 30). With more evidence regarding achievement, parents and students, are then able to make inferences as to the quality of learning and in some cases teaching, that has taken place. Teachers need only refer to curriculum guides when parents question the grading process. In the case of British Columbia, teachers are subject to the Prescribed Learning Outcomes, which “are content standards for the provincial education system. Prescribed learning outcomes set out the knowledge, enduring ideas, issues, concepts, skills, and attitudes for each subject. They are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do in each grade” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002, p. III). As such, all teachers are expected to use the outcomes as objective, or quantitative, “benchmarks that will permit the use of criterion-referenced performance standards” (p. III).

On the other hand, teaching has become more complicated because of the more prescriptive nature of the standards set out by various educational ministries. “How shall I cover all of these outcomes and have my students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding?” is a cry heard throughout the teaching community. In the past, teachers have used traditional paper and pencil testing as a means of gathering information about student understanding and achievement. Music teachers, in addition to paper and pencil

¹ In fact, a sub-culture of educational vendors has emerged, providing music educators with pre-made

testing (i.e., When did Mozart die?), have the option of employing performance tests using scales, études, and repertoire, to determine a level of musical understanding that students have achieved. Unfortunately, many music educators have exhibited an apathetic attitude for incorporating any assessment strategies in the classroom, citing lack of time as the main hindrance, instead using non-musical goals such as attendance, effort, and participation as the main focus for student grading (McCoy, 1991). Such practice may contribute to student—and public—perceptions of music as an activity rather than a legitimate discipline with its own knowledge base. Drake (1984) found that the principal criteria in the assignment of grades for students in college and university performing groups were attendance and participation. This cycle of non-musical assessment, then, could be attributed to the fact that there is a “lack of training concerning grading and student assessment” (Lacognata, 2010, p. 20). As such, music teachers, who are products of the university system, tend to grade in the same manner as they were graded during their undergraduate program (Foyle & Nosek, n.d.).

John Dewey (1938) reminds us that what actions we take depend upon the previous experiences with which we have connected to particular situations:

The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do.

(p. 38)

Dewey’s words represent an important philosophical focus for the manner in which education, explicitly, and assessment, implicitly, were to have been structured—experientially. In other words, the deeper the experience of the educator in the discipline,

including assessment instruction, the more solid a foundation for the assessment of those with whom he or she interacts. While few would argue with the ideals of Dewey's logic, the movement for academic reform and accountability in the form of standardized tests has been a burden, financially and academically, on the educational community for a number of years (Moran, 2009).

Regelski (2005), in discussing purposes of assessment in music programs, describes that lessons are "evaluated as 'good' if... 'delivered' according to the traditions and procedures associated with the methods and materials in question, not according to whether [they] produced results that 'make a difference'" (p. 15). In an earlier article, Regelski (1999) is more fervent:

the teacher-conductor functions as a musical dictator, little if any musical independence develops on the part of the students that can transfer to life outside the ensemble. Thus, despite the high musical standards reached by many *directors*, their students are often benefited not much more in musical or educational terms than organ pipes or piano strings are benefited by the artistry of the performer. (p. 100, emphasis in original)

Elliott (1995) stated that, "achieving the goals of music education depends on assessment. The primary function of assessment in music education is not to determine grades but to provide accurate feedback to students about the quality of their growing musicianship" (p. 264), the ability of which can only be determined by those with experience as musicians. According to Colwell (2002), music educators have exhibited a general "lack of serious interest in assessment" (p. 1146). He warns that, "teachers cannot continue to randomly add and subtract experiences and objectives" (p. 1155) in order to

develop their lessons. The result of such practice would be the marginalization of music as an activity rather than a core discipline. If we construct our personal understandings through our experiences, as suggested by Wiggins (2007), then “teaching is essentially a process of designing experiences and providing support for learners as they actively and interactively engage in those experiences” (p. 36). However, unless teachers, and especially music teachers, design curricula based on skills that they have experienced there is little contextual basis from which to design and conduct meaningful assessment of student achievement, or for students to be able to develop their own meanings from those experiences. Meanings which, as outlined by Bruner (1990), are “culturally mediated phenomen[a] that [depend] upon the prior existence of a shared symbol system” (p. 69).

Definition of Assessment

At this point, it would be appropriate to provide a definition of assessment. The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2002), in the Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for Choral and Instrumental Music, 11 to 12, defines *assessment* as “the systematic process of *gathering information* about students’ learning in order to describe what they know, are able to do, and are working toward” (emphasis added, p. 4).

Instrumental Music Education in Canada

“Music in secondary schools had a remarkable growth following the Second World War. Nowhere was this more dramatic than in the field of instrumental music” (Green & Vogan, 1991, p. 349). In 1946, a milestone in the annals of Canadian school music occurred when North Toronto Collegiate introduced instrumental music as an optional subject. This program was an experiment in which “music was to be treated like

any other subject” and became the prototype in the widespread expansion of instrumental music over the next three decades (p. 354). This flourishing of instrumental music did much for displaced military bandmen, and other musicians, looking for steady employment following World War II.

Instrumental music in British Columbia. British Columbia has a rich and varied history of its own in regard to instrumental music and education. In the latter 19th century, “bands and orchestras were abundant in the musical life of Victoria” (Green & Vogan, p. 88), but quite limited in the school system. In 1873, John Jessop, the first Superintendent of Education in British Columbia, “suggested that teachers better qualify themselves to teach [music],” (McIntosh, 1986, p. 6) though it was, for the most part, more focused on vocal music and theory rather than instrumental music, and was used mostly as an extra-curricular activity. In 1914, Victoria High School initiated an in-school program when it began a 14-piece orchestra under the direction of mathematics teacher E.H. Russell.

In 1936, instrumental music in secondary schools in British Columbia received strong recognition when the Department of Education “allow[ed] academic credit for students in Grade 9 who studied either violin and theory or piano and theory with private instructors” (McIntosh, p. 7), a practice which continues to this day. However, band programs were still far outnumbered by orchestras and “it was not until the 1950s that a system of group instruction was developed in which full-time, certified [band] teachers were operating within the regular school schedule...[providing]...a more consistent level of achievement within individual schools (Green & Vogan, p. 194). Following the formation of the British Columbia Instrumental School Teachers' Association (BCISTA)

in 1954, and its merger with the British Columbia Music Educators' Association in 1962, a renewed emphasis on instrumental music in the schools had begun, which assisted in solidifying instrumental music pedagogy and resources.

The Problem

In the current age of accountability, assessment continues to create anxiety and frustration for educators. Music education, in particular, has its own set of challenges related to assessment. Colwell (2003) writes that “music educators accept the general principle of assessment but remain ignorant of the detailed actions required for a reasonably valid assessment” (p. 16). As a so-called *subjective* process, assessment must be imbued in some form of phenomenological experience in order to provide both relevancy and validity. Music educators, due to the nature of the art form, must extend beyond the usual nonverbal because they “are expected to clarify what music is all about, by helping our students...*understand what they are doing and why*” (Reimer, 2003b, p. 134, emphasis in original). Band directors come to the profession with varying amounts of performing experience and pedagogical expertise, which may impact on how they are able to design and interpret the assessment data they receive from their students. Ward (2004) determined that years of experience had little to no effect on the opinions of instrumental teachers.

In order to provide students, as noted earlier by Reimer (2003b), with the ability to “understand what they are doing and why,” educators must possess, as Dewey (1938) exhorts, a “maturity of experience” with which to develop and execute the assessment of student achievement. According to Frary, Cross, and Weber (1993), teachers' assessment knowledge is generally derived from their experiences as students, from their colleagues,

and from in-service professional development, with little from their undergraduate teacher education.

In 2000, Asmus cites “National Standards, state requirements, and political realities” in suggesting that “substantive information about how best to prepare music teachers” in a new era of education is needed because “the field of music education is dramatically different than it was when the music teacher preparation programs were originally conceived in the last century” (p. 5). Unfortunately, there appears to be “limited research and scholarship devoted to assessment in music over the past several decades” (Colwell, 2006, p. 199), none of which appears to be Canadian based. In fact, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, in 2005, already had determined, citing an urgent need for research into “evaluation and assessment in the arts” (p. 2).

While no music education specific research relating to assessment in band has been found relating to Canada, a number of American studies have been completed (e.g., Hanzlik, 2001; Kancianic, 2006; Lacognata, 2010; Lehman, 1998; McCoy, 1991; McPherson, 1995; Russell & Austin, 2010; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Simanton, 2000; Stoll, 2008) with respect to assessment in secondary school band programs. This study will expand on the American research, but with a focus on British Columbia band programs.

The present research sought to help determine needs for music classroom assessment training, and specifically band classrooms, for undergraduate music education students, pre-service, and in-service teachers, by examining the current uses of classroom assessment among secondary school band directors in British Columbia.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices. The study also sought to discover any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in designing and implementing those assessment procedures as well as any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director's career stage. At the same time, the study focused on determining the purposes, and uses, of band directors' assessment methods with respect to current governmental mandates, as well as potential implications for teacher education related to the use of classroom assessment. Additionally, the data collected in the survey portion of the study assessed the degree to which band directors use attendance, attitude, effort, and/or participation as a component of their assessment practices, in contravention of the idea of a standards-based, achievement oriented curriculum which, according to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2010) should constitute "a criterion-referenced approach to evaluation and enables teachers, students, and parents to compare student performance to provincial standards" (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/).

Research Questions

The following research questions relating to assessment by band directors in British Columbia were examined:

- a) What types of assessment practices are used by band directors in British Columbia?
- b) Are the grades that band directors assign to students based on the use of varied assessment strategies?
- c) What are band directors' understandings of the purposes of classroom assessment, and, in particular, music?
- d) Are the assessment structures that band directors design and execute supportive of *best practice* (as determined by experts)?
- e) What importance do band directors assign to the purposes and uses of assessment?
- f) What are band directors' understandings of the purposes and uses of their classroom teaching and assessment methods, with particular emphasis on a comprehensive musicianship² model?
- g) Do band directors provide for the implementation of a standards-based curriculum in relation to assessment?
- h) Do band directors base their assessment practice(s) in relation to undergraduate/graduate coursework, providing such coursework existed?

² Comprehensive musicianship is defined as "a program of instruction which emphasizes the interdependence of musical knowledge and musical performance. It is a program of instruction that seeks, through performance, to develop an understanding of basic musical concepts: tone, melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, expression, and form. This is done by involving students in a variety of roles including performing, improvising, composing, transcribing, arranging, conducting, rehearsing, and visually and aurally analyzing music" (Wisconsin Music Educators Association, 1977).

Additionally, the study examined the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in British Columbia in regard to the design and implementation of assessment procedures, including any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director's career stage.

Delimitations of the Study

1. Only secondary school band directors acted as participants in this study. Middle school band directors may share a number of similarities with their secondary counterparts, including training, though the performance demands of the secondary ensemble tend to be greater, lending credence to more performance-based assessment.
2. It is understood that every ensemble in a secondary music program (i.e., band, choir, and orchestra) share similar, yet distinct, challenges related to reporting, grading, and assessment. So that the results are not skewed by outside factors, the focus of this study was limited to band programs and directors rather than any other genre or teacher.

Significance of the Study

This study sought to discover the current uses of assessment in the band classrooms of British Columbia, as well as the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes that band directors have in the design and implementation of their assessment procedures. As such, the study may prove helpful in contributing to the refinement of undergraduate music education and music teacher certification programs in relation to pedagogical praxis; a Deweyan perspective of pragmatism and experience regarding the instruction of future music educators in the purposes and usage of assessment in the

band classrooms of British Columbia.

Summary

“The choice for teachers is to either find a way to assess arts instruction or witness its eventual elimination from the school curriculum” (Dorn, Majeda, & Sabol, 2004, p. 81). As such, this study aimed at developing some insight into the teaching practices employed in the large ensemble instrumental music context through the exploration of teachers’ understandings as they frame and solve problems and select assessment tools. It is my hope that the findings of this study will help to better inform the practice of *pre-* and *in-*service instrumental music teachers and lead to further research into ways of improving the effectiveness and consistency of assessment within the instrumental music classrooms of secondary schools in British Columbia.

The following chapter (Chapter 2) provides a review of the literature related to the historical foundations of assessment—including music education, accountability and music education, as well as teacher knowledge, judgement, and experience.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment. This chapter presents an overview of the literature relevant to the study. The chapter is organized into the following sections: a) historical foundations of assessment—including music education; b) accountability and music education; and c) teacher knowledge, judgement, and experience. A final section presents a summary statement of the literature and its meaning and relevance to the study.

Historical Foundations of Assessment

“Right now, *assessment drives education*” (Carini, 2001, p. 171, emphasis in original), though educational assessment has been at the forefront of social consciousness for some time, especially with increased interest brought about through the standards and accountability movement of the mid-to-late 1990s. Over the past two decades, “education systems around the world have experienced unprecedented increases in reform initiatives” (Raptis & Fleming, 2006, p. 1192) and the significance of the roles of assessment and accountability in education has only increased (Leithwood, 2005). Debate, especially in North America, regarding the efficacy of the system continues to spawn articles in numerous educational publications, while the media, and would-be politicians, provoke public outcry by providing statistical analyses of supposed lagging achievement—most notably in the United States—in a global perspective (Munroe-Blum, 2010). Governments, in an effort to demonstrate leadership, and thereby their own

effectiveness, tout the supposed spiraling of achievement standards as a need for rigorous assessment (testing) in order to raise standards. In the United States, there is the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001. In Canada, the *Educational Quality and Accountability Organization* (EQAO) in Ontario, the *Provincial Achievement Tests* (PAT) in Alberta, and the *Foundational Skills Assessment* (FSA) in British Columbia, were set up to develop, administer, and assess student achievement through standardized testing. While these tests may provide a broad view of the education system in any given jurisdiction, they offer individual students little information regarding their own growth and achievement. This practice is intentional, but according to Kancianic (2006), “classroom assessments have more potential to impact students than most large-scale standardized tests” (p. 1). As such, the classroom teacher should be tasked with making “decisions about student achievement, the effectiveness of instruction and materials, and curriculum soundness. Students’ progress depends very much on teachers making wise decisions about these issues” (Beattie, 1997, p. 2).

Historical View of Assessment

Assessment as a means of determining knowledge, or as a matter of accountability, is not a recent phenomenon; indeed, it has been noted that, as early as 4,000 years ago, “it was common practice in China to examine key officials every three years to determine their competency” (Popham, 1988, p. 1). In Victorian England, rising expenditures in education were scrutinized and student testing was introduced as a means of reducing costs in an effort to help fund the Crimean war. The Newcastle Report of 1858, the first comprehensive survey of English educational practice, determined that:

in order to increase pedagogical efficiency...one significant change in the

manner of distributing government grants [occurred]: They should go only to those schools and teachers who could show that 1) the average student attendance reached 140 days a year and 2) *children had attained a certain degree of knowledge*, “as ascertained by the examiners appointed by the County Board of Education.” (Small, 1972, p. 438, emphasis added)

In fact, as a result of the report, the public education grant, which had been 265,500£ in 1851, and expanded to 973,950£ in 1858, fell to 76,000£ by 1865 (Small). This principle of “payment for performance” appears to be paralleled by the high-stakes testing procedure currently in place in the United States, where NCLB “requires school wide accountability for student learning; schools that fail to demonstrate adequate yearly progress are in jeopardy of losing certain federal funding” (Kancianic, 2006, p. 21). In Canada—Ontario specifically—high-stakes testing is much less connected with funding than with public perception as school, and district, results are widely distributed through media outlets (<http://www.eqao.com/results>).

Definitions

One common problem with assessment is the use of the word itself. Numerous authors have espoused the difference between *formative* versus *summative* assessment,³ or “assessment *for* learning” versus “assessment *of* learning.” All, however, distill down to Salvia and Ysseldyke’s (1995) definition as “the process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about students” (p. 5). Newton (2007) contends that the term “assessment” can be interpreted in different ways, but that it aligns into three main categories: *judgement*, *decision*, and *impact*, each of which holds distinct implications for

³ The contrast between formative and summative assessment was first communicated to a wide audience during the early 1970s by Bloom et al. (1971) in their *Handbook of Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning* (Newton, 2007).

the design of an assessment system. This means that each of them needs to be addressed separately, for example:

- to derive standards-referenced judgements, performance descriptions, and exemplar materials need to be developed and shared.
- to support selection decisions, assessment results need to have high reliability⁴ across the range of performance levels.
- to ensure that students remain motivated, the assessment might be administered on a unit-by-unit basis with opportunity for re-taking; to ensure that all students learn a common core for each subject, the assessment might be aligned to a national curriculum. (p. 150)

Another challenge is the lack of consistency with which teachers and administrators use the related nomenclature. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) add to the confusion in that “assessment is sometimes viewed as synonymous with evaluation, though common usage differs” (p. 337). To illustrate, Dressell (cited in Wiliam, 2006) wrote that, “a grade is an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgement by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite amount of material” (p. 170). *Assessment, evaluation, measurement, and grading* often are used interchangeably by teachers and administrators as the same idea when, in fact, they are not. As noted earlier, the British Columbia Ministry of Education (1995), in the Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for Music 8 to 10, defines *assessment* as “the systematic process of *gathering information* about students’ learning in order to

⁴ “Reliability and validity are central in all types of summative assessment made by teachers. Reliability is about the extent to which an assessment can be trusted to give consistent information on a pupil’s progress; validity is about whether the assessment measures all that it might be felt important to measure” (Mansell, James, & the Assessment Reform Group, 2009, p. 12).

describe what they know, are able to do, and are working toward” (p. 5, emphasis added). This is a rather broad definition but does provide a good starting point in discussions regarding the assessment process. *Measurement*, according to Boyle and Radocy (1987), is “the quantification of data from the many various types of tests and testing procedures employed in assessments of musical behavior [*sic*] in formal education settings” (p. 6), while *evaluation* “involves making some judgement or decision regarding the worth, quality, or value of experience, procedures, activities” (p. 7). Colwell (2002) provides a clear statement of the difference between *evaluation* and *assessment*:

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

Campbell (2010) goes further, dividing the term assessment into two sections: a) the assessment task; and b) the task assessment, where “the assessment task is what the student does to meet the assessment or exam requirements. The task assessment, on the other hand, is what the marker does to grade or mark the student work or performance, including the administrative work involved” (p. 3). *Grading* seems to be a much more ambiguous term as numerous articles, books, theses, and dissertations discuss grading, often in conjunction with assessment, but rarely define its meaning. Rome, Mayhew, Bradley, and Squillace (2009), however, articulate grading as:

a complex rhetorical system in which the faculty member is communicating to several audiences at once (the student, parents, the program and the [school],

potential employers, graduate and professional programs, etc.) about the student's relative achievement in a number of different areas (progress, potential, mastery of skills, mastery of content, time management, etc.). (p. 32)

This definition seems rather dense, erudicious, and awkward; less than useful for teachers. Brookhart (2013), however, defines grading as simply, “the process of summing up student achievement with marks or symbols” (p. 257). That is, the assignation of a letter, number, or some other designation to a person’s overall achievement in a course related to a previously determined scale.

Assessment in Music Education

Historically, the assessment process in music education has about 100 years of development and has undergone many transformations. Early attempts to categorize students, in a standardized test format, were begun by Carl Seashore with his *Measures of Musical Talent* in 1919 (Lehman, 1968, p. 5). Seashore’s test focused on students’ musical aptitude with regard to a number of elements, including the discrimination of consonance, intensity, pitch, and tonal memory, rather than musical achievement. Rhythm, as a key element of the test was added in 1925 and consonance was deleted in 1939 (Boyle & Radocy, 1987). Seashore (1919), as a means of validating his testing of aptitude, wrote:

musical talent is a gift bestowed very unequally upon individuals. Not only is the gift of music itself inborn, but it is inborn in specific types. These types can be detected early in life, before time for beginning serious musical education. This fact presents an opportunity and places a great responsibility for the systematic inventory of the presence or absence of

musical talent. (p. 6)

Following Seashore's germinal test, other researchers developed a number of aptitude tests, though the practice of administering such tests waned during the 1960s.⁵

Musical achievement tests, designed to measure "actual instrumental proficiency" (Whybrew, 1962/1971, p. 9), soon followed though a "majority of these [tests] have been concerned with knowledge of the rudiments of music" (p. 148) rather than achievement of any performance standard. While standardized tests have been, and continue to be, used to determine some level of achievement, classroom music teachers are ultimately responsible for assessing "how well their students have learned the specific material they have been taught" (Gordon, 1998, p. 157). The educational reform movement has helped move teachers away from traditional pencil and paper testing, in most disciplines, toward performance-based assessment, where "the teacher observes and makes a judgement about the student's demonstration of a skill or competency in creating a product, constructing a response, or making a presentation" (McMillan, 2001, p. 196). Music instruction, at least in the secondary schools, has been most often associated with performance—generally instrumental and choral—skills, as in McMillan's definition. However, the assessment practices of many band directors, especially during the mid-to-latter 20th century, often have been connected more with attendance, attitude, and concert/festival ratings than actual student achievement. Lehman (1992) writes, "many directors grade primarily on the basis of attendance or effort, and the grades tend to be consistently high. This practice, so at odds with the usual practice in other disciplines, is

⁵ For a comprehensive listing of published, standardized tests relating to musical aptitude and/or musical achievement, the author suggests *Measurement and Evaluation of Musical Experiences* by Boyle and Radocy (1987), *A Selected Bibliography of Works on Music Testing* by Lehman (1969), *Measurement and Evaluation in Music* by Whybrew (1962/1971), or Gordon's (1998) *Introduction to Research and the Psychology of Music*.

often seen by fellow educators as evidence that there is no serious evaluation in music” (p. 59). While this lack of seriousness related to evaluation may be connected more to the perception of music as a frill rather than causal,⁶ the fact that band directors continue to assign grades on the basis of attendance and effort (Wright, 2008), despite many authors’ attempts to negate such thoughts, certainly perpetuates the notion. Wright’s study confirms an earlier Canadian report by Harris (1984) that found “discrepancies between teacher practices in evaluation and course requirements” (p. ii). During the height of the educational reform movement in the latter 20th century, Asmus (1999) provided music educators with a rationale beyond the assignment of grades based on non-musical objectives:

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

Unfortunately, “some music teachers reject the idea of assessment on the grounds that music learning is highly subjective” (MENC, 1996, p. 3).

In a recent study of music teachers in the southwestern United States, Russell and Austin (2010) determined that:

While some of the assessment objectives, formats, and practices utilized by music teachers were aligned with expert recommendations (e.g., development and dissemination of formal grading policies, use of written

⁶ The main debate has focused on talent, or lack of, as the causal factor in regarding music as a frill (i.e. not everyone has talent in music).

assessments to capture a wide range of music knowledge, frequent performance assessments, and varied tools used to increase reliability of performance assessment), other objectives, formats, and practices would hardly be considered assessment exemplars (e.g., giving attendance extensive weight in the grade formulation *and* issuing substantial grade reductions on the basis of attendance, relying on subjective opinion to assess student attitude, emphasizing quantitative measures of practice, neglecting assessment in the creative domain, emphasizing prepared performance of ensemble repertoire rather than performance indicators of musical independence and learning transfer, and awarding a very large proportion of high grades). (p. 49, emphasis in original)

Scott (2004), incorporates the idea of invaluable information regarding assessment when she writes, “well-constructed performance-based assessments integrate assessment with instruction—what is taught in the classroom is reflected in the assessment, and what is assessed guides instruction” (p. 17). In essence, Scott is developing a rationale for *authentic assessment*, a concept that Wiggins (1993) developed into the following set of criteria in regard to judging assessment authenticity:

- Engaging and worthy problems or questions of importance, in which students must use knowledge to fashion performances effectively and creatively.
- Faithful representation of the contexts encountered in a field of study or in the real-life "tests" of adult life.
- Nonroutine and multistage tasks - *real* problems.

- Tasks that require the student to produce a *quality* product and/or performance.
- Transparent or demystified criteria and standards.
- Interactions between assessor and assessee. Tests ask the student to justify answers or choices and often to respond to follow-up or probing questions.
- Response-contingent challenges in which the effect of both process and product/performance determines the quality of the result. Thus there is concurrent feedback and the possibility of self-adjustment during the test.
- Trained assessor judgement, in reference to clear and appropriate criteria. An oversight or auditing function exists: there is always the possibility of questioning and perhaps altering a result, given the open and fallible nature of the formal judgement.
- The search for *patterns* of response in diverse settings. Emphasis is on the consistency of student work - the assessment of *habits* of mind in performance. (pp. 206-207, emphasis in original)

“Focusing on performance,” according to Hallam (1998), “also has the advantage of being an authentic assessment. It relates closely to what might occur in real-life situations” (p. 282). However, Colwell (2006) tells us that “*authentic assessment* as a descriptor is avoided, as it is seldom related to assessment in music. Almost all assessment in music is authentic” (p. 207, emphasis in original). “Authenticity” he writes, “is not a major issue in music research, as nearly every dependent variable involves some type of music performance” (p. 212).

One of the outcomes of the education reform movement in the United States, with

its more centralized system for educational funding and policy, was the establishment of a set of national content standards across academic disciplines. This attempt at reform in American education peaked with the No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act of 2001, which “aim[ed] at improving the performance of U.S. schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools” (Ocean County Vocational Technical School, n.d., p. 1). During the mid-1990s, the Ontario Ministry of Education developed a set of expectations for each discipline and grade level that every student was required to meet before credit was awarded. The net result of these educational reforms has been increased assessment of students as a means of providing the perception of public accountability. Other provinces soon followed as “the current movement towards global competitiveness and calls for restructuring and accountability...provided the climate for music educators in Canadian schools to focus on high standards” (Beatty, 2000, p. 193).

In 1994, prior to NCLB in the United States, The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations,⁷ developed a set of national standards for American arts educators, which provided content and achievement standards for dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Music education content standards consisted of the following:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

⁷ The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations is a group that was developed out of President Clinton’s *Goals 2000* initiative as a means of promoting arts education in American schools. The Consortium was funded by the National Association for Music Educators (MENC) and coexists with the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE), the National Art Education Association (NEAE), and the National Dance Association (NDA).

3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

(Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, pp. 59-63)

These standards were intended to be the overarching elements from which music teachers are to create the courses they teach; everything a music teacher does must connect, in some form, or another, to one of these standards at any given time during instruction. Standards, according to Colwell (2006), “cover specific competencies that can be assessed. The assessment component is what differentiates standards from a goal or an aim” (p. 64). Many states began to develop similar standards, aligned with the National Standards, and while many school districts have developed assessment policies in concurrence with the standards, the classroom teacher is left with the responsibility of determining what constitutes an appropriate indicator of achievement—the assessment evidence—for each standard and to what degree a student meets said standard.

Standards

In Canada, the Canadian Band Association (2006) developed the *National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music* as a means of “provid[ing] an understanding of what school administrators, parents, musicmakers, and music

educators might do to enable children to access all forms of musical thinking and knowing” (p. 4). This attempt at “nationalizing” music education programs in a similar manner to that of the United States is perhaps laudable, though Canadian band directors, may be unaware of its existence or unwilling to incorporate the document due, perhaps, to its lack of exposure.

Standards may be seen as “bring[ing] some form of uniformity to the school experience” (Starratt, 2009, p. 79), which offers students the ability to move freely from school to school without the need for remediation. However, the move toward standardization has created “a growing educational pattern [within] the educational system from the empowerment of educators and students...to a centralized authoritarian hierarchy in which outside experts determine what is appropriate curriculum and instruction” (Horn, 2009, p. 108).

Green and Vogan’s (1991) exhaustive historical analysis of music education in Canada does not discuss assessment as a classroom process, but links adjudication at festivals as the primary means of assessment because no direct discussion is evident. The same appears to be true for the United States as “Mark and Gary (1999) discussed the development of one of the first major ‘assessments’ designed specifically for instrumental music: the school band (and orchestra) contest” (Kancianic, 2006, p. 28). However, this appears to be not just an early form of assessment by band directors as, “ratings at contests and festivals and student satisfaction have been the primary assessment indicators in music” (Colwell, 2006, p. 210).

Accountability and Music Education

“‘Accountability’ is an important word in American⁸ education, and ‘accountability’ usually means testing, even today” (Gronlund & Cameron, 2004, p. 3) and “initially creates images of record keeping, testing and reporting—mechanisms by which we traditionally evaluate and document progress, success and failure” (White, 1989, p. 82). Inasmuch as testing is viewed—at least by the public—as a somewhat contemporary development, “testing has long been a staple in American [and Canadian] public education” used by schools and colleges “to limit promotion to the next grade [or] for college admission” (Ravitch, 2002, p. 9). The introduction of a National Curriculum and standardized testing in the United Kingdom are two initiatives that characterize increased government interference in, and control over, all aspects of education during the 1980s and 1990s (Turner-Bisset, 1999). In Canada, control of curriculum has not been “nationalized” but many provinces, during the 1990s, initiated more curricular hegemony with reforms centred around financial efficiency and student achievement (Kullar, 2011; Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1999).

“Since the beginning of schools, there have been doubts about the adequacy of teachers’ subject matter knowledge” (Kennedy, 1990, p. 1). The education reform movement, with its focus on standardized accountability, appears to have negated, to some extent, the idea of teacher judgement as having validity with the public. According to Ross and Mitchell (1993):

Subjectivity has traditionally been regarded as invalidating the legitimacy of educational assessment. On the one hand the pupils' subjective

⁸ The same can be said for Canadian schools, though “the push for reform was not as strong as in the United States” (Gronlund & Cameron, 2004, p. 5).

experience has been seen both as inaccessible to the teacher and as private to the pupil. On the other hand the subjective judgements of teachers have often been thought to be irrelevant and alien to their pupils' artistic purposes. (p. 99)

According to Brown (2004), “many policies concerning assessment standards and procedures aim to connect teaching and learning to regulation and administration” (p. 301). A number of authors have decried this shift of regulatory control (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Kancianic, 2006; Leithwood, 2005) toward widespread standardized testing. Such standardized educational policies and their implementations have been gaining momentum steadily for several decades (Rupp & Lesaux, 2006). Music education, according to Sezer (2001), is affected because “accountability impacts curriculum planning, instructional strategies, budgets, behavioral objectives, individualized learning and program evaluation as well as student evaluation” (p. 72).

The recent educational reform movement, driven by governments in response to demands by taxpayers for greater financial accountability “has come to be equated with students’ performance on standardized tests” (Allan, 1998, p. 12). Darling-Hammond (2004) acknowledges that a number of different “conceptions of accountability” (p. 1150) exist, influencing educational policy. These include, but are not limited to: political, legal, bureaucratic, professional and market accountability. Eisner (2004) has noted that education, it seems, has become a profession that seeks “curriculum uniformity so parents can compare their schools with other schools, as if test scores were good proxies for the quality of education...and...puts a premium on the measurement of outcomes, on the ability to predict them, and on the need to be absolutely clear about what we want to

accomplish” (p. 3).

Standardized Testing

In Canada, “every province and territory...with the exception of Nunavut, administers some form of mandated large-scale assessment” for high school graduation (Volante & Ben Jaafar, 2008, p, 203). For example, the *Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)* is administered to all Grade 10 students in the province and must be passed before a diploma will be awarded. However, no Canadian jurisdiction has any form of standardized testing in place for music courses. Indeed, this is a global phenomenon, as noted by Hallam’s (1998) discussion of standardized testing in the United Kingdom where “instrumental music assessment of pupils’ learning is rarely compulsory” (p. 273).

Philosophical Foundations of Assessment in Music

In terms of assessment in music, Colwell (1970) firmly established the need for the use of criteria as a means of assessing musical objectives and performances because “musicianship is made up of such a variety of skills, the only way to estimate student progress is to evaluate many of these skills” (p. 102) where “evaluation presupposes a set of standards or criteria” (p. 11). Swanwick (1999) agreed that there is “a need for reliable touchstones, for explicit standards,” but also “for a shared language of musical criticism” (p. 72). Since then, the development and use of criterion-referenced⁹ assessment—a term often substituted with “rubrics”—rather than norm-referenced¹⁰ assessment as a means describing student achievement became the predominant trend in educational theory.

⁹ “Criterion referenced tests are designed to determine whether individuals have reached some *pre-established level or standard of performance*, usually in some academic subject or skill area” (Sattler, 2001, p. 6, emphasis added).

¹⁰ “Norm-referenced evaluation compares one student’s achievement to that of others” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 19).

Swanwick (1994) concluded that “assessment by declared criteria has permeated all educational systems” (p. 103) since “accountability and ‘commonsense’ became political watchwords of the 1990s” (p. 54). Objectivity, in the guise of standards and criteria, continues to be relevant currently as “teachers set specific criteria to evaluate students’ learning. These criteria form the basis for evaluating and reporting student progress” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 16).

Not all agree with the idea of criteria and standards, however. Wood (1987) retorts that:

attempts to standardize assessments through the use of apparently specific schemes purporting to describe achievement constitute both a recognition and a concealment of the possibility that teachers have different views of what constitutes achievement and different capacities to pick out defined attributes. (p. 14)

Mills (1991) lends her voice, saying, “all assessment is subjective, in the sense that human beings determine how it is done....The fact that assessment is subjective, in the sense that human beings are involved in it, is surely something to be celebrated, not bewailed. The material being assessed is, after all, human endeavour” (p. 176). Stanley, Brooker, and Gilbert (2002), in an Australian study with 15 staff of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, determined that “a principal concern expressed by participants was that criteria-based assessments emphasise a narrow view of music performance characteristics” (p. 53). With respect to subjectivity, psychologists, according to Schmalstieg (1972):

generally agree that reliability of subjective measures is frequently

impaired because human judges commonly (a) are too lenient, (b) tend to be influenced by each other, (c) are unable to cope with the complexity of the behaviors to be evaluated, (d) are influenced by the "halo"¹¹ effect, and (e) tend to avoid the use of the extreme positions on a rating scale. (p. 280)

Music education, during much of the latter 20th century, was predominantly guided philosophically by aesthetic meaning as developed by Reimer (1970) in his *A Philosophy of Music Education*, which outlined that the meaning and value of music is in the music and in its connection to feelings:

in order for [music] education to be humanistic it must be primarily *aesthetic* education. That is, education in [music] must help people share the insights contained in the aesthetic qualities of the work, for that is where the insights into human subjectivity lie. The insights are available in the [music] itself, and the function of aesthetic education is to make those insights available by showing people where and how to find them. One does not find them by asking their creator what he was trying to communicate. One finds them *by going deeper into the aesthetic qualities of the created work*. (p. 51, emphasis in original)

Many interpreted this model of “music education as aesthetic education” to be focused on musical works where the development of musical listening ability is a basic obligation of general music and is the essential mode of musical experiencing (Reimer, 1970, p. 119).

In this philosophical model, *music education as aesthetic education*, “music comes to be understood as an object constructed of ‘bits’” (Spruce, 2001, p. 122) and is often assessed

¹¹ The “halo” effect is defined as “the tendency to rate students with pleasing personalities and good ‘track record’ in class more highly than other students regardless of their actual performance on the tasks being rated” (Saskatchewan Education, 1991, p. 119).

as such under what might be labeled a rhetoric of objectivity, where “assessment [is] predicated upon inappropriate criteria” (p. 127) and “the listener is distracted from holistic engagement with the musical work as a constructor of meaning” (p. 123). Objective assessment, then, is perceived as providing legitimacy to the assessment process, along with the status of music within the curriculum, often to the point that cultural context is ignored and music becomes decontextualized and reinterpreted in aesthetic terms (Spruce, 2001). Carini (2001) agrees, writing that:

as the physical-mathematical star rose on the Western horizon, objectivity and measurement became the only values and standards by which knowledge was evaluated and accorded a ranking status. Accordingly, *diversity was diminished*. In the West, the arts, humanities, and education would all be powerfully influenced by that overriding perspective. (p. 77, emphasis added)

In an effort to provide greater legitimacy, much has been written with regard to the alignment of the purposes of evaluation in music education with practice, the most common of which are from the perspective of “how to assess,” or the “techniques of assessment” (Asmus, 1999, Colwell & Goolsby, 2002; Farrell, 1997; Goolsby, 1999; Hale & Green, 2009), including much on the use of criterion-referenced rubrics (Farrell, 1997) and the beginnings of portfolios as an assessment tool (Goolsby, 1999). Some authors, all American, have studied assessment from a quantitative view (Hanzlik, 2001; Kancianic, 2006; Lacognata, 2010; McCoy, 1991; McPherson, 1995; Saunders & Holahan, 1997; Simanton, 2000; Stoll, 2008), most of whom detail the percentages of music teacher assessment “habits.” However, searching the literature offers only partial

guidance, because grading practices in music are rarely examined (Barrett, 2006). Hence, minimal study with regard to qualitative or the meta-cognitive processes involved with assessment in secondary school band programs in the United States and/or Canada has occurred (Ward, 2004). Colwell, (2006) concluded, “What is most surprising is the limited research and scholarship devoted to assessment in music over the past several decades” (p. 199). As noted earlier, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (2005) determined an urgent need for research into “evaluation and assessment in the arts” (p. 2), especially because “few authors have studied classroom assessment in high school band programs” (Kancianic, p. 28). In Canada, one study of arts teachers’ assessment practices was conducted (MacGregor, Lemerise, Potts, & Roberts, 1994), though it focused on the group as a whole rather than music specifically, and did not include a detailed discussion of the tools used by teachers for determining student achievement.

Research on Assessment in Music/Band Classrooms

As mentioned previously, a number of authors have investigated the use of assessment in secondary school music (band and choral) classrooms in the United States. To date, no study of Canadian assessment practices has been found by this researcher.

Any act of assessment requires a basis in the domain/subject from which to make a judgement and “all assessment involves judgement and will therefore be subject to some error and bias” (Harlen, 2006, p. 117). As the idea of accountability deepens in the psyche of the public, teacher knowledge and judgement is scrutinized with more frequency than in the past where “standards are used as a lever to improve the reliability and consistency of teacher judgement” (Klenowski, 2008, p.140). Unfortunately, “what constitutes knowledge and how we formulate judgements about that knowledge are

questions that are rarely raised explicitly in the context of assessment” (Delandshere, 2001, p. 119). The question then becomes, “what forms the basis of assessment strategies?” More specifically, “what forms the basis of assessment for music educators?” According to Carini (1994), “To assess or judge assumes a distance and an unequal footing between [teacher] and [student]: the judge (critic) stands superior or apart from the judged” (p. 35). As such, music educators should be providing a rich basis of information regarding student progress and achievement based on musical knowledge and progress.

According to Boyle and Radocy (1987), however, students are often assigned grades based on their “attendance, participation, and/or attitude” (p. 263). Concurrence is provided by Lehman’s (1998) survey of music teachers across the United States ($N=252$), where many reported using extramusical factors such as attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude when grading students, though some used a mix of performance-based criteria and extramusical factors such as attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude. Stoll’s (2008) survey of 59 music teachers found that the “most commonly used assessments were ‘class participation’...and ‘students playing individually’” (p. 60). Hill (1999) also found that extramusical criteria such as attendance, attitude, and participation were important sources of information regarding student assessment, even though band directors preferred to assess students based on musical criteria. Russell and Austin (2010) found that band directors in the Southwestern United States ($N=324$) “based grades on a combination of achievement and non-achievement criteria, with non-achievement criteria receiving greater weight in determining grades” (p. 37). Similar results were reported by McCoy (1991), Wright (2008), and Simanton (2000). In fact, Simanton’s study ($N=202$)

found that “on average, 56% of band grades come from non-performance criteria (attendance, participation, and attitude)” and that nearly 92% of students in band classes receive a grade of “B” or higher (p. 61), while “18% of band directors report no assessment of individual student performance” (p. 45).

Hanzlik (2001), in a study of the assessment practices of band directors in Iowa ($N=154$), found that “the assessment practices used by band directors 80 percent of the time were playing band music and scales and rudiments; sight-reading music; teacher observation and playing études” (p. 125) and that at least 80 percent of band directors never used such assessment tools as “student journals, portfolios, reflective writing, teacher surveys and student displays” (p. 125). Sherman (2006) found that 92.4% of music teachers ($N=138$) from the Eastern Region of the Music Educators National Conference use at least one of effort, attitude, class demeanour, and/or behaviour as “part of the assessment of the individuals within their programs” (p. 47). Brookhart (1991) reported that teachers often used a “hodgepodge grade of attitude, effort, and achievement...[that] falls down under a validity check” (p. 36). Cizek, Fitzgerald, and Rachor (1995/1996) reported that “attendance and participation were fairly highly valued by...teachers” (p. 171) in assigning grades to students and that such practice is “apparently not uncommon” (p. 172). Wiliam (2006) concluded that the use of grades as a mode of communication between teachers and parents is in conflict with student motivation. As such, “the grade is rarely a pure measure of attainment and will frequently include how much effort the student put into the assignment, attendance and sometimes even behaviour in class” (p. 170).

Lacognata’s (2010) survey of band directors in the United States ($N=454$), one of

the largest of its kind, found that “the four most frequently selected components were also assigned the most weight in the directors’ overall assessment method: *performances* (26.63%); *participation* (22.27%); *performance-based tests* (20.54%); and *attendance* (18.67%)” (p. 93, emphasis in original), which means that nearly 41% (participation and attendance) of the assessment weighting is attributed to non-musical elements. No indication is given as to how performances are factored into the weighting, but if performances are included as merely an attendance component, then more than 67% of a student’s grade is weighted toward non-musical criteria.

New teachers, however, “may feel compelled to demonstrate their accountability for student learning through assessment because they are trying to ‘prove’ their value as a teacher” (Kancianic, 2006, p. 102), though often without “appropriate tools necessary to detail what constitutes valid assessment of teaching and learning” (Colwell, 2003, p. 12). Undergraduate music education students, according to Edmund, Birkner, Burcham, and Heffner (2008), “are left with few tools to draw upon during their own teaching experience and, as future teachers, may not understand the importance of assessment” (p. 53). In an effort to investigate whether recent graduates of music teacher education programs—those with less than five years experience—consider assessment differently than their more experienced colleagues, a component of this study was to determine if such differences exist.

Assessment in Music/Band Method Books

A number of method books¹² are available for band directors as a means of scaffolding various techniques and musicianship related to band directors’ selected

¹² A majority of the available books are focused on beginning band students. The most commonly used books are *Standard of Excellence* (published by Kjos), *Yamaha Band Student* (published by Yamaha), *Accent on Achievement* (published by Alfred), and *Essential Elements* (published by Hal Leonard).

repertoire. Following a brief scan of assessment in the most popular methods, Pearson's (2004) *Standard of Excellence* appears to be the most comprehensive, with musical objectives to be met by the students, including materials based on comprehensive musicianship. Following a student performance of any given exercise, teachers are to assign "between zero and three points, one for each objective the student successfully completes" (p. 477). There is, however, no discussion as to the degree of "application and understanding" (p. 484) for any given objective.

All of the method books scanned also include comprehensive theory, history, and composition exercises, and quizzes, for students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor musical development.

Teacher Knowledge/Judgement

Every teacher assesses; assessment is an integral part of teaching, for in order to respond helpfully to students we are necessarily forming and articulating impressions of what characterises their work. These appraisals have their origin in intuition but they have to be developed further if we are to avoid being arbitrary, basing any judgement on the whim of the moment. (Swanwick, 1994, p. 102)

Judgement varies from person to person and "the amount of judgement involved in scoring varies widely....Different scorers can and do arrive at different scores as they weight elements of the answer differently...and introduce other personal biases into their judgements" (Gronlund & Cameron, 2004, p. 24). In essence, to assess, or judge, something is to make a comparison between two or more related possibilities. According to Fiske (1977), "the role of the evaluator consists of weighing a student's performance

against the evaluator's own performance concept for the purpose of assigning grades or making suitable comments” (p. 256). Hence, comparisons made without in-depth knowledge, or experience, in the appropriate domain, is merely speculation on behalf of the evaluator rather than informed professional judgement. Understanding teacher knowledge is nebulous in that “teachers garner knowledge from a multitude of sources and...it is often difficult to delineate the domains from which teachers draw while teaching” (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 49). “One has to know the historical context, the *archaeology* of cultural ideas in order to adopt the beliefs involved and experience the music appropriately” (Walker, 2001, p. 11, emphasis in original). Epistemology, according to Pollock and Cruz (1999), “might better be called ‘doxastology’” (p. 11), as it relates more to the “study of beliefs” rather than to the study of knowledge, in that knowledge—both in its creation and expression—is organized contextually within one’s own belief system. The beliefs that teachers hold, according to Pajares (1992), “influence their perceptions and judgements, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom” (p. 307). Beliefs are connected with assessment in the sense that they “influence knowledge acquisition and interpretation, task definition and selection, interpretation of course content, and comprehension monitoring” (p. 328), all of which stem from contextual, or “‘practitioner’ knowledge” (Triantafyllaki, 2010). Such knowledge is essential to beliefs because it is foundational to the idea of “experience as central to performance teachers’ expertise” (p. 72). She continues, stating that “the professional identity of music teachers is in a large part due to socialisation within the professional community, the institutions that shape their practice during their careers and preceding generations of music teachers” (p. 73). Socialisation, as a

component of experience, was discussed earlier by Dewey (1938/1997). He claimed that experience:

is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment, whether the latter consists of persons with whom he is talking about some topic or event, the subject talked about being also a part of the situation; or the toys with which he is playing; the book he is reading...; or the materials of an experiment he is performing. (pp. 43-44)

Knowledge Bases

In an attempt to establish how knowledge is formed and used, researchers in the cognitive sciences, as well as educational researchers, have categorized knowledge in various ways. For example, Cordeiro (2010) outlines four types of educational knowledge:

- declarative—factual knowledge;
- procedural—how to knowledge;
- contextual—what you learn in the context of a job; and
- somatic—sensing knowledge, or what some people call intuition, or gut feeling (http://www.sandiego.edu/soles/about/meet_the_dean.php)

Somatic knowledge, writes Eisner (2001), is a felt reaction of rightness within an experience; “a form of body-situated knowledge that cannot be reduced to recipe or algorithm” (p. 20) that defies analytic process. In other words, we simply *know* what is right. Polanyi (1966), labels this type of knowledge as “tacit knowing” (p. 9), where “*we can know more than we can tell*” (p. 4, emphasis in original). Tacit knowledge, writes

Guthrie (1996), “is acquired primarily through experience, generally acquired through working with other experienced, ‘qualified’ or professional persons” (p. 106). It is a type of knowledge that, “because it is difficult to articulate, it is easier to explain through example” (p. 105), and is further illustrated by Pirsig (1976/2005):

1. Every instructor of English composition knows what quality is. (Any instructor who does not should keep this fact carefully concealed, for this would certainly constitute proof of incompetence.)
2. Any instructor who thinks quality of writing can and should be defined before teaching it can and should go ahead and define it.
3. All those who feel that quality of writing does exist but cannot be defined, but that quality should be taught anyway, can benefit by...teaching pure quality in writing without defining it. (p. 215)

Swanwick (1994) explains that, while “we could very easily substitute ‘music’” for ‘writing’ in Pirsig’s explanation (p. 123), teaching analytically, as many teachers do, means that “discourse is stripped of significance, *shorn of quality*; intuitive understanding is driven out and the knife of technical analysis cuts away to the bare bone” (p. 142, emphasis added). Assessment in such an environment, then, appears to be nothing more than an exercise in mathematics: x number of errors = y %; a process that Mills (1991) labels as “segmented assessment of musical performance” (p. 175). Mills (2005) further contends that “assessment needs to fit the behaviour being assessed. A musical performance is not a mathematical problem” (p. 177) though “holistic assessment is not totally reliable, in the sense that all assessors will always come to complete agreement” (p. 177). Thompson and Williamon (2003) concur, saying that “of the two, holistic

marking schemes seem to maintain the highest level of ecological validity” (p. 25). As such, “formalized quality judgements can be seen as providing a structured output to a process that is already taking place as part of listening” (p. 21).

Pedagogical Knowledge

All teachers are in need of a multi-faceted knowledge system—discipline specific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which includes assessment (Kennedy, 1990). In fact, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Council on Measurement in Education, and the National Education Association (1990) developed a list of standards for teachers with regard to educational assessment:

1. Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
2. Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
3. The teacher should be skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both externally produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.
4. Teachers should be skilled in using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and school improvement.
5. Teachers should be skilled in developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessments.
6. Teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators.

7. Teachers should be skilled in recognizing unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information.

Music educators, according to Elliott (2009), must possess knowledge in the domains of musicianship¹³ and “educatorship” (p. 172), “both of which have established expectations as to the behaviors that constitute desirable routines” (Froehlich, 2007, p. 14). Shulman (1986) outlines a further domain of educational knowledge, that of *pedagogical content knowledge*, which “goes beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching” (p. 9) and that:

pedagogical content knowledge [is] of special interest because it represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems or issues are organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction. (Turner-Bisset, 1999, p. 41)

Froelich (2007) labels this idea of combinatorialism between musicianship and educatorship as a “*community of practice*” (p. 14, emphasis in original). At the same time, Ball, Thames, and Phelps (2009) explain that, while “the notion of pedagogical content knowledge has permeated scholarship on teaching and teacher education [it] has done so unevenly across fields” (p. 393).

Dorn, Madeja, and Sabol, (2004) tell us that “a knowledge about art is a distinctly different kind of knowing from the kind of knowing associated with the actual making of artistic objects” (p. 84). Similarly, Reimer (2003a) tells us that “music-think is not the same as language-think” (p. 15), whereas Gardner (1990) regards knowledge about music

¹³ Musicianship, according to Bolduc (n.d.) “is a term that has vague connotations, making it difficult to standardize by definition, and difficult for teachers and adjudicators to interpret and quantify in the wide array of competitive musical events that are graded, ranked, or rated” (p. 3, emphasis in original).

as “an ancillary form of knowledge, not to be taken as a substitute for ‘thinking’ and ‘problem solving’ in the medium itself” (p. 42). Elliott’s (1995) praxial model of music education, which has its genesis in Aristotle’s concept of *praxis*, contends that music is a four-dimensional concept involving: a) a doer (musicer); b) some kind of doing (musicing); c) something done (music); and d) the complete context in which doers do what they do (p. 40). For educators, these concepts are steeped in what might be called *phronetic knowledge*. Phronesis, according to Nonaka (2007), is the “experiential knowledge to make context-specific decisions based on one’s own value/ethics” (p. 14) and “synthesizes ‘knowing why’ as in scientific theory, with ‘knowing how’ as in practical skill, and ‘knowing what’ as a goal to be realized” (p. 15). Phronetic knowledge “is a matter of attaining ‘the good’ for both individual citizens and the common weal, and its distinguishing feature is a practical wisdom learned by example, models, and practise in actual situations” (Georgii-Hemming & Johansen, 2010, p. 4) and, as such, is akin to pedagogical content knowledge. In music education, this is comparable to Reimer’s (2003b) four ways of knowing: knowing *within*, knowing *how*, knowing *about*, and knowing *why*. Additionally, because music education has a long history of purported elitism (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 30), the idea of extrinsic reward systems and values has been debated in many a philosophy of music education class, whereas a diverse curriculum based on “phronetic knowledge helps us achieve goals that are *intrinsic* to the action itself” (Back, 2002, p. 2, emphasis in original).

“Criticism is inherently an act of judgement” (Eisner, 1998, p. 109) and any “judgement can be about what is given through the senses, and...decided through experience” (Hartnack, 1967, p. 11). And, as “people learn by constructing their own

understanding of their experiences, then teaching is essentially a process of designing experiences” (Wiggins, 2007, p. 36) that will best benefit students in the sense that “new knowledge originates in what we have already experienced; in the familiar and in what we know from before” (Georgii-Hemming & Johansen, 2010, p. 3). Hence, there is a need for teachers to develop curriculum in conjunction with assessment because “without the ability to plan for action and know what tasks need to be carried out and the ability to assess how successful action has been to achieve goals, an individual would not exhibit what we judge to be rational behavior or achieve academic success” (McAleese, 1998, p. 11). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) argue that assessment should be considered at the beginning of the planning process rather than as an after-thought to the instructional process. In essence, the concept of “backward design” is to start with the end in mind so that teachers are able to plan their teaching methods in a clearly structured manner that moves students toward the desired outcome(s). That is: outcome(s) generate(s) the type of assessment, which then generate(s) the activities leading to the assessment.

Hughes (2010) provides a contextual basis for experience in relation to Kant’s *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*:

Anything that we might know and that counts...as ‘experience’ must fulfil the following criteria: it must have some quantity, that is, must have some extension in time and space; it must stand in some relation to other things; and it must be capable of being experienced as possible, necessary or actual. These are the formal criteria of the experience of an object, for there must also be something given to us through the senses. (p. 2)

If, as Stauffer (2005) writes, “philosophy derives from experience” (p.136), then the challenge is not to live a prescribed philosophy, but to develop a personal philosophy based on experience:

No teaching act is devoid of philosophical or psychological context. Each teaching act is deeply rooted in what the actor believes about the nature of learning and, in this case, of music. Experiences in a curriculum...can ensure that prospective teachers are acting with intention and not just out of habit—habit born out of their own experiences as learners and not necessarily what they were taught to do as teachers. (Wiggins, 2007, p. 41)

Stauffer (2005) also contends that “philosophy in undergraduate teacher preparation tends to be decontextualized” (p. 136) and “from their perception as students, undergraduates conceive of philosophy as a paper to be written or an assignment to be completed rather than as thinking that shapes practice” (p. 137). Philosophy, whether in pedagogical process or assessment, ought to be formulated through experience, *in situ* and in action. Learning occurs when tension is created and tension is created by action. If “leadership is an ‘action’ process” (Battisti, 2002, p. 255) and “agency and meaning arise in and are sustained by action—action that is always situated, embodied, and social” (Bowman, 1992, p. 32), then, as outlined by Polanyi (1966), it is “not by looking at things, but by dwelling in them, that we understand their meaning” (p.18).

Broomhead (2004) explains that “teachers who merely follow the directives of tradition without adequate attention to philosophical issues are destined to perpetuate the status quo” (p. 20). Regelski (1999) admonishes the teacher education process as content “mainly with training teachers to employ such methods effectively in the service of the

taken for granted curricular goals and values” (p. 101). Jorgensen (1997) concurs:

Each music teacher must fit the right instructional approach to a set of demands, in some measure, unique to a particular situation...If music teachers are apathetic and dependent on the leadership and instructional methods of others, it is because of how they have been prepared as teachers and what has been expected from them throughout their careers.
(p. 92)

Dewey (1916) defined education as the “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience” (p. 89-90). Teachers, as acknowledged content specialists by virtue of a specialist degree, are “believed to know whether such things [musical experiences, for example] fulfill the standard of good specimens of their own kind” (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, p. 43). Kinney (2009) suggests that “internal consistency of performance evaluation is related to music experience and training” (p. 333). Additionally, Thompson and Williamon (2003) surmise that all performance assessment systems in music are based on structured quality judgements, which make at least three fundamental assumptions:

- *musical performance quality is a dimension with a common psychological reality for experienced listeners*
- *experienced musicians are able to offer consistent judgements of music performance quality*
- *experienced musicians are able to distinguish between aspects of a performance such as technique and interpretation*

(pp. 23-24, emphasis in original)

The essence of these assumptions is a type of what Fullan (2003) calls *informed professional judgement* (p. 7) that assists “***in the shaping of curriculum work programs, pedagogical approaches and classroom assessment*** [which] ***allows and enables individuals and cohorts to take different routes through the terrain***” (Luke, Weir, & Woods, 2008, p. 15, emphasis in original). In a manner similar to Csikzentmihalyi’s (1990) conception of *Flow*, where comparative levels of skill/confidence and challenge combine to create a proximal zone known as a “flow channel,” *informed professional judgement* can be viewed a synthesis of teacher knowledge and prescriptive governmental control versus teacher autonomy. It is necessary, then, to rely on an extensive “content of experience” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 16) in order to teach, and assess, coherently and successfully, as “one must be able to concentrate and interact with the opportunities at a level commensurate with one’s skills” (p. 119). However, Earl and Katz (2006a) explain that *informed professional judgement* is “paradoxical” because:

On the one hand, it puts educational reform squarely in the hands of educational professionals. At the same time, it means that educators cannot rely on tacit knowledge and personal preferences. Instead, they must be prepared to challenge and reconstruct their professional knowledge and to change their professional practice (p. 12).

Bowman (1992) holds that philosophy has “a determination to uncover underlying and often unexpressed assumptions...[and] works to render the implicit explicit, with the ultimate intent of enriching both understanding and perception” (p. 4). As such, teachers must consistently revisit their philosophical and contextual pedagogical content

knowledge in order to maintain themselves in the flow of informed professional judgement.

“The concept of context is an enigma” (Huen, 2009, p. 149) in the sense that context is:

often conceived of as a set of (unexamined) presuppositions or as the (justifying) ground. This logical notion of context, however, overlooks the *perspectival* movement between the context and the contexted. In our practice of making explicit the implicit, it is indeed the ‘context’ (the implicit which was originally out of sight), *together* with the ‘contexted’ (the explicit initially within focus), which are anticipatorily contextualized by *yet another* implicit and deferred context. *In its relation to* the contexted, context is more like a background, i.e. it is not something we can see, but something we *see in*. (p. 153, emphasis in original)

In other words, there are multiple views of the world in which music teachers live that require critical pedagogy¹⁴ where informed professional judgement, as a combination of knowledge and autonomy, creates an atmosphere of transformative empowerment for both teachers and students in a state similar to *flow*.

Summary

For decades, many music teachers have relied on assessment and evaluation schemes that attach varying amounts of non-musical goals (attendance, effort, participation) to achievement. As Cizek, Fitzgerald, and Rachor (1995/1996) reported,

¹⁴ Critical Pedagogy “is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationships among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state” (McLaren, 1998, p. 45, as cited in Abrahams, 2005, p. 6).

“attendance and participation were fairly highly valued by...teachers” (p. 171) in assigning grades to students and the practice of doing so is “apparently not uncommon” (p. 172). A major contributing factor to this practice is the fact that “there is little professional consensus as to what teachers should assess, how they should assess, or when they should assess” (Russell & Austin, 2010, p. 38).

In a standards-based educational climate, such as the model currently in place in the North American milieu, the focus on standardized accountability has created a rhetoric of objectivity that goes beyond the *aesthetic/praxial* debate¹⁵ that has consumed music education for much of the past 40 years. Accountability, as a movement in education, has developed what might be termed a form of schizophrenia for teachers: on one hand, it seeks to diminish teacher knowledge/judgement and autonomy in favour of prescription and standardized test scores. On the other hand, it admonishes teachers for “developing students [that] never realize and develop their full potential, often lacking creativity and autonomy” (Viggiano, 2005, p. 491) and “teaching to the test” (p. 499). Informed professional judgement and experience have become seemingly unimportant and real-life musical opportunities, explicitly connected—those that provide the student with experiences that are functional beyond the indolent mechanics of *technicism* and *methodolatry*¹⁶—often are viewed disparagingly because they are more difficult to assess. As stated by Csikszentmihalyi (1997), “the volatility surrounding assessment is not difficult to explain...[because]...educational evaluation has historically been based on the assumption that learning is synonymous with thinking; hence that educational success

¹⁵ Much has been written regarding this debate. For further information, one should begin with Reimer (1970, 2003b) and Elliott (1995).

¹⁶ The ‘how-to’ of teaching: recipes, formulae, and prescriptions that constitute the ‘curriculum’; the simple act or fact of employing the teaching method becomes the focus of the teacher’s planning (Regelski, 2005, p. 15).

must be measured in terms of cognitive change” (p. 34).

As Dewey (1938) reminds us, “a primary responsibility of educators is that they be not only aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth” (p. 40). Developing appropriate assessment strategies is the key to success and “what will need to be measured is not so much the ability to think, but the depth of sensations, feelings, and meanings that a child is able to extract from experience as a result of exposure to art” for which, until recently, “has not been taken seriously” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 37). It is time!

In the following chapter, *Method*, I will outline the sequential, explanatory methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment. The study sought to understand current practices in relation to a standards-based curriculum, such as mandated by British Columbia's Ministry of Education, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, the relationships between assessment and teacher knowledge and experience, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the teaching of assessment. This chapter presents an overview of the two-phase, sequential explanatory, mixed method strategy used in the study and is organized into five sections: a) a history and rationale for the use of mixed methods in the present study; b) the quantitative instrument; c) the qualitative instrument; d) data analysis; and e) a summary of the methods.

History and Rationale

For much of the latter 20th century, a debate “raged in the social and behavioral sciences regarding the superiority of one or the other of the two major social science paradigms or models” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 3). McCoyd, Johnson, Munch, and LaSala (2009) indicate that little has changed during the intervening years. In fact, they coined the word “quantocentrism,” which they describe as “a force that operates in a diffuse and subtle manner to promote quantitative methods as the legitimate research paradigm” (p. 812). “Quantitative purists maintain that social science inquiry should be objective” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14), or a postpositivistic philosophic

paradigm, while qualitative purists “contend that multiple-constructed realities abound...and context-free generalizations are neither desirable nor possible...and that knower and known cannot be separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality” (p. 14).

During the mid-20th century, a third paradigm emerged based on the work of Campbell and Fiske (1959), which “presented one of the first explicit ‘multimethod’ designs in the social and behavioral sciences. Specifically, it utilized more than one QUAN method (e.g., a structured interview that yielded QUAN data, a structured observation protocol that also yielded QUAN data) to measure a single psychological trait” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006, p. 18). Mixed method research, according to Gorard and Taylor (2004), has further developed as “dissatisfaction grows with the limitations of traditional mono-method studies...and with the methodological schism and internecine ‘warfare’ that divides our [educational and social science] field” (p. vii). According to Ross and Onwuegbuzie (2010), “the call for methodological pluralism has been answered by an increasing number of researchers combining qualitative and quantitative approaches within the same study” (p. 234). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) attribute the rise of mixed methods studies in recent years to:

- a) the introduction of a variety of new methodological tools (both quantitative and qualitative),
 - b) the rapid development of new technologies (computer hardware and software), and
 - c) the increase in communication across the social and behavioral sciences.
- (p. 17)

To some degree, mixed methods research has been a component of many quantitative studies throughout the past century; for example, open responses in both questionnaire and interview surveys require the researcher to qualitatively decipher and analyze responses (Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006). Mixed methods research, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007):

provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research...[inasmuch as]...quantitative research is weak in understanding the context or setting in which people talk...[and]...the voices of the participants are not directly heard in quantitative research....Qualitative research makes up for these weaknesses. (p. 9)

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) concur when they say, “Research associated with comprehensive school reform projects [i.e., assessment] is an example of research often involving mixed methods” (p. 306).

At this point, a definition of mixed methods research is necessary in order to contextualize the current study. Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006), propose that “mixed methods is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and ‘mixing’ or integrating both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research problem” (p. 3). However, this definition seems rather simplistic and does not provide a paradigmatic basis for a study. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) provide a much more comprehensive definition of mixed methods research:

an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research; it is the third methodological or research paradigm (along with

qualitative and quantitative research). It recognizes the importance of traditional quantitative and qualitative research but also offers a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results. Mixed methods research is the research paradigm that (a) partners with the philosophy of pragmatism in one of its forms (left, right, middle); (b) follows the logic of mixed methods research (including the logic of the fundamental principle and any other useful logics imported from qualitative or quantitative research that are helpful for producing defensible and usable research findings); (c) relies on qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques combined according to the logic of mixed methods research to address one's research question(s); and (d) is cognizant, appreciative, and inclusive of local and broader sociopolitical realities, resources, and needs. Furthermore, the mixed methods research paradigm offers an important approach for *generating* important research questions *and* providing warranted answers to those questions. This type of research should be used when the nexus of contingencies in a situation, in relation to one's research question(s), suggests that mixed methods research is likely to provide superior research findings and outcomes. (p. 129, emphasis in original)

Traditionally, "the use of monomethod research (i.e., quantitative research *or* qualitative research) has occurred throughout the 20th century despite numerous calls for increased methodological pluralism and rigor by researchers representing many other

fields” (Ross & Onwuegbuzie, 2010, p. 234, emphasis in original). In a similar vein, education in the 21st century has seen a push for pluralism in terms of multiple literacies (e.g., language, mathematics, etc.) as a means of enhancing student growth and achievement. “To be ‘multilingual,’” writes Eisner (2008), “means being able to use different media effectively to represent what one has learned” (p. 9). In research studies, Creswell (2009) agrees that “focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem” (p. 12) enhances understanding of that problem. Earlier, Creswell (2008) wrote, “by assessing both outcomes of a study (i.e., quantitative) as well as the process (i.e., qualitative), we can develop ‘a complex’ picture of social phenomenon (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, p. 7)” (p. 552). Singleton and Straits (2005) tell us that “it is best, wherever feasible, to study a given problem with a variety of methods so that the weaknesses of one strategy may be cancelled out by the strengths of the other” (p. 5). As such, the current study is steeped in a multilingual (mixed method), sequential, explanatory approach that provides both a practical understanding of current assessment practices and the underlying conceptions, and background, of band directors’ use of assessment in the band classrooms of British Columbia.

The first step of the study, a quantitative survey, provided a useful, but limited, practical perspective (i.e., the “what” of the situation), and the second, qualitative component, used naturalistic, semi-structured interviews as a means of providing a wider, theoretical perspective (i.e., text) as well as rationales (i.e., the “why” of the problem). Mixed methods, then, allowed a dialectical research program which connected the empirical evidence of the quantitative survey instrument with the qualitative interview

that drew upon the subjects' personal beliefs. "Life consists of simultaneously multiple voices" (Bresler, 2008, p. 233), which presents the idea of a pragmatic approach to research in relation to a phenomenological dialogic (i.e., beginning teachers, mid-career teachers, and veteran teachers) as "the act of communication intensifies meaning" (p. 229).

Pragmatism, in the early 20th century praxis of George Herbert Mead, according to Maxcy (2003), "allowed for a mixture of methods that the social scientist found helped to adjust oneself to a new situation" (p. 69). Dewey, Maxcy continues, "came to the conclusion that research methodology was already mixed insofar as it contained both inductive and deductive methods" (p. 72). Pragmatic philosophy is based on experience of an event, or idea, and is often associated with the writings of John Dewey. The present study considers pragmatism as an essential component to developing and understanding assessment in the classroom. Teachers, though having experienced assessment as students, often lack the practical experience of providing feedback or designing performance assessments for students. Creswell (2009) outlines pragmatism's philosophical basis for mixed methods research:

1. Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This applies to mixed methods research in that inquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research.
2. Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. In this way, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.

3. Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way (e.g., quantitative or qualitative).
 4. Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Thus, in mixed methods research, investigators use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem.
 5. The pragmatist researchers look to the *what* and *how* to research, based on the intended consequences—where they want to go with it. Mixed methods researchers need to establish a purpose for their mixing, a rationale for the reasons why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the first place.
 6. Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts. In this way, mixed methods studies may include a postmodern turn, a theoretical lens that is reflective of social justice and political aims.
 7. Pragmatists have believed in an external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind. But they believe that we need to stop asking questions about reality and the laws of nature (Cherryholmes, 1992). “They would simply like to change the subject” (Rorty, 1983, p. xiv).
 8. Thus, for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. (pp. 10-11, emphasis in original)
- “The bottom line,” according to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), “is that research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering

important research questions” (p. 16).

Research Design

The design of the current study was a mixed-method, sequential explanatory model, grounded in a pragmatic paradigm, that determined the current assessment procedures of band directors in British Columbia, as well as underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors have in designing and implementing those assessment procedures. This design was chosen for the study because “quantitative methods contribute precision...[and] contribute to the generalizability of the results...[while] qualitative methods contribute contextual information about individuals and setting...that cannot be readily addressed in quantitative measures” (Springer, 2010, p. 446). Figure 1 illustrates, in graphic form, the research design of the study.

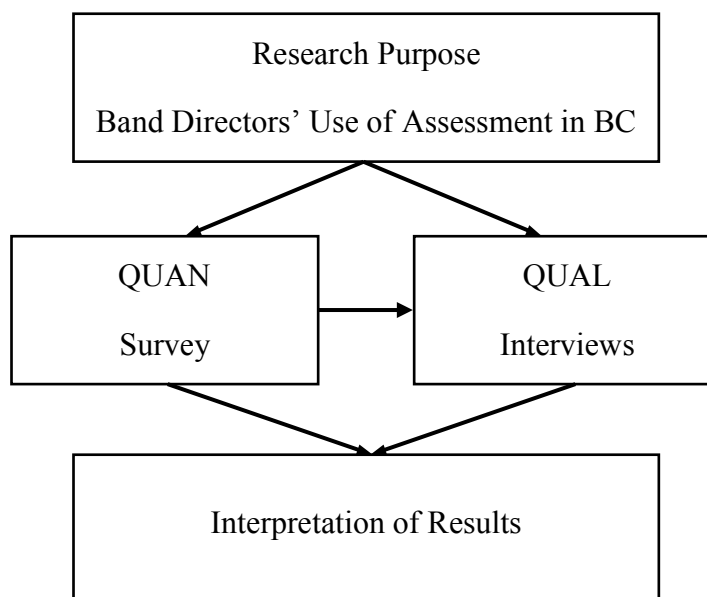


Figure 1. Research Design

Quantitative Instrument

“Surveys are information-collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior”

(Fink, 2009, p.1) and “survey instrumentation is...the science of asking questions” (Singleton & Straits, 2005, p. 263). Survey research, according to Creswell (2009) “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 12). For this study, a survey involving a questionnaire was developed in order to gather information from a large population (band directors), over a large area (British Columbia). The use of a questionnaire as the quantitative instrument was chosen because, according to Springer (2010), a questionnaire:

1. can reach larger numbers of participants more quickly, easily, and in a more cost-effective manner than personal interviews
2. is less susceptible than personal interviews to researcher effects
3. allows participants, through confidentiality agreements, to respond more openly than they may otherwise

Survey research provides an overall “snapshot” of a population’s needs with respect to any number of factors, including, but not limited to: Needs assessment, program evaluation, attitude measurement, opinion polling, and policy analysis (Hutchinson, 2004). Survey research, because of its similarity to educational assessment, can be considered an appropriate means of collecting information about assessment. That is, the researcher (teacher) gathers information about a certain population (students) “for examining relationships between variables” (Hutchinson, p. 285). Additionally, part of this study’s aim was to assess how pre-service music teacher education might change in order to assist curriculum building and pedagogy.

Web-based Surveys

In the technological age of the 21st century, there has been a “quick evolution of web surveys from novel idea to routine use” (Dillman, 2007, p. 447). Hence, surveys that make use of the Internet to investigate large populations over a large geographical area, such as British Columbia, “may be designed to make effective use of the new computer-mediated methods” (Singleton & Straits, 2005, p. 245) and have the ability to provide accurate data collection that “save[s] time and money instead of sending a mailed questionnaire” (Phelps, Sadoff, Warburton, & Ferrera, 2005, p. 167). According to Ganassali (2008), “it is now established that web-based surveys are inexpensive, with a short response time and that they can achieve satisfying response rates compared to questionnaires delivered by ‘classical’ mail” (p. 21). Several studies have found, according to Jacob (2011), that “web-based surveys can, under certain circumstances and with certain populations, produce higher overall response rates than paper-based surveys” (p. 41). One study by Deutskens, de Ruyter, and Wetzels (2006) found that “the online survey has a higher response rate than the mail survey” (p. 352). It is possible, then, with web-based surveys, to assess large populations in various locations and have statistical results of data instantaneously. Couper and Bosnjak (2010) indicate that “with regard to measurement, however, Web surveys offer much promise in terms of improved measurement or data quality” (p. 539). Hence, a computer-based survey has the ability to provide instantaneous analysis of responses and has the potential to eliminate researcher error with regard to mathematical and/or statistical error.

Deutskens, de Ruyter, and Wetzels (2006) have identified a number of limitations to online surveys, the most common of which, appears to be loss of coverage, or

representativeness. This was confirmed in a study by Jacob (2011), that found, “switching from mail- to web-surveys would increase the loss of coverage due to missing or inaccurate email addresses and reduce response rates” (p. 43). However, for the purposes of the current study, it was found that missing or inaccurate coverage was eliminated by using up-to-date school lists from the Ministry of Education website along with lists from school districts, as well as phone contact with the schools, if necessary. At the same time, “the education sector is one area where access to email is likely to be very high” (James, 2007, p. 129) and because every school in British Columbia has had Internet access (Wilson, 2001) for at least the past 10 years, each teacher should have access to a school district email.

There are many online services that have the ability to conduct surveys (i.e., <http://www.surveymonkey.com>, <http://www.toofast.ca>, <http://www.zoomerang.com>); however, <http://www.surveygizmo.com> was selected because of its minimal cost (free) and available features, such as the ability to receive unlimited responses, multiple types of questions (i.e., Likert scales, radio buttons, randomization of questions, open-text, etc.), multiple means of analysis (including Descriptive Statistics, as used in this study) with graphic output, and the ability for participants to use mobile devices (i.e., iPad compatibility) for the input of their responses.

Survey Design and Construction

For the quantitative section of the study, a survey, questions were designed and chosen for inclusion in order to provide the researcher with a comprehensive background of band directors’ assessment beliefs and practices. Because music (band), traditionally, has been cited as highly subjective and band directors have habitually used wide-ranging

assessment procedures, the need for broad-based questioning was apparent. This portion of the study was based on earlier research regarding assessment in music classrooms (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kancianic, 2006; Lacognata, 2010; Russell & Austin, 2010; Sherman, 2006; Simanton, 2000; Stoll, 2008; Wright, 2008), along with the researcher's personal experience. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was divided into four sections: a) demographic (background) information; b) philosophical views on assessment; c) assessment usage (this section includes the submit button); and d) a "thank you" page that doubled as an invitation to directors in the hope that they would participate in the qualitative portion (interview) of the study.

The questionnaire for this survey was composed of mostly closed responses (Likert scale), with a few short answer (open response) items used as clarifiers or for the completion of responses that might not have fit into the responses provided. The survey questions were developed with three main purposes in mind. First, questions about band directors' demographics and education were included to determine if assessment usage might have some relationship with directors' educational background or geographic region. For example, participants were asked about their certification and qualifications for teaching in order to determine the potential that such characteristics might impact assessment use. Second, because beliefs influence knowledge acquisition and interpretation (Pajares, 1992), they play an important role in how people decide to use that knowledge. Questions in this section were asked to determine the types of beliefs and views that directors hold regarding assessment. For example, participants were asked, "To what extent do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statement: Assessment is an integral part of the lesson planning process in band. Response choices

included: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree.

Select questions were formatted in a similar manner to other researchers. To illustrate, Figure 2 (below) is taken from Kancianic (2006):

How important are the following purposes of student assessment in your largest high school band class?

1 = Not At All Important . . . 5 = Extremely Important

to identify individual student needs-----	1	2	3	4	5
to identify general class needs -----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine level of musical preparedness for a public performance-----	1	2	3	4	5
to set or maintain class standards -----	1	2	3	4	5
to rank students according to individual performance level -----	1	2	3	4	5
to meet local, state, or national standards -----	1	2	3	4	5
to meet school or school district requirements -----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine interim or report-card grades -----	1	2	3	4	5
to provide feedback to students -----	1	2	3	4	5
to provide feedback to parents -----	1	2	3	4	5
to provide feedback to school administrators -----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine whether instruction has been successful -----	1	2	3	4	5
to demonstrate accountability for student learning -----	1	2	3	4	5
to help students prepare for a public performance -----	1	2	3	4	5
to establish or maintain credibility for the music program-----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine whether students are practicing at home -----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine soloists for a specific piece of music-----	1	2	3	4	5
to determine what concepts students are failing to understand -----	1	2	3	4	5
to motivate students to practice their instruments -----	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 2. Questions from Kancianic’s (2006) study

In this study, the question and its responses were reworked to read “How important do you believe the following statements regarding the purposes of student assessment? (5 = extremely important . . . 1 = not important).” Table 3 (p. 100) illustrates the adaptations made to Kancianic’s (2006) question for use in this study.

Third, questions about directors’ assessment usage in the band room were asked to gauge the types and depth of assessment that they incorporate into their instructional practice. As an example of the type of question used in this section, directors were asked,

“Which of the following assessment strategies, if any, do you use in your assessment of students during a typical school year? Please check all that apply.” Response choices for this question included:

technique performance tests, repertoire performance tests, portfolios, paper and pencil theory tests, computer-based theory tests, paper and pencil music history tests, computer-based music history tests, student-teacher conferencing, attendance, effort, attitude, essays, listening test/quiz, participation, observation checklists, student self-assessment, student peer-assessment, none of the above.

The responses in this question were randomized so that they would display differently each time the survey was accessed.

The survey design and construction was based on previous research in assessment, the researcher’s own experience, and from *best practice* as provided by the review of literature. In this study, best practice can be defined as using assessment procedures that are connected with curricular, not behavioural, objectives. Such practice has been noted by a number of researchers (Asmus, 1999; Colwell & Goolsby, 2002; Farrell, 1997; Goolsby, 1999; Hale & Green, 2009), and especially Russell and Austin (2010).

The questions were chosen to align with the research questions of this study. Chapter 5 (Conclusions) details the research questions with the findings.

Ethical Considerations

As with any research concerning human interaction, approval for this study was sought, and approved, from the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of Victoria. Additionally, such research and ethics approval, as required from each school

district in which potential research participants may teach, was gained in accordance with each district's policy regarding outside research.

Once principals had provided band directors with the survey information and password, those band directors who were so inclined logged on to the website, input the password, and were asked to read a *Letter of Information for Implied Consent* (in Appendix A) which outlined the rationale of the study (survey), the anonymous nature of the survey and, because the study uses an online program located in the U.S., there is a possibility that information about you may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act. Participation was clearly stated as voluntary and respondents were free to withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without prejudice.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire portion of this study was piloted using seven band directors, all known to the researcher, who are band directors at the middle school level, not currently in the secondary school system (either retired or on leave), or from a school district not included in the random sampling so as to include as many secondary school directors as possible in the main study. Because middle school band directors have the same, or very similar, training to secondary school band directors, they were able to provide the survey with appropriate criticisms concerning any perceived deficiencies. The pilot study was conducted via acquaintances of the researcher (seven in all) who teach, or have taught, band in British Columbia. Due to the feedback loop of a pilot study (researcher-pilot subject-researcher), objective and explicit insight regarding questions and design was requested from the pilot's participants. All seven respondents in the pilot returned prompt

feedback (Appendix B), with only one recommended change for improvement. This recommendation led to the definition of assessment (as defined earlier) prominently displayed on every page of the survey.

The interview questions were not piloted, mainly due to tight timelines, though they were discussed with several of the directors that assisted in piloting the survey. These directors were asked for their opinion about the questions and no concerns were raised. Also, because the researcher is highly conversant with the population (band directors) and the subject matter, as well as the nature of semi-structured interviews as conversations between two people, a great deal of freedom is allowed. Once the interviews began, the researcher did add one question after the first interview, that being, “What does the word ‘effort’ mean to you?” The responses to this question were not included in the study as they were not relevant to the current research but could be used as the basis for further research in this area.

Survey Sample Process

The sample for the survey portion of this sequential explanatory, mixed methods study was taken from a stratified random sample of band directors in British Columbia. The province was organized according to four geographic regions of the province as follows: the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and the Coast, the Fraser Valley and Southern British Columbia, and the Interior and Northern British Columbia, as per Cowley, Easton, and Thomas (2011). Within each geographic region, three school districts were chosen using the *rand* function of Microsoft Office Excel 2011. Because there are 60 school districts in British Columbia that range in identification number from 5 to 93, this process involved organizing the parameters for randomization as 1-100.

Once the *rand* function was complete, the researcher progressed down the list, labeling each district as it corresponded to Cowley, Easton, and Thomas' (2011) geographic regions: Lower Mainland – A; Vancouver Island and the Coast – C; Fraser Valley and Southern British Columbia – D; and the Interior and Northern British Columbia – B. For example, a district that was not included in the study was District #84, Vancouver Island West. In the randomization, Microsoft Office Excel 2011 looked as shown in Figure 3 below.

School District	School District Name	Geographic Region	Geographic Label
84	Vancouver Island West	Vancouver Island/Coast	Extra

Figure 3. School District Randomization Sample

The *Geographic Label* here indicates “Extra.” This means that three districts in the Vancouver Island/Coast region had already been identified and had responded positively to participation in the study. Therefore, District #84 was “extra” to the study.

The districts that were selected represent a cross section of British Columbia urban and rural geography. These districts range from systems that have one secondary school to districts that include 20 secondary schools.

Once ethics approval had been granted from the University of Victoria, the researcher contacted superintendents, or his/her designate, via email, of the 12 randomly selected districts (four regions, three districts from each region) in order to gain district approval (Appendix C). Each district has its own policy concerning outside research proposals, and while all have different ways of conducting business, they all require similar documentation, which is outlined below:

1. A copy of your research proposal

2. Outline of your project
3. Copy of university ethics approval
4. Is there class time involved? How much?
5. Active Consent Form - parent approval

In a few cases, a resending of the initial request (Appendix D) was necessary in order to gain district approval. Following initial contact, two of the districts declined participation in the study and one district did not respond to multiple emails or phone calls. Therefore, three new districts were contacted as per the randomized list of districts. During the approval process, one of the districts contacted the band directors, rather than the principals, without the researcher's knowledge, regarding their agreement to participate in the study.¹⁷ However, as the researcher was never provided the names of the directors, principals were still contacted and participant anonymity was preserved.

All of the possible 80 secondary school principals were contacted for the study to give to the band directors. The survey webpage was accessed 22 times from the time the survey went online to the time it was closed. That is, someone with a unique, randomized password attempted to access and complete the survey. Therefore, an initial return rate of 27.5% ($22 \div 80$) was indicated. Of the 22 access attempts, however, six were wholly unusable, as they had been accessed with a password but left otherwise incomplete, providing a total of 16 usable, completed surveys and a final return rate of 20%. It might be possible that principals and not band directors may have accessed the web-survey, creating the discrepancy here. While a full sampling of all band directors in British Columbia would have been ideal, it would have been impractical and, according to

¹⁷ The researcher received the following email: Good afternoon—I have forwarded your information to our Band teachers and am waiting for their response. Your proposal meets our district criteria to date. I'll let you know if they wish to participate.

Alreck and Settle (2004), a sample larger than 10% of the target population is rarely necessary, because as sample size increases, sampling error decreases. A smaller sample, then, posed no threat to the validity of the study.

Demographic Information

In addition to data specifically related to the assessment practices used by band directors, demographic information (gender, teaching experience, educational background, school size, etc.) was collected to determine potential relationships between said demographics and assessment usage. This information was not used in the analysis due to the lack of substantive responses in the beginning director category especially. No information about school districts was collected though one question did ask if the band director taught in an urban or rural area.

Reliability and Validity

Just as “reliability and validity are central in all types of summative assessment made by teachers” (Mansell, James, & the Assessment Reform Group, 2009, p. 12), reliability and validity constitute an integral part of the methodological process. Reliability refers to the consistency or dependability of the results. The current survey established a reliable outcome because all participants were practicing secondary school band directors, meaning that all respondents understood both the concepts and nomenclature in the survey. Additionally, because “reliability can be improved by using a pretest or pilot version of a measure first” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 113), the survey was piloted with seven retired and/or current middle school band directors, demonstrating test-retest reliability.

“*Validity* is the extent to which scores generated by an instrument measure the characteristic or variable they are intended to measure for a specific population” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007, p. 116, emphasis in original). Face validity and content validity, though similar, are two indicators of instrument soundness that consist of expert judgement regarding the degree to which a survey appears appropriate for its intended purpose. Content validity, a variant of reliability (though at least as significant), determines whether or not the survey and its questions are representative of the content that it intends to measure (Fink, 2009, p. 43). The development of the survey instrument began with a review of prior studies’ use of questionnaires regarding secondary teachers’ assessment practices (Hanzlik, 2001; Kancianic, 2006; Lacognata, 2010; Simanton, 2000, Stoll, 2008). In the current study, content validity was established by piloting the survey with band directors outside of the sample (retired and/or current middle school band directors). Face validity, on the other hand, was satisfied by having the survey completed by British Columbia band directors who were not directly involved in the formal study. That is, they are either middle school band directors, recently retired from the profession, or from a district not included as part of the stratified random sample. The researcher was able to determine the degree of comprehension and clarity of the subject matter in order to ensure that the survey yields appropriate data for analysis.

Survey Dissemination

As stated earlier, the intent of the researcher for the dissemination of the questionnaire was two-fold. Following district approval, the researcher then contacted school principals, via email, with a cover letter, in HTML format (Appendix E), asking that they invite the band director(s) in their schools to participate in the survey. The cover

letter for the band directors (Appendix F) included an invitation to participate in the survey and a hyperlink to the survey website. This step accomplished an extra layer of anonymity for band directors as well as potentially alleviating any lack of personal, or professional, connection perceived by teachers when receiving materials addressed to “The Band Director” or “The Music Teacher.” The emails were addressed to the principal’s name and email account, or, as in a few cases, simply to the school’s email account. The emails were sent to all secondary school principals in each randomly selected district as approval was granted. In addition to the anonymity provided for band directors, it was hoped that principals would seek to understand that band directors are working toward more clarity in terms of their assessment practices.

Due to a low response rate early in the process, a second round of invitations was required. Therefore, follow-up emails and posted letters (Appendix G) were sent to all principals of the schools selected for the survey. Resending emails and letters to all selected schools was necessary because the survey was anonymous, which meant that the researcher had no knowledge of whether or not any particular band director had participated in the survey. Shortly after the second round of invitations was sent, a few more survey responses were collected.

Once band directors had completed the web-survey, they were directed to a *Thank You!* page that asked if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview. Those directors who were so inclined were asked to then click the Yes button, directing them to a separate webpage (Interview Contact Information Form, Appendix H), not connected to the survey, thereby maintaining the anonymity of all directors who participated in the survey.

Limitations of the Survey

Surveys have inherent limitations, regardless of mail-out or web-based format. Earlier, it was noted that web-based surveys have a lower cost factor than a mail-out, though the potential for loss of coverage due to missing or inaccurate email addresses, as well as lack of access to the Internet (though not in this study), could be of concern. There are other limitations that may contribute to measurement error, including numerous design, implementation, and response factors. According to Fan and Yen (2010), there are four stages that can contribute to low response rates and/or biased results, and these are outlined as follows:

1. *survey design and development*, which is significantly influenced by various factors, such as topics, length, ordering, formatting of web survey
2. *survey delivery factors*, such as sampling methods, contact delivery modes, invitation designs, informed consent methods, pre-notification and reminders, and incentive approaches
3. *survey completion*, such as the importance of knowing the respondents' levels of computer user and web use,¹⁸ as well as each respondent's interpretation of each question within his or her own perception
4. *web survey return*, which could include various technical failures that will substantially decrease the response rate, even if a web survey is strong in the first three stages

In this study, the design and development of the survey underwent many transformations. Because the topic of assessment in music can be contentious, questions

¹⁸ It was noted earlier that all schools in British Columbia have Internet access. Additionally, all teachers in all districts have an email address and the use of technology in the classrooms of British Columbia has been a priority for a number of years.

were reworked and reordered a number of times until the flow moved from the more cerebral questions of philosophy and personal values to the more pedestrian events in a band directors' day. That is, recalling the types of assessment that they use on a daily basis.

Some band directors may not have received the information package from the school principal and therefore did not have the chance to begin the survey. Others may have been intimidated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security statement on the Informed Consent page which caused them to end the survey without answering any questions. This may account for some of the incomplete surveys. Also, despite a successful pilot study, differences between computers (i.e., PC/MAC vs. tablet) and the formatting of webpages (type of web browser used) may have impacted band directors' ability to connect with, or view, the survey.

One important idea related to Fan and Yen's (2010) stages is that of interpretation in survey completion. Band directors may have interpreted questions in a way that the researcher did not anticipate. However, because beliefs and attitudes about assessment were part of the study's purpose, individual and varied responses were fostered through the use of a wide variety of questions relating to directors' views on assessment. Also, the questions in this section were designed to have directors look into themselves about their philosophy and practice.

It was anticipated that the pilot study—seven participants—would alleviate some of the limitations mentioned, especially with regard to the clarity of questions in the survey. However, this could not have accounted for prospective participants who were non-responsive, whether as a conscious choice (i.e., "I don't do surveys"), an

unwillingness to share their assessment practices due to some perceived retribution (i.e., anonymity concerns) or embarrassment regarding assessment (i.e., “I know I should be assessing my students, but...”), or, perhaps, they did not receive the information about the survey (i.e., the principal either did not receive or pass on the information). It should be noted that, as in other studies utilizing surveys, such follow-up invitations were necessary as a “reminder” about the survey and included further emails to principals, and posted letters sent directly to the principals about the survey, its purpose, and the anonymity of the survey.

Qualitative Instrument

As stated earlier, the survey portion of this study was to determine the assessment strategies used by secondary school band directors in British Columbia. The information collected from the survey, however, provided only minimal understanding of the underlying philosophical bases that these band directors call upon in designing and implementing assessment for their band classes. As opposed to the quantitative survey, with its deductive process, the qualitative interview “involves asking questions, listening, expressing interest, and recording what is said” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 268); an inductive process that “allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to [teachers] understanding their action” (Seidman, 2006, p.10).

Eisner (1998) explains that the use of qualitative research is a means of “understand[ing] a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (p. 58). As such, interviews, according to Bresler and Stake (2006), are used “to assist in interpreting what is happening” (p. 295). As “every word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness” (Vygotsky, 1987, 236-237, cited by Seidman, 2006, p.

7), the intent of the follow-up interviews was to flesh out trends identified in the survey with a focus on determining any differences in philosophical underpinnings of beginning, mid-career, and veteran band directors. The interviews were organized according to a narrative paradigm, which Bruner (1990) explains as important because “our capacity to render experience in terms of narrative is not just child’s play, but an instrument for making meaning that dominates much of life in culture—from soliloquies at bedtime to the weighing of testimony in our legal system” (p. 97). In other words, once the initial assessment usage was identified and collated from the survey, the interviews searched “for connecting threads and patterns among the excerpts within [preset] categories and for connections between the various categories that might be called themes” (Seidman, 2006, p. 125).

The approach to this phase of the study used the participants’ narrative to explain their experiences, events, and assessment practices. The one-on-one nature of the interview was “conducive to candid conversation and a comprehensive (deep and rich) expression of what the interviewee thinks about certain matters. Further, there [was] greater opportunity for respondents to express themselves more fully in an interview compared with, for example, a questionnaire” (Sanderson, 2006, p. 243). The interviews, then, provided a means of triangulation supportive of the survey portion of the study.

“Qualitative methods are frequently used to assess how well something is done or to explore the meaning that people hold about educational issues” (Sheppard, 2010, p. 55) and “when two or more methods that have offsetting biases are used to assess a given phenomenon, and the results of these methods converge or corroborate one another, then the validity of inquiry findings is enhanced” (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, p.

256). Interviews, according to Bresler and Stake (2006), are used “primarily to obtain observations that the researcher is unable to make directly, secondarily to capture multiple realities or perceptions of any given situation, and, finally, *to assist in interpreting what is happening*” (p. 295, emphasis added). For Seidman (2006), “in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). In the qualitative portion of the study, a naturalistic, constructivist paradigm was used, with semi-structured interviews as a follow-up to the survey instrument. This allowed for more specific information regarding the beliefs and attitudes of band directors, to be brought forth. Semi-structured interviews, according to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), are comprised of “specific core questions determined in advance from which the interviewer branches off to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interview proceeds, and allowing elaboration” (p. 167).

Triangulation

Triangulation is an important concept related to mixed methods research that “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5) and “can also capture a more complete, *holistic*, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study” (Jick, 1979, p. 603, emphasis in original). The use of interviews, as an explanatory key, was an important aspect of this study as a means of triangulation for it can be more difficult to elicit extended written communication (i.e., open-ended questions) from band directors who, as busy, “time-challenged” individuals, may not have responded to longer, more open-ended survey questions requiring thoughtful reflection prior to writing, or typing, a response. Also

important was the need for an explanation of the survey results through a more dialogic process. This assisted in determining band directors' rationales regarding the types of assessment used in their bandrooms. Therefore, the survey instrument of the first phase of the study, with closed response and short answer mechanisms seemed an excellent starting point, while those teachers who indicated that they would be willing to contribute further, in terms of beliefs, etc., were then contacted for an interview via email, all taking place in person.

Interview Questions

In this portion of the study, the questions were developed by the researcher as an extension of the survey in order to seek further evidence of assessment usage in the band classes of British Columbia. The researcher, as a means of follow-up to the survey, personally developed all of the questions in the interview phase so that they would connect with directors in a more deeply cognitive and philosophical manner than the survey. Further, this was completed by considering the nature of the survey questions and extending them to align with teacher preparation and current needs. The questions were divided into two parts, background questions relating to the band director's training and current status (Appendix I), and practical questions (Appendix J), that address assessment in the band class specifically. The questions in the preliminary, background section were developed and chosen simply to relax the participants by having them to discuss the nature of the band program they administer and to gauge the scope of the directors' experience. These questions were designed as short response, one word or sentence, so that they would move quickly. The final question in this section, "What would you consider to be your biggest challenges as a beginning band director? As an experienced

director?” was a means to set up the more formal assessment questions that would follow.

The questions in the *Practical Questions of Assessment in the Band Class* section were based primarily on the researcher’s personal knowledge of assessment, the background to which he was exposed during his own teacher education program, and the review of literature. Additionally, questions were designed to connect with the responses from the quantitative survey as a means of determining the phenomenological connection between band directors’ thoughts and their actions.

The order of the interview questions follows a pattern of beginning knowledge about assessment, the assessment strategies that band directors currently utilize, student involvement, directors’ personal/professional feelings about assessment and finish with a needs assessment. That is, moving from the teachers’ background in assessment toward what they see as important for the future.

Interview Participants

Because “adding qualitative interviews to experiments [surveys] as a manipulation check and perhaps as a way to discuss directly the issues under investigation and tap into participants’ perspectives and meanings will help avoid some potential problems with the experimental method” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18-19), the second phase of this study employed a naturalistic, semi-structured interview process with selected band directors, using a purposive sampling (Neuman & Robson, 2009; Palys, 2008) structure, because the participants are selected due to some characteristic. Due to the fact that “only a small number of inquiries have explored schoolteachers’ occupational phases expansively” (Baker, 2005b, p. 141), this phase of the study was intended to focus on the basis of the demographic data obtained in the

survey, which would have distributed directors into one of three subsets relative to the criterion of teaching experience: beginning teacher (0-5 years), mid-career teacher (6-15 years), and veteran teacher (16+ years). Baker (2005b) developed “a five-tier qualitative model of lives...demonstrating changes in the teachers’ perspectives across the years” (p 141), though his subsets were divided according to the chronological age of the teacher rather than teaching experience. However, as a relatively low number of directors responded to the call for interviews, this portion of the study used the six respondents who indicated a desire to participate. Nine directors had indicated a desire to participate in a follow-up interview but two band directors from the survey who indicated positively to the call for interviews did not respond to multiple communications for an interview and another band director, unfortunately, passed away between the completion of the survey and the beginning of the round of interviews. Therefore, six band directors (four male and two female) were interviewed during this phase of the study.

The subsets, and the corresponding experience configurations, for the current study were chosen for a number of reasons and do have some overlap to Baker’s (2005b) study. First, a beginning teacher (i.e., one who is in his or her first five years of teaching) is often still “getting [his] feet wet,” as well as learning about district and school policies. Another reason for using 0-5 years as a marker for beginning teachers is the report by The American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE), as described by Kimpton (2005), that “only about 60% of those earning degrees in education actually *take* a teaching job—which means that 40% of new teachers never set foot in a classroom. Furthermore, of those who do choose to teach, 30 to 50% will remain in teaching for less than five years” (p. 11, emphasis in original). This statistic is supported by Pillay,

Goddard, and Wilss (2005) who explain that “25% and 40% of beginning teachers in countries in the Western World are leaving teaching or they are burned out” (p. 22).

Second, those teachers categorized as mid-career (i.e., 6-15 years), after “learning the ropes,” so to speak, have established some sense of purpose and routine in their teaching. Baker (2005a) determined that the mid-career phases of teaching could be either the “*professional apex* of energy or [that] a crisis point was reached” (p. 270, emphasis in original).

Third, veteran teachers (i.e., 16+ years), while likely having enjoyed their teaching career to date, are those most resistant to change, and may, therefore, “become disenchanted or marginalize themselves from learning, no longer holding the good of their pupils as a high priority” (Day, 2004, p. 126).

As the intent of this section of the study was to determine if teachers at various career stages differ in their beliefs, attitudes, and structures of assessment in their programs, all six band directors (varied in terms of career stage) who indicated an interest in the follow-up interviews were contacted for the second phase of the study.

The six interview participants were from the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley/Southern BC regions of British Columbia as per Cowley, Easton, and Thomas (2011). No respondents from the Interior/Northern BC, or Vancouver Island/Coast regions indicated an intention to participate in the interview process. The schools at which the teachers work are varied in terms of their size, cultural, and socioeconomic environments. The teachers were all full-time band directors though two of the teachers split their time between middle and secondary schools, with secondary being the greater part of the teachers’ load.

All of the band directors who, at the end of the survey, indicated a desire to participate in a follow-up interview asked to be contacted via email. Once the researcher made contact with the band directors, a schedule was designed that would allow the researcher to meet face-to-face with each participant during a one-week period so as to minimize costs of transportation and accommodation.

Face-to-face interviews have a number of advantages: enhanced cooperation, address respondent questions, the ability to probe for fuller understanding of responses from respondents, and the sustaining of longer interviews (Martella, Nelson, & Marchand-Martella, 1999). Many of these advantages might not have been available had the interviews been completed by phone or Skype. Specifically, face-to-face interviews for this study allowed longer interviews that were uninterrupted because the participants had blocked off an hour of time in a place that they felt comfortable. One disadvantage for this type of interview is the cost associated with travelling to the participants' place of employment, though it was not prohibitive in this instance. Another, and potentially more concerning limitation here, is access to a wider pool of participants. That is, a number of eligible participants from varied career stages may have provided greater depth regarding the usage and beliefs associated with assessment in the secondary school band programs of British Columbia.

Interview Procedures

“To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction” (Covey, 1989, p. 98). As such, developing a plan for the interview process was imperative so that each

interview was as free as possible from researcher bias and the participants were left free to express themselves openly and honestly. This assisted in creating a reliable and valid study. In this study, once participants indicated a desire to participate as an interviewee, each interview site was organized according to each participant's request. The site for each interview was situated in the participant's band room, or a closely adjoining room, where the participant felt comfortable, with few distractions (Neuman & Robson, 2009), and the researcher was able to gain a sense of each band director's organizational structure. This naturalistic process, then, "permitted the researcher to enter the field with relatively little advance conceptualization, allowing the inquirer to be open to whatever becomes salient to pursue. The design is emergent and flexible" (Patton, 2002, p. 194).

Each interview participant signed a consent form waiver (Appendix K) before the interview began, indicating that he/she was fully informed about the study, its purposes, and their voluntary participation in it. The option to withdraw from the study at any time was clearly indicated, both in writing and verbally, before the interview began. No participant ended an interview prematurely, which meant that all data collected was available for use.

All data collected will continue to be retained and stored in a secure location (including digital data) and in a confidential manner for a period of one year. In order to ensure freedom of expression by all study participants regarding their assessment practices, beliefs, and attitudes, each participant was assured that his/her participation and comments will remain anonymous in this dissertation or in any future publications, with no identification possible related to the final phase of the study, either personally or professionally (i.e., school district).

Following the signing of the consent waiver form, the researcher set up the high definition video camera (JVC Everio GZ-E200 with a 32 gigabyte high speed storage card, attached to an Optex D-Pod mini tripod) and began each interview with a quick chat with the participant to test the video recording equipment. This camera is easily transportable and has a built-in zoom microphone. The researcher then posed the background questions, laying the foundation for the practical questions of assessment practice, beliefs, and attitudes. Throughout the interview process, the band directors appeared relaxed, ready, and more than willing to respond to the questions posed to them. Because the interviews were semi-structured, both the researcher and the participant had the ability to move off of the script and develop a thought that arose from the discussion, and this occurred frequently. At the end of each interview (each interview lasted from 45-60 minutes), the researcher concluded by asking the participant if he or she had any questions (there were none pertinent to the study), and thanked the participant for his/her contribution to the study.

At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher reviewed the video recording, extracted the audio for transcription purposes, made a backup copy (backed up and stored separately, on computer and an external hard drive, against loss), and began the transcription process. In order to best analyze the data collected, the researcher used the audio extractions of the interviews with ExpressScribe software as a means of converting speech to text, which allowed the simultaneous listening and typing of interviews. ExpressScribe was chosen as the transcription software because it was free, but more importantly because it allowed the researcher to listen and type simultaneously while slowing down or speeding up the audio as necessary for accuracy. Any unclear words or

phrases during transcription were reviewed with the appropriate video recording because lip-reading can be an effective clarifying tool. The advantage for the researcher in using ExpressScribe was the opportunity to begin deciphering themes while listening and transcribing. Certain words and phrases from different interviewees became one in the same, especially when the pace of the audio was slowed. Once the transcription was completed, the researcher reconnected with each participant as a means of member checking, with an attachment of the appropriate, written, raw transcription, via email to determine the degree of accuracy regarding the interview, to which all interviewees responded affirmatively. No changes were requested. It should be noted that three of the six interviewees are known to the researcher, and had met the researcher in capacities unrelated to this specific study, prior to the commencement of the study.

Reliability and Validity

Early qualitative researchers in nursing, according to Thorne (2000), claimed “that such issues as reliability and validity were irrelevant to the qualitative enterprise...[and that they]...have taken a lead among their colleagues in other disciplines in trying to work out more formally how the quality of a piece of qualitative research might be judged” (p. 70). Perhaps this attitude has led some researchers to believe that qualitative research is somewhat less “scientific” than its quantitative sibling (McCoyd, et al., 2009), an attitude wholly debunked by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Eisner (1998).

As for current practice, Shenton (2004) discusses qualitative inquiry regarding reliability and validity with a reiteration of Guba’s (1981) four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are advocated as

“qualitative ‘techniques’ to enhance rigor and reframe quantitative terms with qualitative equivalents: internal validity–credibility, external validity–transferability; reliability–dependability; objectivity–confirmability” (McCoyd et al., 2009, p. 820).

Credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. In this study, all participants were band directors in a secondary school setting, thereby having similar experiences with which to recall and create a rich data stream related to assessment in the band class. Shenton (2004) explains that “this is one way of triangulating via data sources” (p. 66). Because a singular interpretation of reality is non-existent, the naturalistic researcher, writes Hoepfl (1997), “assumes the presence of multiple realities and attempts to represent these multiple realities adequately” (p. 58). As such, individual band directors provided a particular perspective and set of experiences which were then verified against themselves and others where, ultimately, a rich picture emerged of the practices, beliefs or attitudes based on the contributions of all directors. Lincoln and Guba (1985) pronounced member checking, or participant feedback, as “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314).

Transferability “concerns the extent to which our findings are applicable beyond our immediate research setting” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 117). Based on previous research in the quantitative domain that demonstrates similar findings in various jurisdictions (Hanzlik, 2001; Kancianic, 2006; Lacognata, 2010; McCoy, 1991; McPherson, 1995; Saunders & Holahan, 2009; Simanton, 2000; Stoll, 2008), it was found that similar results occurred and therefore, are both generalizable and transferable. However, in a qualitative domain, the “researcher cannot specify the transferability of

findings; he or she can only provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 59). Shenton (2004) concurs, writing that as “the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations” (p. 69).

Dependability “is demonstrated through the methodological techniques that were conducted including: whether they were applicable to the research; whether they were applied consistently; whether there existed an appropriate time scale and samples” (Pulman, 2008, p. 101). Hence, the processes within the study are reported in detail, thereby enabling any future researcher to replicate the study, if not necessarily to obtain similar results.

Confirmability “refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others” (Tercanlioglu, 2008, p. 144). As noted by Guba (1981), “an inquirer should provide documentation for every claim from at least two sources” (p. 87). The researcher in this study used interviews as a means of triangulation, described in relation to credibility, to demonstrate validity in this context.

Limitations of the Interview Phase

With regard to limitations in this phase, it was possible that, following the survey phase of the study, participants might not have been inclined to expand upon their assessment thoughts in an interview setting, which might appear more personal than an anonymous survey. If this had been the case, another round of invitations would have been distributed to the schools in the random sample. However, another round of

invitations during this portion of the study was not necessary because there were enough participants willing and available to interview.

Further limitations might have included time and cost considerations (i.e., transcripts), varied interview formats among participants (i.e., (in)formality, place of interview), or a lack of participants in a designated subset. Also, as Marshall and Rossman (1999) indicate, further weaknesses regarding interviews might have included multiple interpretations of the data or, perhaps, the dependence on the openness and honesty of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews also incur limitations; for example, validity and bias from the interviewer. Validity may be impacted because questions were not always asked in the same manner or in the same order to each participant. Also, a lack of truthfulness on behalf of the participants could influence validity, if found to be true. Bias related to the researcher is not possible to eliminate fully because we are human and our judgements are inherently subjective in nature (Harlen, 2006). The researcher strove to minimize bias by allowing the participants to provide and expand upon their own answers responses to questions. Also, because semi-structured interviews “go with the flow” some of the questions were not asked in the same manner, or order, to each interviewee. This may impact the way in which interviewees respond to various questions and the “slant” of their responses. It is likewise unknown if an interviewee was presenting thoughts as his/her own or as thoughts that he/she considered to be what the researcher wanted. However, the benefits of the rich data collected mitigate the limitations of the process.

Ethical considerations are vitally important and warrant particular management with regard to participant anonymity and voice. Establishing firm protocols for

maintaining each participant's anonymity, in conjunction with the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board guidelines, such as secure data storage (digital and hard copy), and strict adherence to invitation and the interview consent form, were complied with and eliminated, to the researcher's knowledge, any concerns in this area.

A final limitation for the qualitative instrument is that the interview questions were not piloted. However, the questions were designed by a practicing teacher (the researcher) who has two undergraduate degrees in education, a graduate degree in Music, and a graduate diploma in performance as well as work in the field of assessment, including instructing an assessment course in higher education. Questions for the interviews were discussed with a number of the band directors who piloted the survey. Therefore, it is believed that the survey has face and content validity. Moreover, in line with Guba's (1981) four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, this study presents reliability and validity because the sample consisted of practicing band directors, the results are similar to previous studies completed in this area, found to be transferrable, and dependable (all procedures were applied equally), and confirmable because the interviews provide a secondary source of information beyond the survey but also in that the participants provided decidedly comparable responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Statistics play a significant role in much of our daily lives, whether as a component of advertising (i.e., 75% of people drink Brand X coffee), determining traffic patterns (i.e., where should a traffic light be installed), or in the citing of longitudinal

weather data (i.e., average precipitation or temperatures). “Statistics is important in behavioral sciences because it provides the framework in which research is done, facts determined, and the ‘interesting stuff’ discovered and described to others” (Lehman, 1995, p. 1).

“Data analysis may be restricted to the survey data alone or it may compare the survey’s estimates with results obtained from other surveys or data sources. Often, it consists of examining tables, charts and various summary measures, such as frequency distributions and averages to summarise the data” (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 5).

The data collected in the survey portion of this study were analyzed using a frequency distribution model: a method of organizing and summarizing data into easily describable phenomena that “is a listing of intervals of possible values for a variable, together with a tabulation of the number of observations in each interval” (Agresti & Finlay, 1997, p. 4). This frequency distribution configured the data in relation to reported usage percentages and processed according to measures of central tendency (mode, median, and mean) in a tabular format with graphic organizers to emphasize and assist with the description of the survey results. The rationale that undergirds this phase of analysis is the ability of band directors to read and understand the data, as many have not likely taken a statistics course that would allow them to understand more detailed statistical analysis (i.e., ANOVA).

Qualitative Analysis

Data analysis for qualitative research often occurs throughout the process or, as Thorne (2000) writes, with “constant comparative analysis” (p. 69), a process by which the accounts of different people with similar experiences are continually compared. In

this phase of this study, themes that arose from the data are described, analyzed, and presented in a richly detailed narrative form in the upcoming chapters. The data analysis involved transcribing, reading, and re-reading the transcripts many times in order to code the data (text blocks) and identify themes. Guiding this analysis is a narrative paradigm that, as noted by Neuman and Robson (2009) “the researcher presents or reveals the social reality as members in a field setting [band directors] experience it” (p. 342).

During this phase of the study, the data were analyzed multiple times, as per Thorne (2000) and Seidman (2006), with the first analysis occurring during the interview itself simply by hearing the words of the interviewee, mentally “processing what the participant is saying” (p. 113), which led to follow-up and clarifying questions. The video of each interview was reviewed, examined, and then, once the audio was extracted, the transcription process began, which provided further content analysis as the researcher listened and typed the interviews. The transcripts were edited for clarity and read multiple times, continuously scrutinizing the data for similarities and differences with similarities being grouped together and coded via key words, phrases, and text blocks derived from the directors’ responses—the research questions never far from the process. Further readings of the transcripts produced a data stream of initial thematic ideas, each of which was copied and pasted into another document for the purposes of comparison with other interviewees’ transcripts. As the rich thematic data from all the transcripts were parsed into several documents, connections between the interviews became evident. The pages of grouped data containing the various thematic ideas were then laid out on a table and further examined to determine if the connecting ideas could be sifted into broader themes. That is, the data were compared “with all others that may be similar or different in order

to develop conceptualisations of the possible relations between various pieces of data” (Thorne, 2000, p. 69). This investigative content analysis was able to narrow an initial set of 12 documents containing thematic ideas¹⁹ down to 7. The data were further read, sorted, colour-coded, and analyzed for similarities and differences, with the seven remaining themes able to be pared down into four²⁰ by reviewing each of the concepts for possible relationships. For example, the subtheme of band directors’ *knowledge base* (a cognitive precept) was a key component that arose out of the interview process and all band directors indicated deficiencies in this area especially with regard to instrumental pedagogy and assessment. Also, because band directors’ *beliefs* (another cognitive precept: subtheme) about assessment are grounded in their knowledge base and judgement, and as a central purpose to the study, they were apparent throughout the interviews. To illustrate, because knowledge and beliefs form in the mind, *Cognitive Conflict* became a dominant theme that emerged through the process of constant comparative analysis of the key words, phrases, and text blocks found in the transcripts. Appendix L illustrates the coding process through a sample interview transcript with associated initial thematic coding; Appendix M illustrates a sample excerpt from one of the identified 12 themes (preliminary code groupings) as copied and pasted; and Appendix N provides a graphic detailing of the final four emergent themes.

Summary

Assessment in the bandroom is a multifaceted process, requiring directors to develop assessment instruments that are: a) are seen as “objective” in order to be

¹⁹ Assessment strategies, Challenges, Effort, Feelings, Knowledge Base, Method Books, Needs, Nomenclature, Prescription, Standardized Tests, Student Involvement, Teacher Education

²⁰ The Practice of Assessment, Cognitive Conflict, Connecting with Instructional Objectives, and Supervisory Skepticism

perceived as providing legitimacy to the assessment process (Spruce, 2001), and b) true to the director's phenomenological, or "subjective," musical experience. This dichotomous nature of assessment in music as objective/subjective is the genesis behind the mixed methodology of this study. The objective, or quantitative, survey set out to discover the current assessment practices and trends of a sample of band directors in British Columbia, whereas the naturalistic, or qualitative, interviews sought to underpin the survey, the point of which, phenomenologically, "is to 'borrow' other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 62).

The following chapter (Chapter 4) presents the findings of the study in terms of sample structures, the web survey (quantitative) data, followed by the interview (qualitative) data. As per Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), some mixing of the qualitative data with the quantitative will occur.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to investigate the current assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods. This chapter will present the findings of the study in terms of the sample structures: the web survey (quantitative) data, and the interview (qualitative) data. Data from the participants' responses to the web survey will be presented through descriptive statistics (see Chapter 3). The interview responses are then presented and cross-referenced with the data collected from the survey responses. Some discussion will take place during the presentation of the interview data in relation to the themes encountered through the analysis. Further discussion of the results and their implications will occur in Chapter 5.

Sample Size and Response Rate

Eighty secondary school principals were contacted for the study. The survey webpage was accessed 22 times from the time the survey went online to the time it was closed. That is, someone with a unique, randomized password attempted to access and complete the survey. Therefore, an initial return rate of 27.5% was indicated. Of the 22 access attempts, however, six were wholly unusable, as they had been accessed with a password but left otherwise incomplete, providing a total of 16 usable, completed surveys and a final return rate of 20%.

Quantitative Instrument

Demographics

There were nine questions in this section. The completed sample consisted of 16

responses, with only 15 respondents answering the gender question in the background section of the survey. The gender distribution of the participants was nearly a 3-to-1 ratio, male-to-female, with 11 male and 4 female band directors responding to this question. The teaching experience of the respondents leaned more toward the mid-career teacher (6-15 years) with the distribution shown in Figure 4. Due to the lack of balanced responses, it was not possible to identify possible trends for analysis of experience-specific assessment.

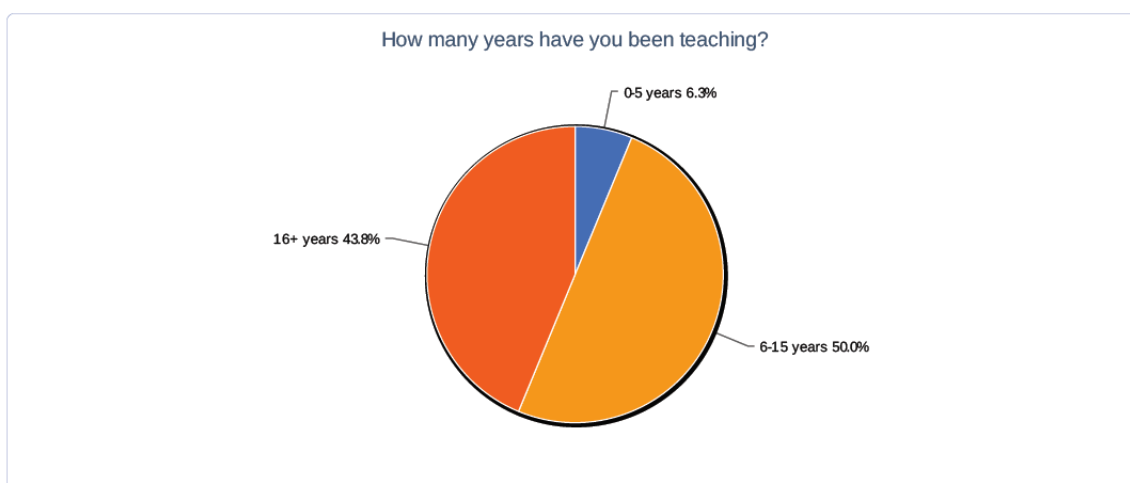


Figure 4. Teaching experience

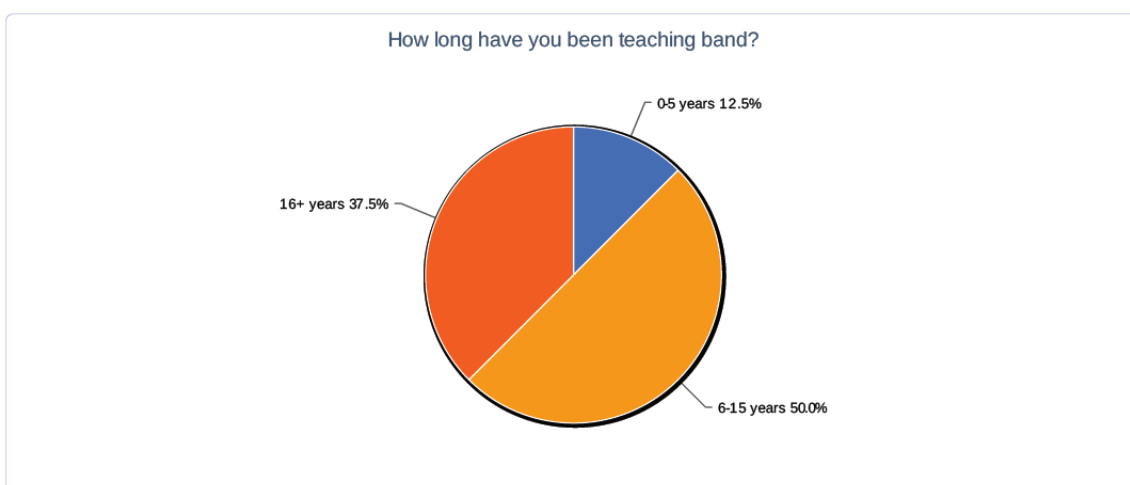


Figure 5. Teaching experience with band

The distribution of experience shifted slightly for the question, “How long have you been teaching band?” There is no way to determine how or why the participants may have shifted between categories without further questioning. That is, what prompted the switch to teaching band? Figure 5 (previous page) shows this expanded shift regarding teaching band (0-5 years-12.5%, 6-15 years 37.5%, 15+ years-50%).

Respondents, as shown in Figure 6, possess a wide variety of education/certification in conjunction with the question, “What education/certification have you completed?” Additionally, three respondents added open-text responses in the “Other” category: BA, BMusEd, and MEdAdmin. These responses closely resemble the qualifications outlined in the main question and should not be considered exclusionary.

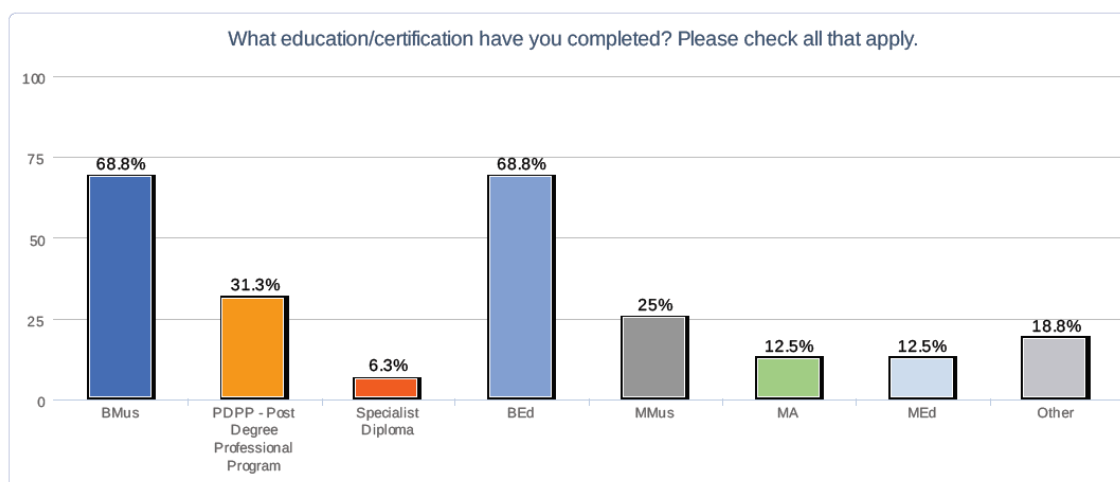


Figure 6. Education/Certification

Regarding the question of teacher certification, “Were you originally certified to teach in British Columbia? If no, where did you receive your certification?” all but one participant were certified in British Columbia. The remaining participant indicated that teacher certification was completed in Alberta, which has a reciprocal agreement with

British Columbia regarding teacher certification. This statistic means that all of the participants who responded have certification related to the British Columbia curriculum.

In terms of school setting, the majority of respondents (68%) indicated that they teach in an urban setting. The distribution of school setting is shown in Figure 7.

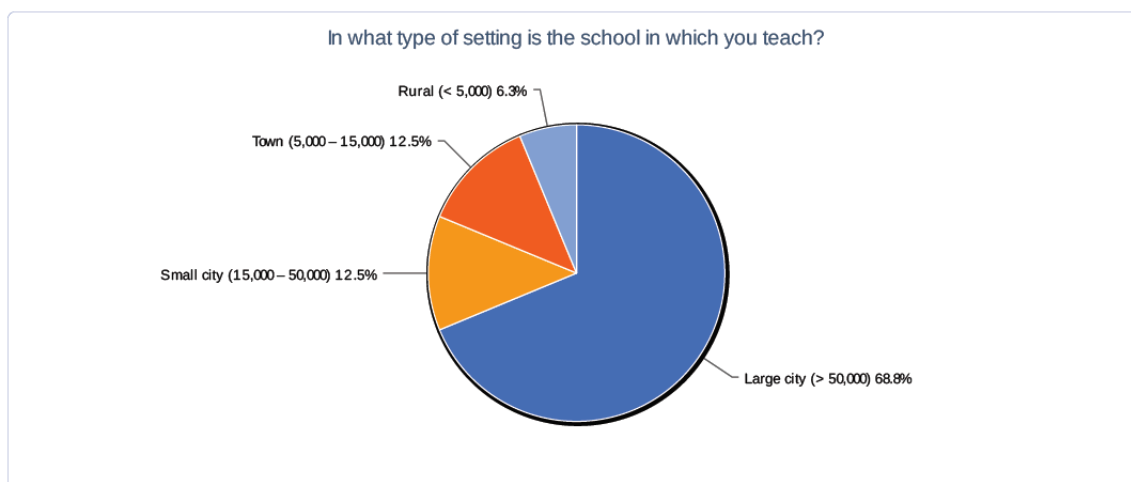


Figure 7. School setting

Regarding school population, 10 of the respondents indicated that they taught in a school with a student population of 1000 or greater. The remaining participants were split evenly between 101-499 students and 500-999 students. This is shown in Figure 8 below.

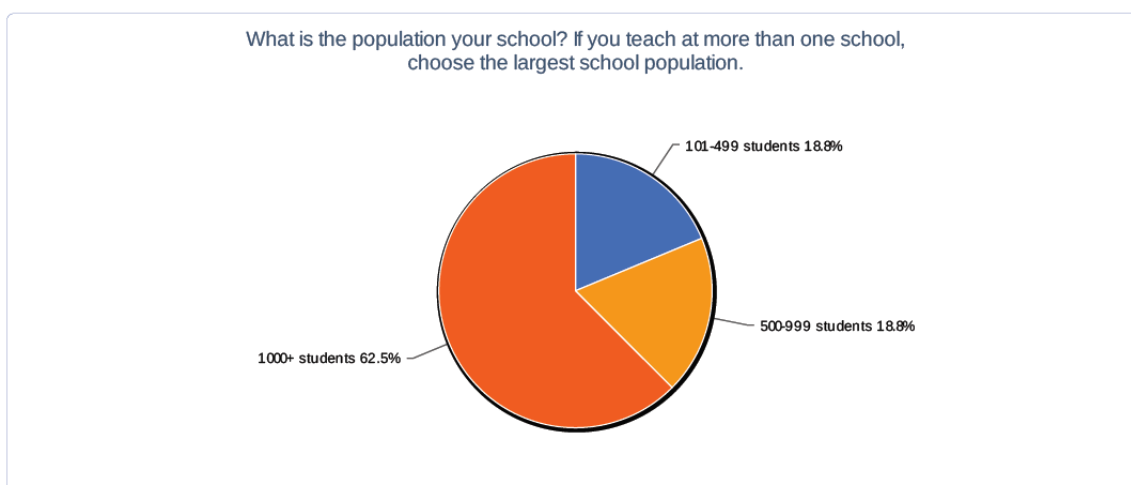


Figure 8. School population

In regard to teaching load, 5 of the 16 respondents indicated that some portion of their teaching load was outside of their music specialization. Appendix O provides the open-text responses of those teachers who teach subjects outside of their band classes.

Professional Development

With respect to the question, “In your pre-service teacher education, what training, if any, did you have in regard to student assessment?” the results of which are shown in Figure 9, one respondent (6.3%) indicated that there was no assessment instruction in his/her pre-service teacher education, while 25% indicated that self-study was a means of learning about student assessment. Additionally, 2 of the 16 respondents indicated that they had taken graduate coursework that focused on student assessment.

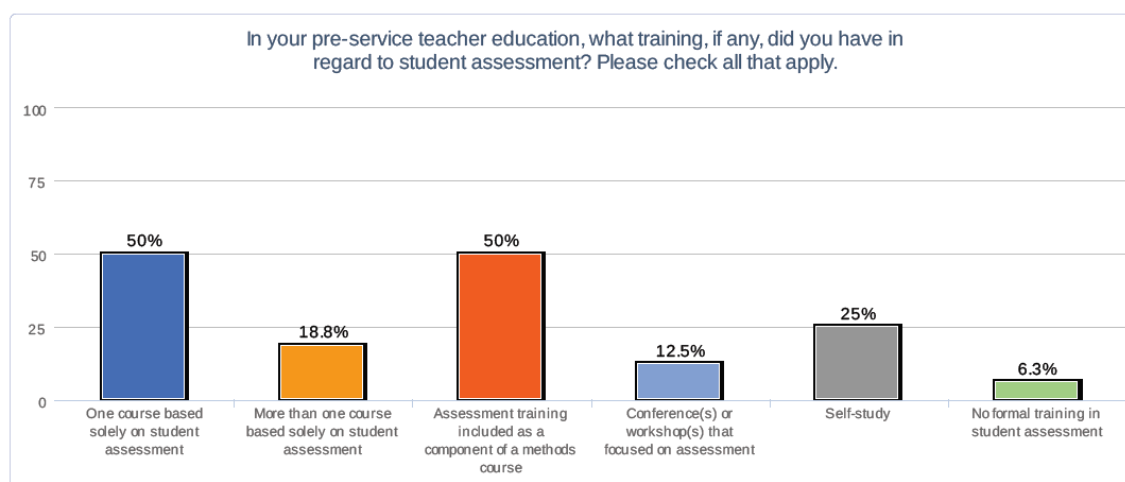


Figure 9. Pre-service education in student assessment

Professional development is an important component of in-service teaching, whether organized by a subject-based conference, school district, or with colleagues. Occasionally, professional development takes place through personal interest and study. Assessment, general or subject-specific, is sometimes presented to teachers through such activities and band directors may have had an opportunity to participate in those

activities. Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of responses related to band directors' participation in professional development within the last three years.

Table 1

Professional Development in Assessment During the Past 3 years

Statement	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I have had opportunities to participate in professional development related to assessment	3	11	2	0
I have participated in classroom assessment related professional development in my school, district, or elsewhere	1	11	3	1
I have read books or articles, watched videos or webcasts about classroom assessment	2	8	4	2
I have discussed, planned, and modified classroom assessment with colleagues	5	7	3	1
I have been part of an assessment committee at my school or in my district	0	0	6	10
I have participated in web-based communities (blog, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) related to assessment	0	2	3	11

N = 16

Assessment Beliefs

In order to understand why band directors use assessment as they do, it was necessary to examine the underlying belief systems, regarding assessment in band and in general, that support their work. As stated in the Introduction, this study sought to determine any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in British Columbia in regard to the design and implementation of assessment procedures, including any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director's career stage. This section will present the results of the survey as they relate to the section of the survey titled *My Views on Assessment*.

Regarding assessment in the classroom, and illustrated in Table 2, participants were asked, “I believe that assessment in the band class is (please choose the best answer):”

Table 2

Assessment in the Classroom

Statement	Count	%
fundamental to the teaching/learning process	8	50%
important for student learning	7	43.8%
neither important or unimportant for student learning	0	0.0%
somewhat important for student learning	1	6.3%
a nuisance that impedes the teaching/learning process	0	0.0%

N = 16

It can be seen that the majority of respondents consider assessment in band to be important or fundamental to the teaching/learning process, while only one participant selected “somewhat important.” This is a significant area on which to focus, especially in regard to the types of assessment used by those teachers who responded “important or fundamental to the teaching/learning process.” The connection of assessment usage and beliefs to instruction will be discussed in both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Further to teachers’ beliefs about assessment, participants were asked, “How important do you believe each of the following statements are regarding the purposes of student assessment?” As shown in Table 3 (on the next page), 17 statements were available to the participants, who were then able to choose their responses from a five-point Likert scale ranging, in descending importance, from 5 (extremely important) to 1 (not at all important). Participants also had an opportunity to choose “No opinion.”

Table 3

Importance of Student Assessment

How important do you believe each of the following statements are regarding the purposes of student assessment?	Likert-scale					
	5	4	3	2	1	No opinion
to provide feedback to students	9	6	1	0	0	0
to provide feedback to parents	4	3	4	5	0	0
to provide feedback/evidence to administrators	1	1	5	5	2	2
to identify individual student abilities	5	6	4	1	0	0
to identify general class abilities	4	7	2	1	2	0
to determine whether instruction has been successful	11	4	1	0	0	0
to determine what concepts students are understanding	9	2	4	1	0	0
to determine what concepts students are failing to understand*	7	5	1	2	0	0
to determine future instructional direction	7	5	3	0	1	0
to demonstrate student accountability for learning	7	6	2	0	1	0
to establish or maintain credibility for the band program	3	3	3	3	3	1
to determine the level of musical preparedness for performance	4	6	2	2	2	0
to help students prepare for performance	5	7	2	2	0	0
to determine whether students are practicing at home	2	2	6	3	2	1
to motivate students to practice their instruments	4	2	5	5	0	0
to set or maintain class standards	3	5	5	2	1	0
to rank students according to individual performance levels*	2	1	5	3	3	1

$N = 16$. * $n = 15$

Band directors, like other teachers, use lesson planning to develop daily activities related to curriculum and instruction. Assessment, according to current educational theory relating to backward design,²¹ is an integral component of instruction in all classrooms. As such, the belief that assessment is integral, or not, may impact on band

²¹ Backward design, as presented by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), is the process of curriculum (and lesson planning) development that advocates an assessment-first strategy of: a) identify desired results; b) determine acceptable evidence; and c) plan learning experiences and instruction.

directors' usage of assessment in their program. In response to the question, "To what extent do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statement: Assessment is an integral part of the lesson planning process in band," respondents overwhelmingly chose *Strongly Agree* or *Agree*, as shown in Figure 10.

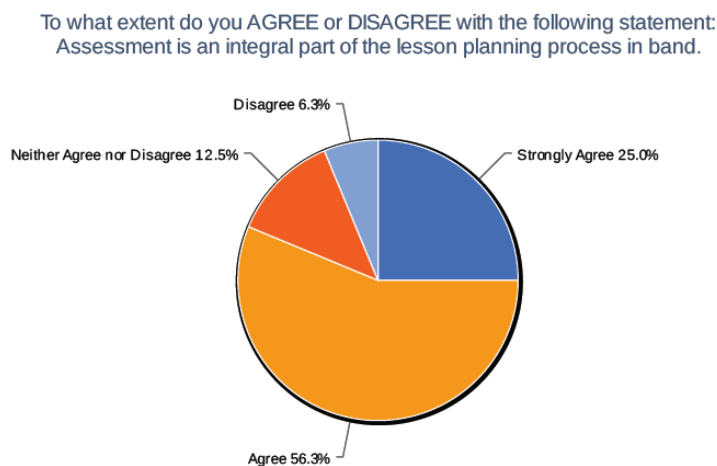


Figure 10. Assessment as an integral part of lesson planning

Band directors appear to have differing views when thinking about their students, teaching, and assessment. Directors were provided with a series of statements relating to their views on the impact of assessment on student development, or the teaching process, and were asked to provide their level of agreement (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*) to each those statements. Table 4, on page 102, provides the statements and the associated responses.

Having established band directors' thoughts regarding assessment in the band class, it was necessary to determine if they used assessment in their classes and how such assessment might be mandated by school or district administration. In asking the question, "Do you assess the students in your band class(es)?" one director responded with "No."

Table 4

Assessment, Students, and Teaching

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Assessment influences how students feel about themselves in band	5	8	1	2	0
Assessment has a significant impact on teaching	2	8	5	1	0
Assessment helps teachers improve their teaching	5	9	1	1	0
Assessment helps teachers see how the students are learning	4	10	0	2	0
Mandated assessment activities impede teaching and learning	4	6	3	3	0
Teaching is about assisting students to gain credits and graduate	0	0	2	6	8
Teaching is about helping students become effective learners	10	6	0	0	0
Assessment is fair to students*	4	4	5	1	1
Students will learn more if the teacher makes most of the decisions about their learning	0	1	6	6	3
It is as important for students to develop critical thinking about music as it is to "play the right notes"	8	7	1	0	0

Note. * $n = 15$

As a result of this directors' response, a further question, with a qualitative, open-text comment box, was posed, "If you answered NO, would you please elaborate as to why you do not assess your students?" In the comment area, that director responded:

My students are signed up because they enjoy making and learning about music. I tend to give higher marks because I believe learning about music is about following an intrinsic passion. I try to help each student build skills that gives them tools that will enhance their enjoyment of music.

Such a response seems contradictory to the director's thinking as it is noted that the director indicated that no assessment is used in band class. However, the response, "I tend to give higher marks" denotes that some form of assessment must exist in order for "marks" to be present. Perhaps the respondent was unaware of the meaning of assessment.²² From this point forward, the number of participants is lowered to 15 from the previous 16.

Assessment Policy

The next section of the survey related to assessment policy and band directors' knowledge of policy as related to district and national curriculum structures. The first question, "Are you aware of the 'National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (Band)' developed by the Canadian Band Association?" yielded a NO response for 12 of the 15 participants. Whether this result is due to band directors' lack of participation in, or knowledge of, the Canadian Band Association, the Canadian Band Association's (or its provincial affiliates) possible infrequency in connecting with band directors, or some other reason is unknown at this time and beyond the scope of this study.

In terms of local jurisdiction regarding assessment, not one of the participants was able to respond affirmatively (14-No, 1-Don't Know) to the question, "Does your school/district have an explicit assessment policy that you are required to follow?" It can be taken from this that band directors are able to develop and implement their own policies for assessment in their classes.

²² It should be noted that every page of the survey contained the following statement, "For the purposes of this survey, ASSESSMENT is defined as, 'the systematic process of gathering information about students' learning in order to describe what they know, are able to do, and are working toward.' This definition is taken from the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2002), Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for Choral and Instrumental Music, 11 to 12, p. 4.

All of the participants indicated that their students receive academic credit for participation in band.

Assessment in the Band Class

A concern of many teachers, including band directors, is the frequency of assessment. The question, “How often do you typically assess your students?” yielded the data shown in Figure 11.

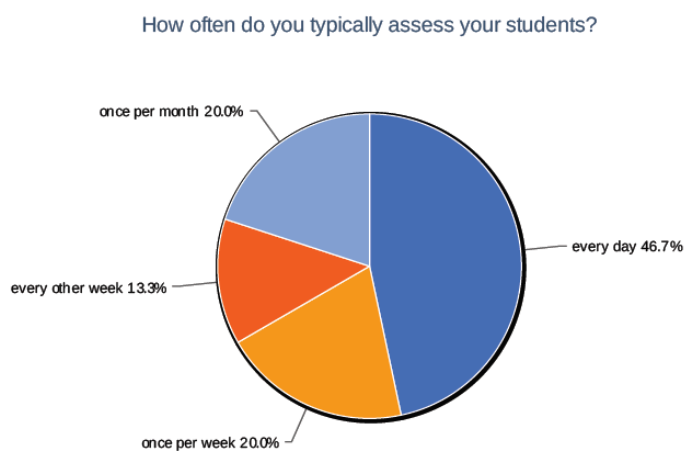


Figure 11. Frequency of assessment

It is difficult to understand from these data whether those band directors who indicated that they assess student “every day” use formal or informal means of assessment. That is, do these teachers believe that the use of informal comments in rehearsal represents an assessment of student achievement? The answer to this question lies beyond the scope of the current study.

Assessment types. The next section of the survey was concerned with the types of assessment that band directors use in their classes. A variety of options were provided and directors were asked, “Which of the following assessment strategies, if any, do you use in your assessment of students during a typical school year? Please check all that

apply.” For the purpose of teacher anonymity,²³ the options were randomized each time the survey was accessed. Table 5 illustrates the distribution of assessments that band directors have indicated they use.

Table 5

Assessment Types

Assessment type	Count	Percent
technique performance tests	15	100%
repertoire performance tests	14	93%
participation	13	87%
attitude	12	80%
attendance	11	73%
paper and pencil theory tests	11	73%
student self-assessment	11	73%
effort	10	67%
listening test/quiz	9	60%
student-teacher conferencing	8	53%
student peer-assessment	8	53%
observation checklists	4	27%
paper and pencil music history tests	3	20%
computer-based music history tests	0	0%
computer-based theory tests	0	0%
essays	0	0%
portfolios	0	0%
none of the above	0	0%

Note. The percentages have been rounded up or down for visual clarity.

As revealed in Table 5, all respondents indicate the use of technique testing as a component of their assessment structure and 93% also use repertoire testing. A majority of the band directors indicate that they use attendance, attitude, effort, and participation, often in combination with each other.

Non-Achievement Factors

An area of concern revealed by numerous studies in the United States, most notably Russell and Austin (2010), indicated that many band directors use non-achievement factors (i.e., effort, attendance, attitude, and participation) as a significant

²³ This was done in the unlikely event that teachers who know each other have been chosen to participate in the survey.

portion of the grading process for students in band classes. Participants in the current survey were asked, “If you indicated that you use effort, attendance, participation, and/or attitude in your assessment of student achievement, how do you factor this into the student's final grade (percentage of grade, extra credit, etc.)? Please describe in the boxes as necessary.” Of those participants who responded to this question, results similar to previous studies regarding weighting were recorded and these are illustrated in Table 6, though some participants did not provide responses in this area of the survey. The full open-text responses are provided in Appendix P.

Table 6

Non-Achievement Factors

Factor	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	Weight range
Effort	12	9	5-40%
Attendance	10	8	5-20%
Participation	11	9	5-40%
Attitude	11	7	5-10%

Note. *N*=number of respondents,
n=number of respondents who indicate non-achievement weighting

Band directors were then asked, “If you use performance tests as part of your student assessment plan, what format do you use? Please check all that apply.” Figure 12 (next page) illustrates the various formats that band directors use for performance tests. As can be seen from the data, band directors have different means of assessing students in performance contexts. However, it must be pointed out that providing individual achievement levels for assessments in those areas labeled sectional performances in class, ensemble performances in concert, ratings at solo and ensemble festivals, and ratings at large-group festivals is, for all practical purposes, impossible. Also, it is not known if such assessment is formative or summative in nature.

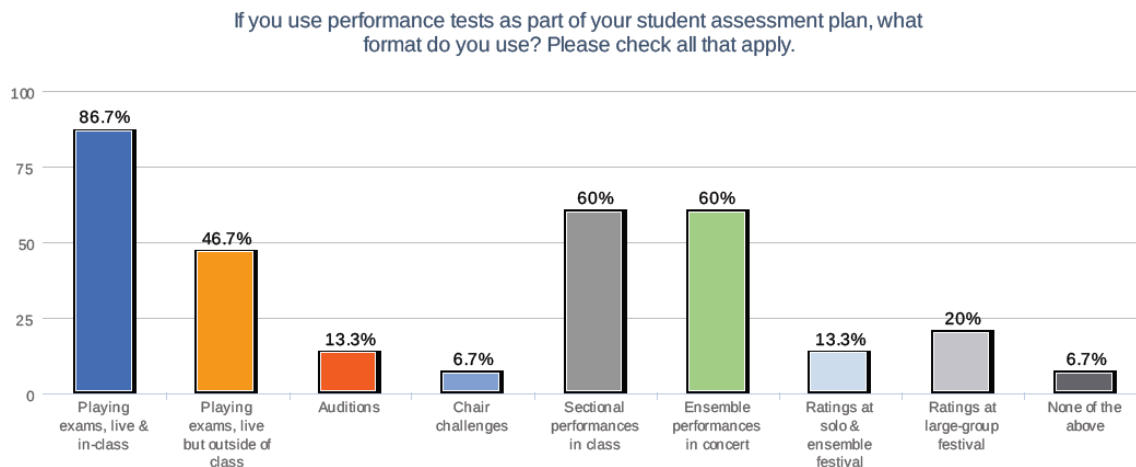


Figure 12. Performance test formats

Assessment Technologies

Some teachers offer digital recording as a component of their assessment program. Such a process offers students and teachers the opportunity to focus on the rehearsal process without taking time away from the large ensemble. By employing such technologies in their programs, teachers can review performance tests without having students replay the material. Figure 13 demonstrates participants' use of digital technology in their classroom.

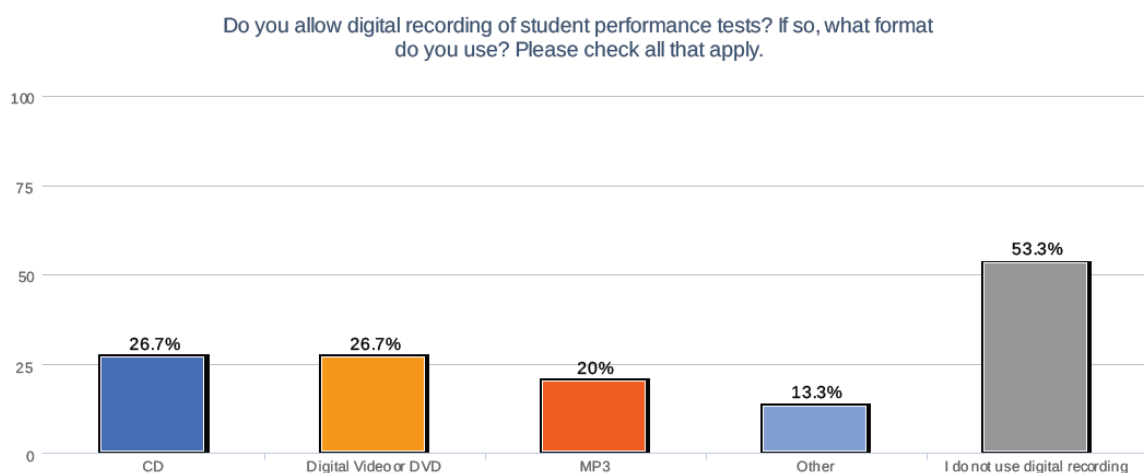


Figure 13. Digital technologies in the band class

Additionally, two respondents indicated, in the open-text comment box, that they used software technology that was not indicated in the survey. One participant uses SmartMusic and another uses Audacity.²⁴ A majority of respondents indicated that they do not use technology as a component of their program. Further to the use of technology in the classroom, seven respondents also allow students to email performance tests to them for assessment.

Pre-structured assessment tools for band directors are easily available from a number of sources. A majority of participants indicated that they use some form of pre-structured assessment while 27% responded that they do not use pre-structured assessments. Figure 14 shows the distribution of pre-structured assessment used by band directors. Thirty-three percent of respondents used the open-text comment box that was available for the “Other” category. One director wrote, “I glean ideas from sources, such as conference handouts, print sources, etc. but adapt them for my personalized needs.” All of the open-text responses for this question are provided in Appendix Q.

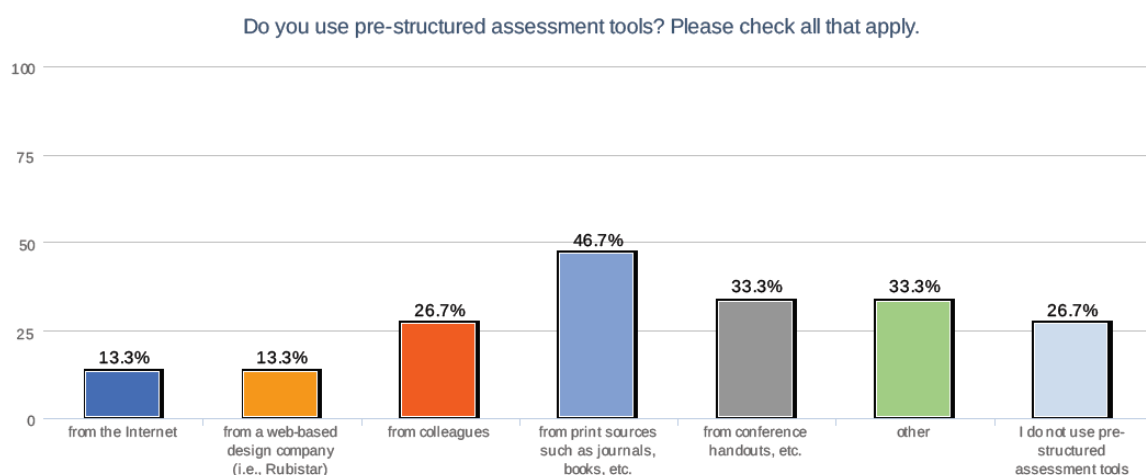


Figure 14. Pre-structured assessment tools

²⁴ SmartMusic is an interactive software program that allows students to practice with an accompaniment, providing a grade for students that is based on pitch and rhythm. Audacity is an open source, cross-platform software program used for recording and editing sounds.

Hanzlik (2001) suggested that reflective practice is an important aspect of student learning and understanding but found that at least 80 percent of band directors never used such assessment tools as “student journals, portfolios, reflective writing, teacher surveys and student displays” (p. 125). Band directors in the current study, and in response to the question, “Do you use reflective practice with your students? For example, students are allowed to discuss or explain their performance/work,” responded oppositely with 80% in the affirmative for the use of student reflection in their classrooms. However, when band directors were asked, “Do you use any of the following as part of your student assessment?” a majority of respondents, as shown in Table 7, indicated that they do not have students write journals or use practice logs or journals. The question, then, becomes, “How do you use reflective practice in your classroom?”

Table 7

Other assessment

Response	Yes	No
Students write journals.	1	14
Practice log or journal	7	8
Students audition for admission into ensemble(s)	4	11
Students audition for ensemble placement (Principal, I, II, III chair)	4	11

Note. $N=15$

Students in the band classes of British Columbia often have multiple opportunities to redo tests, as 93% of participants responded “Yes” to the question, “If you use performance tests in your program, do students have the opportunity to ‘redo’ performance tests for a higher grade?” As such, students are not penalized for an “off day” as a performer. While this practice may not be considered “authentic assessment” in the sense of professional musicians who perform auditions, concerts, etc., and are expected to be “on,” it does lend itself to the learning process. As pointed out by Wiggins

(1993), authenticity of assessment includes, “the search for *patterns* of response in diverse settings. Emphasis is on the consistency of student work - the assessment of *habits* of mind in performance” (p. 207, emphasis in original).

It appears that, at this point in the survey, one participant either left the survey and did not return to complete it or, perhaps, had some form of computer, or network, glitch as only 14 participants moved on in the survey.

Rubrics/Exemplars

When asked, “Do you use rubrics as part of your assessment plan?” a majority of respondents (12) indicated “Yes,” while 2 responded “No.” On the question of exemplars, participants were asked, “Do you use exemplars of student work as ‘standards of quality’ for other students to reference?” Again, a majority (11) responded “Yes,” while 3 responded “No.”

Technology and Assessment in the Band Class

As the 21st century moves into its second decade, technology is expected to have an ever-increasing role in education (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012). As indicated earlier, some participants in the study use computer software programs as a means of assessing students (SmartMusic, Audacity). In response to the question, “Have you used computer-based assessment as a component of your assessment plan for band?” only 3 participants responded “Yes,” while 11 indicated that they do not use any computer-based assessment. Those respondents who answered “No” were given an opportunity to stipulate a rationale for not using computer-based assessment. Of the six available responses, the 11 respondents only chose two, “It does not fit into the structure

of my program,” and “I do not have the appropriate support for technology,” as shown below in Table 8.

Table 8

Computer-based technology

Available response	Count
I am unaware of technology that supports assessment	0
It is too time-consuming	0
It is impersonal	0
It does not fit into the structure of my program	6
I do not have the appropriate support for technology	5
Other:	0

Note. N=11

Assessment – Final Thoughts

As a final question for participants, and to determine if other types of assessment are being used, participants were asked, “Do you use any other type of assessment in your band classes? If YES, please describe what you use.” Six participants provided responses in the open-text comment box. However, only one of the responses, “Solo competitions, Small ensemble performances, Performance of original compositions” was relevant to student assessment. All open-text responses to this question are provided in Appendix R.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative portion of this study has identified a number of important focal points regarding assessment in the secondary school band programs of British Columbia. In terms of professional development, the majority of participating directors indicated that assessment was, to some degree, a component of their pre-service education and that, during the last three years, they have “had opportunities to participate in professional development related to assessment; participated in classroom assessment related

professional development in my school, district, or elsewhere; read books or articles, watched videos or webcasts about classroom assessment; and discussed, planned, and modified classroom assessment with colleagues,” though few have participated in committee work in their schools or as part of web-based, including social media, communities.

Band directors’ beliefs about assessment appear to be connected quite strongly with student success and most deemed assessment to be important or fundamental to the teaching/ learning process. In contrast, the actual assessment structures in the directors’ classrooms appear to be heavily weighted toward achievement in performance alongside equal weightings of non-achievement factors (effort, attendance, attitude, and participation). Participants also indicated a strong sense of student self-assessment in the survey but only seven directors indicated the use of practice logs or journals and only one director indicated the use of journal writing as a means of assessment.

Qualitative Instrument

According to Sheppard (2010), “qualitative methods are frequently used to assess how well something is done or to explore the meaning that people hold about educational issues” (p. 55). Because the purpose of this study was to investigate the current assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, qualitative interviews were then completed to assist in the triangulation and understanding of the survey results. According to Jick (1979), interviews “can also capture a more complete, *holistic*, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study” (p. 603, emphasis in original).

As Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explain, any “study that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods without explicitly mixing the data derived from each is simply a collection of multiple methods. A rigorous and strong mixed methods design addresses the decision of how to mix the data, in addition to timing and weighting” (p. 83). With this in mind, it is, then, the researchers’ determination of how the mixture of the two types of data sets (quantitative and qualitative) will be presented. In the current study, the emergent themes from the transcription process and various coding structures associated with the interviews produced themes that aligned compellingly with many of the subheadings from the quantitative instrument. Therefore, as part of the sequential explanatory, mixed methods procedure, the reporting of the findings of the interviews will connect with data collected from the quantitative portion of the study (for the interview questions, see Appendices I and J), and be presented through the following emergent themes: a) The Practice of Assessment; b) Cognitive Conflict; c) Connecting with Instructional Objectives; and d) Supervisory Skepticism.

Emergent Themes

The Practice of Assessment

Band directors in British Columbia do assess their students. In fact, as noted in the quantitative survey, nearly 50% of band directors in the survey indicate that they assess their students, in some form, on a daily basis, with the others ranging from once per week to once per month. What strategies make up the assessment that band directors use in their classrooms? What types of objectives support those assessment strategies? This section, *The Practice of Assessment*, explains the thoughts of the six interviewed band

directors regarding their assessment *Strategies* and assessment that is based on *Non-Achievement Factors*.

Strategies. Band directors, when asked, “what assessment strategies do you use on a regular basis?” communicated the use of differing assessment strategies when working with students. However, it became apparent that the band directors interviewed use limited types of assessment. One director, Olivia,²⁵ a new teacher with less than five years of experience, described the occurrence of assessment in her classroom as “not enough, definitely. I don’t do it regularly enough” and that, “I’m finding I definitely need to do more performance testing, whether formal or informal.”

David, a band director with 17 years of experience, indicated that the assessment strategies in his school include, “a variety of things.” He went on to describe how he connects performance with non-performance:

I remember I went to [a session] at BCMEA²⁶ on marches and so, [the clinician] had a handout. So, between that and other things I've compiled a march page. So, when we're doing a march [with] the wind ensemble, we did “National Emblem” at the beginning of the year, we review, what is march style? So they [the students] have a page and there's a little written quiz on that.

Neil, a teacher with nine years of experience, discussed his assessment practice as:

a lot of, in terms of in-class, from the podium assessment, there's the constant observation of students for the purpose of, initially, or perhaps superficially...rehearsing the music or making the music better...I'm sure that's

²⁵ As noted in Chapter 3, all directors’ names have been changed so as to provide them with anonymity so that no identification of either themselves or their school district is possible.

²⁶ British Columbia Music Educators’ Association.

how the kids see it, but from my perspective, it's looking for the strategies that I'm going to need...so that I can flip through the rolodex in my mind of strategies and exercises to then apply.

Neil's words imply a great deal of formative assessment. Further, Neil assesses students as part of a summative, end of term exam cycle, saying, "the exams in January is another big moment of formal assessment."

Harold, a veteran teacher of 33 years, described that, for him, assessment:
is listening, I mean, listening, listening, listening, and listening to the kids. I always have sections play and make little notes on the seating plan.

As with Neil, this type of observational assessment appears to be formative in nature and may or may not be individualized.

Katherine, as a teacher with six years of experience, however, appears to use assessment in a more reflective way with her students, more as a means of "Assessment AS Learning" process. She says that, in terms of assessment strategies:

I do playing tests quite often, but probably the assessment strategy that I use the most is self-assessment. I use a lot of self-assessment in what I do, and I use a lot of daily self-assessment.

Self-assessment, in this case, is the students providing feedback on themselves about what they have learned or achieved.

Charles, a 23-year veteran, described the assessment practices in his school, saying:

I talk about notes and rhythm, I talk about articulation, I talk about dynamics, phrasing...there's five things on the rubric. I give them a mark out of 10 for each

one. They get a mark out of 50 at the end...That's how we do the individual assessments. With the scale testing in technique, études, and stuff in class, [we] usually break it down into sections of five marks and just give them a mark whether they can play it or not.

He adds:

We have three terms a year, so once a term they do a multiple choice theory test. The end of term assessment [exam], which is just using a rubric.

In terms of assessment types, all directors indicated the use of formative, from the podium, assessment on repertoire, with some performance and theory testing. Self-assessment, completed by students, was noted and will be discussed later.

Olivia includes some theory instruction in her program, describing the use of such testing as valuable in the sense that her students will become more musically literate despite the time it takes to perform such assessments. At the same time, she describes the process of “Assessment AS Learning” by having students “evaluate each other, and so on.” She adds that the impact of such assessment is important, and that even though:

you're taking that time away...it's teaching them things [and] they're going to get there faster anyway, so, it comes down to being more organized.

David described using some theory instruction and assessment as a component of his assessment plan:

I do try to incorporate, also, some theory tests. We sometimes do a scale test, we do playing tests. Recently, we've done units on key signatures and circle of fifths, we do some theory things.

Neil has developed a thorough six-level theory program as a component of his program's assessment strategies. His plan includes multiple opportunities for student success in that:

We have a theory program...a six-level program and students may rewrite an exam as many times as they need to. The ideal situation is that a student has completed all six exams successfully by the end of Grade 11. The best situation is that they finished it by the end of Grade 10, two in 8, 9, and 10.

As Neil states, his students “may rewrite an exam as many times as they need to,” which, as noted in the survey, 93% of participants indicated that they allow students to repeat assessments.

Harold indicated that he provides students with some theory-related skills and, as with Neil, repeated attempts for students to provide better understanding. He describes this, saying:

I came up with my own theory sheets...which have evolved over the years...when I give them a theory quiz, they always end up with, eventually getting every single question right...it's given back to them until they have all the answers.

Katherine appears to develop skills, along with assessment strategies, beyond performance and theory saying, “there are other things...that I use for assessment, you know, theory tests, written assignments, that kind of thing.” Unfortunately, she did not elaborate the meaning of “written assignments” because she went on to discuss other aspects of assessment, specifically, self-assessment.

Charles revealed a cross-disciplinary approach to assessment in theory, saying

that his program has:

an integrated theory program that runs across all the disciplines: choir, band, and strings. [Therefore]...all the kids write the same exam so that we encourage kids to develop across all the disciplines. So, trying to make it basically easier; so if you're to do that, so if you're band, strings, you write one theory exam for both classes.

All directors interviewed expressed a desire to include more varied assessment in their programs but, as Edwards (2010) found, “it can be a challenge for band directors to include theory...beyond key signatures and the like” (p. 75).

Non-achievement factors. Current opinion concerning assessment in music deemphasizes non-achievement/behavioural factors (attendance, participation, effort, attitude) as components of student assessment and achievement. In fact, the idea of moving away from such practices has been promoted for many years as noted by Lehman (1998), who wrote, “the long-standing practice of many music educators of commingling criteria based on music skills and knowledge with criteria not based on music-including attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude—is not compatible with standards-based grading” (p. 38). More recently, Russell and Austin (2010) tell us that:

over the years, researchers have confirmed that assessment approaches adopted by music teachers in elementary general (Barkley, 2006; Carter, 1986; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Talley, 2005), secondary choral (Kotora, 2005; McClung, 1996; McCoy, 1988; Tracy, 2002), and secondary instrumental (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kancianic, 2006; McCoy, 1988; Sears, 2002; Sherman, 2006; Simanton,

2000) contexts are very idiosyncratic and not always well aligned with the recommendations of assessment experts. (p. 38)

In congruence with the U.S. findings, the current study found that band directors involved with this study also use non-achievement as a component of the assessment structures in their classrooms (See Table 6, p. 106), though perhaps not to the same degree. In fact, all but one of the directors interviewed appear to hold similar thoughts regarding non-achievement.

Olivia, who teaches both middle and secondary school music, uses non-achievement factors, because:

at high school and middle school level, it's really important that, if they show up, prepared, and ready to work, that's a huge chunk of it. So, everyday with my younger groups, and I might introduce it to my older groups, they give me a mark for attendance.²⁷ I think a lot of teachers do it.²⁸ So, do they have their instrument, do they have their pencil? Then I can look through, at the end of the term, and see, this kid had all 10s, this kid had mostly 4s, you know. Well, they're not going to be learning the complicated passages if they only brought their instrument in twice that term.

Neil, while using a rubric for some assessment purposes, infers that non-achievement factors assist in determining a student's level of achievement:

I use a rubric that describes the qualities of a typical A, B, and C student, based on six or seven criteria like musicianship, preparation for class, home practice,

²⁷ Students provide a self-assessment of their "preparedness" for class, which translates to an attendance check.

²⁸ Again, there seems to be an apparent lack of consistency among band directors' knowledge and understanding of the purposes and uses of their classroom teaching and assessment methods.

rehearsal etiquette. Things that help me determine where a student is at [grade assignment], but I've shared that with them up front so that they can have an idea of [what it means] when they get the report card.

Harold, despite allocating “make up” marks, employs an assessment system that incorporates non-achievement assessment inasmuch as he uses:

even small things like pencil check. Do you have your music? Do you have your instrument? If they don't have this, they get a little X beside their name, and three X's could lead to a letter grade down, unless they come in and make it up by playing something for me or doing something to show that they are sorry for doing this and this. So, whatever I write them down for they can make it up, because I don't like giving out low marks.

Katherine, while using self-assessment with students, which is a positive step, assesses those same students based upon non-musical, non-achievement factors, in a similar way to Olivia, saying that:

as an assessment method, I use self-assessment every single day and so, probably 75% of the assessment that I do is self-assessment... What I do is, kids give themselves a mark out of 5, for instrument, instrument supplies, and music. The last mark is their effort mark: am I here with a positive attitude, ready to learn? And I tell the kids that, if I see something to the contrary, I reserve the right to take that mark away. But generally they evaluate themselves at the beginning of class. But if they don't bring their instrument they are unable to participate and contribute to class so they get zero for the day...you can't contribute anything. So, you can sit quietly in the corner and you can write down the things that are said

in class, or whatever, but, you're not contributing anything to the ensemble, so, that's a zero.

Charles acknowledges that non-achievement factors are controversial, but admits that, in his program:

half the mark is...if you show up and you are doing your best, you get all the marks. So, if you show up for your sectional with all your stuff and you work for the 20 minutes, that's 5 out of 5, and you have to do that a certain number of times a term. That makes up whatever percent of your mark. There's a same kind of thing for showing up on time for the large group rehearsals and being there for concerts, etc. So, 50% of their mark is show up, display a good attitude, work while you're here.

According to Russell (2011), the use of non-achievement marks dilutes the meaning of those marks and has, in fact, led to litigation in the United States as:

lowering student grades for relatively small offenses, such as limited absences, tardiness, talking in class, forgetting a pencil in rehearsal, or not succeeding on a chair challenge, may not be a fair or proportional response. Such actions could be interpreted by a court to be disciplinary and not academic in nature and lead to a grade challenge. (p. 39)

Because “many of these issues are not assessments of a student’s achievement or understanding of music and are, therefore, misleading as to the student’s academic prowess in music” (Russell, 2011, p. 38), band directors, then, should use assessments that reflect actual learning and not behavioural, non-achievement based, outcomes.

Cognitive Conflict

How teachers use information is affected by both their knowledge of, and their beliefs about, a given subject. Knowledge refers to information that is concrete, dependable, and widely understood to be true. It is distinct from attitudes or points of view that may not be supported by evidence. Beliefs, on the other hand, reflect what we think we know about a given topic. Teachers' beliefs, according to Pajares (1992), "influence their perceptions and judgements, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom" (p. 307). This section, *Cognitive Conflict*, presents the interviewed band directors' apparent lack of background regarding assessment, its nomenclature and usage, especially at the beginning of their careers (*Knowledge Base*) and their *Beliefs*.

Knowledge base. Because "there is little professional consensus as to what teachers should assess, how they should assess, or when they should assess" (Russell & Austin, 2010, p. 38), and because "courses in classroom assessment are not well matched with what teachers need to know for classroom practice" (Mertler, 2004, p. 60), band directors appear to have differing views of the purposes of assessment in their bandroom. This inconsistency regarding assessment could stem from a lack of understanding among band directors regarding the meaning and/or purposes of assessment. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) tell us that "the idea of *understanding* is surely distinct from the idea of *knowing* something" (p. 35, emphasis in original). Phronetic knowledge, as outlined by Georgii-Hemming and Johansen (2010), "is a matter of attaining 'the good' for both individual citizens and the common weal, and its distinguishing feature is a practical wisdom learned by example, models, and practise in actual situations" (p. 4). Shulman (1986) called this *pedagogical content knowledge*. Ball, Thames, and Phelps (2008)

explained that, “the notion of pedagogical content knowledge has permeated scholarship on teaching and teacher education [and] has done so unevenly across fields” (p. 393). Music educators, according to Elliott (2007), must possess knowledge in the domains of “musicianship and educatorship” (p. 262), where all teachers are in need of a multi-faceted knowledge system—discipline specific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which includes assessment (Kennedy, 1990). While all directors interviewed expressed the need for assessment in their programs, an emergent theme from the interview process was directors’ lack of background regarding assessment, especially at the beginning of their careers. That is, the use of assessment, its nomenclature and usage, and the understanding of the purposes of classroom assessment.

Olivia described her background in assessment as she entered the teaching profession as “minimal.” As she spoke, it became clear that, in conjunction with her minimal preparation regarding assessment, she appears to lack a clear understanding of the nature of, and nomenclature related to, assessment. In describing assessment, she says that:

the summative, whether it be report cards and concerts. In band, concerts are summative, but they never seem to quite overlap with the report card summative. I get up to the end [of term] when I’m trying to calculate a mark for them and I just never feel like I have enough on paper to give them as fair of an assessment and then, I’m trying to make something balanced.

A further, and related, concern regarding the background and understanding of directors was their lack of knowledge concerning band instruments and the inherent pedagogical

structures that support them, of which assessment is an important consideration. Olivia said that:

I found I had to completely change and learn a lot on my own to teach the babies [beginning band] because they needed to know which way is up, and all that. I'm still working on getting stronger on my five core instruments and ...I want to expand more but my biggest challenge is that I didn't take music ed so I didn't have class brass, class strings, so I'm learning on the fly in the job.

David described similar pedagogical issues at the beginning of his career, explaining that his challenges were:

learning the instruments and knowing how to deal with all the instruments at every single level. How to get a good tone, the fingerings, I think, were huge. And just...not knowing enough about the instruments to be able to teach them properly.

As for his background knowledge of assessment, David said that his preparation was, “Ah, well, probably not that, that strong” but later suggested that he did have some instruction when, responding to a question about assessment instruction during his teacher preparation, he said:

Definitely...there were different types of assessment, how do we assess phrasing, I mean, how do we, there was a, how do we assess articulation?

This response also speaks to David’s possible disparate knowledge of the meaning of assessment.

Neil, while not specifically discussing his background in assessment described his thoughts about assessment when he started his career, said that:

the assessment concept that I had in mind was really focused on...what is an individual contributing, how is an individual contributing to their section, and [their] section to the ensemble?

It may be possible that Neil's lack of instrumental pedagogy contributed to his lack of a concrete response. About the challenges he faced at the beginning of his career, he said that he lacked, "knowledge of, and depth of knowledge on each of the instruments in terms of technical and idiosyncratic issues."

Harold described his early knowledge of assessment:

There was a Ministry document. I think I read a document that I didn't even see until a few years after I started teaching...nothing was laid out too much of what you had to assess so I came up with my own theory sheets and came up with my own playing tests for the kids, which have evolved over the years.

Regarding nomenclature, because Harold describes the Ministry document as "a document that I didn't even see until a few years after I started teaching," there appears to be some deficiency regarding nomenclature, which is illustrated here:

Mike — If you're having them listen to the performance and make comments about it, they are assessing themselves as they are doing that [listening]. Not necessarily mark wise, but they are using that as an assessment, what we would call, "Assessment AS Learning."

Harold — *Yes, yes, because we discuss it after and we say, what we can do better and that? So, if that's, sure, your label of assessment, yes. I'm thinking more [about] marks.*

For him, the challenges as a beginning director, he says, were related to repertoire selection, which also ties into pedagogical content knowledge and, indirectly, to assessment. He says that:

as a beginning band director, just [having] been through six or seven years of university, maybe coming down to the level of what some high school players were. We were at such a high level in university and that was a bit of a challenge but, it didn't take me too long to realize that [at] certain levels you have to [think] differently [about] your repertoire. I think I chose some repertoire [that was] a bit too difficult at the beginning of my career.

The last sentence speaks to the fact that, as confirmed by Mertler (2004), teachers gain a lot of what they need to know *on the job*.

Katherine's description of her knowledge base of assessment is somewhat different from the others in that she felt:

very well equipped when it came to assessment...because of a lot of the concepts that we discussed in our arts assessment class.

However, Katherine, is like the others, because:

all through university [my education] was more the secondary level, I had a difficult time in my first year bringing what I had in my mind and what I felt I had to offer down to the [beginning band] level, [she found instrumental pedagogy] very, very difficult to begin with. How do you teach the basics? I can teach concepts until the cows come home, but teaching those basics...was difficult at first.

Here, Katherine's use of the words *basics* and *concepts* might appear confusing though for her, *basics* refers to instrument specific procedures such as posture, embouchure, and articulation whereas *concepts* is more entrenched in musical theory, history and the like. Regarding nomenclature, it seems that Katherine's pre-service arts assessment course provided her with an appropriate set of skills with which to articulate clearly and accurately about assessment.

Charles, in contrast to Katherine, and more in line with the others, described his knowledge base regarding assessment as, "Oh man, terrible!" When pressed for clarification, he replied that:

converting musical expression into a number for a report card just seemed ridiculous to me and, in lots of ways, it still does. You play a 65% clarinet really doesn't [make sense]. Having said that, I've spent a lot of time coming up with assessment strategies and it was kind of trial and error, and a lot of talking to experienced colleagues, you know, living in Parry Cove and phoning down to Simcoe,²⁹ or phoning pros...or, whatever, saying, "what do I with this, how do you do this, why do you do it this way?" And, I owe a huge debt to a whole bunch of teachers who gave me all kinds of great stuff. Some of it worked, some of it didn't. Some of it seemed needlessly over-complicated, some of it was overly simple but I was, you know, terribly prepared for that, no idea.

Charles felt challenged at the beginning of his career, much like the others, with the lack of pedagogical content knowledge he received in his pre-service program:

I can remember being ill-prepared for dealing with how to teach...instrumental pedagogy. I took an instrumental pedagogy class...[but] I found that I was

²⁹ As with participants' names, all place names have been changed so as to preserve anonymity.

phoning my then girlfriend...who was teaching in Waterford and grilling her with questions about how do you teach this to saxophone players? How do you teach this to...? I know the sound I want but I don't know how to tell them to get it. I felt completely ill-prepared pedagogically for the, just the specifics of the instrument. I know I learned how to play a scale on the clarinet, but I could not remember, for the life of me, what the fingerings were. And, you know, the other thing I learned really quickly, you're the clarinet [player], you look it up; figure out your own fingering. But I needed to know how to tell them how to articulate...I understood breath support as a brass player. I knew nothing about percussion. When I think back, I was woefully ill-prepared. I didn't know what a paradiddle was, I didn't know how to teach what the difference was between a 5-stroke roll and a 7-stroke roll, I had no idea. So, that I found was my biggest challenge. I had an idea in my head of what the band should sound like, or what the jazz band should sound like, or even, when I started doing, when I was doing choir, I kind of knew what a choir should sound like, I had no idea of how to get to the set up. So that was, as a beginner, that was my, a huge thing.

Beliefs. During the survey portion of the study, directors were asked their level of agreement with the statement, “Assessment is an integral part of the lesson planning process in band,” to which 80% responded that they *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*. Directors were then asked about their beliefs regarding assessment from a list of 17 statements (See Table 3, p. 100). The directors were able to indicate, on a five-point Likert scale ranging, in descending importance, from 5 (extremely important) to 1 (not at all important), their beliefs relating to the question, “How important do you believe each of the following

statements regarding the purposes of student assessment?” The survey found that the highest rated statements (those receiving 12 or more votes from combined ratings of 4 or 5) were:

1. to provide feedback to students
2. to identify general class abilities
3. to determine whether instruction has been successful
4. to determine what concepts students are failing to understand
5. to determine future instructional direction
6. to demonstrate student accountability for learning
7. to help students prepare for performance

These statements support teachers’ beliefs systems about teaching and assessment and are, therefore, directly related to how teachers’ feelings about assessment connect with their actual assessment practices. As mentioned earlier, Pajares (1992) stated that beliefs form attitudes that determine actions, and because of this, teachers’ beliefs can be the strongest predictor of action in classrooms. Cutietta (1992) describes attitude as “a firmly held mental network of beliefs, feelings, and values that is organized through an individual's experiences, and that exerts a directive and dynamic influence on the individual's perception and response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (p. 296). During the interviews, directors were asked about their feelings, either personally or professionally, regarding assessment. Their responses in the interviews point to the importance that band directors assign to the purposes and uses of assessment.

Olivia's feelings about assessment appear to be rooted in a differentiated model of instruction,³⁰ and therefore, differentiated assessment. She believes that:

there's a general feeling in education that you cannot assess performance. In music that doesn't really [work, because] you do [assess performance]... There's general music in the younger grades but there isn't here [secondary]... There's always exceptions and... I think they [The Ministry of Education] try to talk to the exceptions too often instead of let teachers say, well, I know that that kid's different, that kid needs different outcomes or the resource kids are going to have a guitar.

David appears to hold what seems to be a more philosophical rather than practical view of assessment, where, for him:

it's always trying to find... what is fair, what is appropriate, what is broad-based? And finding a balance; for example, how much should tone be worth?... and, so, how to balance [the different elements of performance]? If we're marking out of 80, I have tone, these days, at 20 out of 80. Not all the tests necessarily, especially at the younger grades, [however], some [tests] might focus just on articulation. There's a sheet but, there at the bottom, there's a musicality component... so it's trying to find what is true. How do you define truth, right?

Neil seems to interpret assessment as a philosophical competition between self and profession, but also the wider aspect of assessment as it pertains to group dynamics.

³⁰ “Differentiated instruction implies a purposeful process for adapting the teaching and learning processes of the classroom to accommodate the needs of all learners” (Murray & Jorgenson, 2007, cited by the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, 2013, para. 1).

He believes that:

counting systems and assessment are the two things that music teachers will probably never agree on, and while that's unfortunate, at the same time, it invites a lot of discussion. I wish there was much discussion. I tell students, "from one bell to the next, you're being assessed." The decision to select, Joy! versus Joy Revisited! There's an assessment of student ability on which one we're going to choose [diagnostic assessment]. In terms of rehearsal technique, we are assessing students to draw on different techniques. But at the heart of it we're all sort of dancing around the real issue of, what are we doing to be uniform personally, not uniform as a profession, but uniform personally in the assessment practice that we have, so that those report card grades move towards objectivity and we're trying to mitigate some of the subjectivity.

Harold believes in the necessity of assessment as a motivator for some students but also as a means of identifying student deficiencies because:

it's a necessity in some ways, unfortunately, because there always are some students who won't practice unless they're assessed. So, we have to do it...I think it's so necessary as a music teacher to listen to these kids individually, because when you have 10 clarinets, do you really hear what Johnny over here is doing? ...Can you actually hear, oh, he has trouble getting over the break, or he has trouble tonguing, or he can't get the right alternate fingering for this? Or the mallet player keeps missing the G-flat, why is that? Maybe it's a sticking thing.

Katherine's concept of assessment is aligned in opposition to her own experiences as a student and the need for teacher clarity and transparency. She, in a reflective

moment, explained that:

One of the scary things for me when becoming a teacher was assessment in the arts. I was very, very frightened of it because I had poor experiences when I was in school...I was marked on how much my teacher liked me. My teacher liked me and therefore I got 99% in music classes, without fail...When I was in Grade 12 where I went to my teacher and I said, "How...I'm curious, how did I get 99%? What is it that makes me 1% off a hundred?" And, when I put him on the spot, he was not able to tell me anything. He just said, "Well, why are you complaining? You got 99%! Why do you want to know, why you didn't get 100? Really?" And I was going, "No, no, no, that wasn't really what I was asking, I just want to know how you pulled that number together." And he kind of dodged the question and made a joke and that was the end of it and I didn't pursue it because it obviously made him uncomfortable. But, as a beginning teacher, I was really, really frightened of assessment because I think there is far too much room in arts assessment for...wishy-washy opinions and ways of assessing students, like the old adage, throw papers down the stairs and whatever lands furthest away gets an A, right? I was really frightened of being that teacher because I wanted to be able to say, "Well, you're doing this really well, but here's where you need to really to work and improve and you can do this better" and I wanted to be the teacher that used assessment as a positive...because there is some subjectivity it. But, how do I take some of that [subjectivity] out and make it a more quantifiable, more tangible thing that I can use. Not only for students to become better, but also to inform me so that I can be a better teacher because, obviously if students aren't

getting x, y, and z, I need to use that information to make myself better in that way.

There is also an element of professionalism in Katherine's thinking when she adds:

Not only that, but I don't want to be that course in school where everybody thinks, "Oh, just take choir, take band, it's an easy A." I don't want to be that [teacher], and I don't want my colleagues looking at my classes that way and I don't want students looking at me that way. I want to create something, something good and something memorable for students in their school careers. And so, I think assessment has a lot to do with that.

Charles, despite having reservations about the quantification of musical achievement, recognizes the importance of student assessment for both teacher and student, including self assessment, but feels:

a bit ridiculous...listening to a kid play an instrument and then trying to reduce it to a number...I don't know what a better way is, but at the end, after I've listened to an entire day of [student performances] and especially when I'm on the last one, I'm thinking, does this mean anything...if you got 42 out of 50, or you got 35 out of 50, or whatever? The process of going through it with them is certainly meaningful for them...That 15-minute appointment, of which 5 minutes is playing, it's really about connecting with the kids and having a talk, like, how's it going? How come that didn't work? Or wow, that's really great! What are you doing to make that happen? Getting them to talk about what they're doing. You gain some pretty interesting insight. Now that [becomes] part of their mark? Well, not really...but it, the assessment thing, gives me a way to get to that [the mark].

As with Katherine, Charles believes in a transparent system of student assessment, “It’s important to me that I can say to the parents, this is what the mark is based on, this is why we do it this way. It’s important that I can do that; justify what we do and how we arrived at things.”

Through their descriptions of their beliefs, Harold, Charles, and Katherine touch upon an important point: accountability. As noted earlier, the education reform movement has demanded greater accountability from teachers. Russell (2011) explained that a lack of appropriate assessment in music classes has led to litigation in the United States, while Asmus (1999) explained that:

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

Regarding student involvement in the assessment process, all directors indicated that some form of self and peer assessment, or “Assessment AS Learning,” is exercised in their classrooms, which connects to the purposes and usage of assessment.

Olivia, recognizing a need for student involvement, says that she incorporates student input, “Not as much as [it] should be. A few years ago, I was doing a few more self and peer assessments. And, I think I’ve got to do more.”

David uses student input:

sometimes...in hopes that they would actually listen to what they played before they sent it [test recording] in. Sometimes I think they just play and they think,

“OK, I guess that sounds good.” But they listen to it while they're playing it. They're not listening to it [reviewing it], so I had them do self-evaluation and, in the past, I've used that...but I want to see where they think they're at in terms of their playing.

Neil has used self-evaluation, “at times...[However], I'm careful on self-evaluations to never use a scale of 5. It's always 4 or 6, so there's never, [the student] can't be in the middle, there's no middle. You have to go to the prevailing side [good/bad]. But I don't use those all the time.”

Harold uses student input during class when he asks:

can you please tell us what was good about that and what was wrong about that, and that would lead to an assessment [by] me. After [listening to] that section, they'd help and assess [the others] by giving peer feedback.

Katherine, as described earlier, involves students regularly as part of the assessment process in her program. Further to that, she says that students also:

assess themselves in terms of, we finish playing a song: “How'd you feel about that?” just even little things like that, “What did you like about what we just did? What do you think needs to be changed?” Trying to make them more self-aware musicians...There is self-evaluation built into the marking scheme of each of my classes and I explain and tell them in order to be good musicians, you have to be self-aware.

Charles, though indicating that his students are not really involved, disclosed that he did use students to assess other students. In responding to the use of student involvement, he says that:

having kids assess one another, I experimented with that, too. I had section leaders give a P or F [Pass or Fail] for how you played your scales. I did not find that to be super successful. I basically said, ok, section leaders, you'll test your section on the scale; if they can do it great, and if they can't they can test it with me next week. So, they just had to say yes, or see Mr. Smith.

Later, Charles explains that the choir teacher uses reflective practice and that he:

could learn something from her... They do a lot of reflection, written reflection on performances, and I think it's something that we, I say we, the two band teachers, need to incorporate more. We certainly do debriefing discussions with the kids after performances... Yeah, the written stuff is something I'd like to, I should pay more attention to it.

The importance band directors assign to the purposes and uses of assessment should be discernable through the methods of assessment they use. However, many directors' assessment practices, in contradiction to stated goals (See Table 3, p. 100), appear to be based less on Assessment *OF*, *FOR*, and *AS* Learning structures and more toward identifying general class abilities and helping students prepare for performance.

Connecting the Instructional Objectives

Band directors' instructional regimen includes any number of strategies that connect with their knowledge base and beliefs. Many band directors use method books as their pedagogical basis for scaffolding various techniques and musicianship related to band directors' selected repertoire. Often, these method books, as noted earlier, contain a number of comprehensive musicianship features that can assist students with gaining a deeper knowledge and understanding of music through performance and non-

performance exercises (i.e., theory, geography/history, conducting, etc.). This section, *Connecting the Instructional Objectives*, details band directors' assessment process in their classrooms as it relates to *Comprehensive Musicianship* as well as *Curriculum, Standards, and Prescription*.

Comprehensive musicianship. Ontologically, many band directors would insist that their programs are established with comprehensive musicianship as a central goal. Sindberg (2009) explains that, "at the heart of comprehensive musicianship is a desire to expand what students study and the way they participate in their learning" (p. 37). If comprehensive musicianship were a component of the band programs involved with this study, then varied instruction and assessment would be apparent. To illustrate, band directors indicated, during the survey portion of the study, that assessment practices, as noted in Table 2 (p. 99), are either "fundamental to the teaching/learning process" or "important for student learning." Does the fundamentality suggested by the band directors translate into instructional and assessment alignment with the goals of comprehensive musicianship? As noted in Table 5 (p. 105), the majority of assessment types used by participating directors relate to performance. Were other ideas used? All directors interviewed indicated that they use method books as a supporting resource for instruction, though only as a support for performance objectives. These method books include "enhancers" that connect students with material that connects performance (psychomotor domain) with the cognitive and, to a lesser extent, the affective domains in order to deepen knowledge and understanding. As noted earlier, Pearson's (2004) *Standard of Excellence* is an example of such a method book. Appendix S provides a sample of the comprehensive musicianship material that such books provide. However,

despite using these books as technique and performance builders for their students, every director indicated that the comprehensive musicianship material in the books was used minimally, if at all, for instruction or assessment.

For Olivia, using the embedded assessment strategies in method books is, “something I have never looked into.” David quickly responded with, “I would say no,” while Neil thought for a moment before saying, “I don't.” Harold indicated a desire to “read what they [method books] say, and...try to incorporate it in my listening skills but I haven't given any direct quizzes from that.” Katherine was the only director to suggest using any portion of the available material but only, “sometimes, if it's something that I think would be good for students” though she indicated that it is not part of her regular assessment process. Charles uses method books for his classes, though only for performance assessment. He responded:

if you're referring to the beginning method books where they'll have a little quiz thing at the bottom...not really. I'll use the method books to do assessment. For example, I have a method book...that is a bunch of études, technical études, for example. So, we'll play an étude every class with the seniors, a unison study of some kind and then after a time, and especially after we've started working on repertoire, I'll identify ones that will be for this term's assessment.

In fact, musical theory seems to be the only aspect, beyond performance, that the interviewed directors use in their instrumental programs despite the responses exhibited in Table 5 (p. 105) of the survey, which indicated that the assessment of students included assessments such as listening tests/quizzes (60%) and/or paper and pencil music history tests (20%).

Olivia indicated that she incorporates some theory instruction into her program as it connects to performance. She wants theory, “to be a component of their mark because if they don't understand how to clap an eighth-note rhythm in a theory exercise then they won't understand how to do it in their music, so it's very relatable.” David indicated, as shown earlier, that he does, “try to incorporate...theory tests” in his instructional design. However, David also mentioned that he does work to develop other elements in his pedagogy. He also, “*compiled a march page...and there's a little written quiz*” that he uses with his students. Whether this page is focused solely on performance or includes structural/musical elements is unclear. Neil was the only director to use the word “comprehensive” during the interviews to describe how he would like to see his students, but discussed little, in terms of comprehensiveness, connection to instructional components beyond theory, saying:

the idea is...to prepare them to be comprehensive musicians for their Grade 12 year, as the year of application, they need the language and literacy foundation through 8, 9, and 10...[with] Grade 11 and 12 being years of application rather than furthering language and literacy knowledge.

Harold, in terms of comprehensive musicianship, “came up with my own theory sheets and came up with my own, playing tests for the kids, which have evolved over the years.” He did not verbalize any connection with other components of comprehensive instruction (i.e., history, listening, conducting). Katherine’s ideas about assessing using multiple strategies have already been identified where, “there are other things...that I use for assessment: theory tests, written assignments, that kind of thing, of course.” Charles mentioned that in his school, there are “three terms a year, so once a term they do a

multiple choice theory test.” There appears, however, to be little connection to the broader ideals of comprehensive musicianship in the directors’ responses.

Curriculum, standards, and prescription. A standards-based curriculum “indicates specific criteria that delineates what students are expected to learn and be able to perform and usually includes both content standards and performance standards” (<http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Lexicon-of-Learning/S.aspx>). In other words, “what should a student know and be able to do.”

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education outlines a set of Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs), as part of an Integrated Resource Package, for each grade in all subject areas. These PLOs, as part of a standards-based curriculum, are:

content standards for the provincial education system. Prescribed learning outcomes set out the knowledge, enduring ideas, issues, concepts, skills, and attitudes for each subject. They are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do in each grade...The outcomes are benchmarks that will permit the use of criterion-referenced performance standards. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002, p. III)

While it may seem prudent to consider assessing the affective domain and despite curriculum guidelines that emphasize outcomes such as knowledge, enduring ideas, issues, concepts, skills, and attitudes for each subject, Arul (1977) tells us that attitudes as hypothetical constructs...cannot be measured directly. Any attempt to assess them can only be inferential in nature: that is, we can only study behaviour which is reasonably assumed to indicate the attitudes to be measured and quantify these indications so as to get an idea of how much individuals or groups differ in their

psychological orientations toward a particular object or issue.

(<http://arulmj.net/atti2-a.html>, para. 1)

Cutietta (1992) recognizes that no such instrument for assessing attitude existed, mentioning a need for “standardized tests that measure students’ attitude toward playing their instrument, listening to classical music, and the like...[but that]...researchers and teachers should work together to produce practical and valid instruments for measuring attitudes” (p. 307). Even the venerable Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1997) writes, “While it is not possible at this point to lay out a detailed strategy for assessment [of aesthetic education], I can outline some general principles”³¹ (p. 37). Since then, little appears to have been accomplished concerning attitude assessment in music education. In fact Russell and Austin (2010) tell us that, “most administrators likely are aware of the subjectivity and legal risks that surround attitudinal assessment and would therefore discourage attempts to base grades extensively on attitude” (p. 50). Attitude, as identified by Russell and Austin (2010), is “most commonly...assessed...on in-class participation, responsibility (being prepared for class with all materials), effort, and citizenship” (p. 44).

In a standards-based curriculum, such as that of British Columbia, the assessment structures are to be reflective of the PLOs and based on criterion-referenced performance standards which are specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and timely; that is, SMART goals. As such, a non-achievement factor, such as attendance at school, a provincial requirement, with no text, is not testable, as a subject, is therefore not appropriate to use as an assessment of student learning (Russell, 2011). At the same time,

³¹ Csikszentmihalyi (1997) says that, “the main benefits of aesthetic encounters could be summarized as follows: They make everyday life more rich, interesting, and enjoyable by sharpening sensory skills; They enrich experience by presenting emotionally salient stimuli in a way that allows the audience to understand and respond; They help make sense of the basic randomness of existence by giving shape to experience” (p. 37).

there is no appreciable growth associated with attendance between grade levels. That is, a student in Grade 12 has the same expectations as a student in Grade 1.

Dauncey (1986) tells us that, “many teachers acquire grading practises informally; from a colleague, department head, or by using methods that seem intuitively reasonable. Others may have had a fleeting exposure to an ‘acceptable’ grading procedure during teacher training” (p. 1). At the time Dauncey wrote his thesis, standards-based curriculum design was in the early stages of development and many directors were using non-achievement factors regularly in their assessment structures, as evidenced by the American studies cited earlier. This appears to be as true today as it was then, as band directors continue to use non-musical achievement that is not based in achievement to assess students. Neither the school districts nor the Ministry of Education, according to all of the teachers interviewed, provide guidance in this area.

Olivia, in discussing prescriptive standards, explained that:

the closest thing would be festival because they [the adjudicators] are walking in saying, "This is where we think an average Grade 8 band should play."

David, in discussing the most important part of his teacher education, leads us toward Dauncey’s idea of acquiring grading practises informally, saying that, for him, it was:

the practicum. Without a doubt! You really don't learn that much at university that helps you in the classroom,³² that helps you in the bandroom. I mean, I don't think I could be half the teacher that I am now without my phenomenal sponsor teacher...who's retired...I mean, I had a lot of performance experience and, in

³² For more on this, see Mertler’s (2004) article, *Secondary Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Does Classroom Experience Make A Difference?*

band experience and stuff but, you know, I had no idea, really, what to do in the classroom.

Further, he says, “I think most of us, probably like me, we went to do our practicum and we learned what we learned from our practicum teacher, and then, most of us probably still look here and there and find, try to find ways to, again, find the truth of assessment.” He also asked a very important question, “Do we assess against the world standard or do we assess against the class standard?” Without direction from senior levels of administration or government, this becomes a very difficult question to answer.

Neil reveals that, “there's no rule, district or school, about how to, or how much to assess.” He does believe that, in line with standards-based assessment,

if you haven't considered the assessment...if there's no consideration of the assessment or the endgame, how do you scaffold those learning standards to help that achievement be realized?

Harold, the 33-year veteran, noted, earlier, the necessity of assessment. He would like, in a nod toward standards:

a little bit more, stricter guidelines about what you have to do...[and]...more specifics within music itself, it [his teacher education] was very generalistic...It would have been nice to have in our music method courses, no one came up with any, in that one, that I can remember with any kind of assessment policies.

Katherine explains that, in regard to assessment prescription, “there's nothing! In this district we're very free to do, to go as we want,” which, for her, presents a problem because, “we have a lot of discrepancy with music throughout this district...we've got these huge, amazing programs at some schools and absolutely zero music at other

schools.” Despite undergraduate coursework that made her feel “well-equipped when it came to assessment,” she does believe, in regard to standards-based curriculum and assessment, that, “in some, many ways we're left to our own devices” and as such:

when I started teaching, I was looking at the curriculum documents and everything going, “oh my gosh...these are so open to interpretation.” I was thinking, “there's nothing prescriptive about this, how am I supposed to teach this stuff? ...Oh my gosh, there's really nothing here for me.” But then...[I] am so grateful for the Ministry documents the way that they are because they give you the ability to have some leeway within what you're teaching as long as you achieve those outcomes.

Music education, according to Sezer (2001), is party to the standardized assessment quandary because “accountability impacts curriculum planning, instructional strategies, budgets, behavioral objectives, individualized learning and program evaluation as well as student evaluation” (p. 72). Charles described the imposition of prescriptive or standardized assessment practices from administrative levels as, “ZERO!” but implied the need for direction because:

there's no uniform [description of what], an 'A' at that school means in relation to an 'A' at this school; they're not related, in any way, right? Honestly, the last time I was evaluated as a teacher was 20 years ago! I haven't had somebody come in and watch me teach and say, “this is good, this is bad.” I have no professional accountability to anyone, in terms of assessment or anything else I do! I don't think that's right, that we, if we are professionals, should be accountable and we should have to be regularly assessed. We should be responsible for our

professional development, and in the same way that doctors are, the same way that lawyers are; well, we're accountable to no one! And, in terms of our assessment, I mean, it's great that I can do what I want and I think I'm very committed to doing a professional job with this and I think we [at this school] do a pretty good job. I know lots of guys that, "yeah, I just made the mark up." [This one teacher], he went through a 30-year career doing that and that's ridiculous. It's not right, in my view, that that should be happening...I think we suffer and benefit from a lack of oversight.

Comprehensive Musicianship, Curriculum, Standards, and Prescription are aspects of pedagogy aimed at connecting students with the broader understandings of music and musical performance. It seems that, while band directors understand the ideals of comprehensive musicianship and need for student growth beyond performance skills, they seldom incorporate the substance of it. Additionally, though the autonomy that directors possess with regard to the administration of their programs (assessment and otherwise) is certainly appreciated, they would like to have at least some direction with regard to curriculum, standards, and prescription when it comes to students and assessment. However, the want for more guidance comes with a caveat, *skepticism*, as will be discussed in the next section.

Supervisory Skepticism

Band directors are notorious for being fiercely protective of their programs, so much so, that many retiring directors expend vast amounts of energy researching and recruiting their replacements. Directors, as mentioned above in the *Curriculum, Standards, and Prescription* section, enjoy their autonomy and all have reservations

about the imposition of strict assessment structures at the school, district, or Ministry level. The directors interviewed would like to see some direction but are mistrustful of, and skeptical about, who provides that direction.

Olivia believes that:

There's so much against standardized testing in my opinion; so much teaching to the test...I think a compromise between the two, having some options to a little bit more structure would be really beneficial to young teachers. If they tell every single program [that they] must compete at this level, then that's taking away a lot of the teacher's flexibility...Unfortunately, the music umbrella was written by an art teacher. So, you're trying to figure how you fit within that and how you can read what she says in a creative way and I find I do it with the IRPs, too. I'm going to look at them like this and then I can mark for that. That would be my biggest complaint; if they're going to make something like that they need to include us in the growth of it. We're the ones who've been doing it.

David suggests that:

if there were some thoughtful guidance toward assessment that could be beneficial to music teachers, I would welcome some ideas. Most of the time assessment, if we deal with it, I'm thinking on a pro-d level, not much of it necessarily applies. I find it hard [making] the connection between assessing in Math and assessing in English versus assessing in Band. I'm open to new ideas if somebody comes up with a plan...I think, probably, most of us are guilty of not looking at the IRPs enough, because it seems...they're not performance-based...I think most of us, probably like me, went to do our practicum and we learned what we learned from our practicum teacher, and then, most of us probably still look

here and there and find, try to find ways to, again, find the truth of assessment. There might be some answers in those IRPs. You know, some of those IRPs, I don't know if they're badly written, or we don't like them or we don't dig deep enough but, speaking personally, I haven't spent enough time to look in those IRPs and say, "oh, hey, this might be neat."

Neil suggests that:

it would be really helpful if either the curriculum for the province, or [the] district, as music teachers, we, perhaps, agreed on those qualities of the A, B, or C student as a rubric so that there is a fundamental guide from which we can then nuance for our own program...a central guide from which to start, that would be very helpful.

Harold indicates that he would be happy to work with stricter guidelines:

if they had people [writing them] who really knew what they were doing...where there actually were some music teachers on there, like they did when they created that document in 1979 or 1980...I think there were people on that who were all music teachers.

Katherine sees some value in a more prescriptive curriculum with assessment structures:

if they were created by music teachers. That would be a huge asset. If they are created by non-music teachers, I don't think they would have any value at all...I think it [prescription] can have a place and I think it could be useful.

Charles expresses irritation at the current situation because, "the problem we have is that, because we're all over the place, there's no credibility. Even music schools don't

pay attention to the marks kids get in high school music!” For him, similarly to Neil, the idea of any imposed assessment structure must include a:

standard rubric that we all use. [It would say], this is the way you should be listening, or figuring out how kids play, or this is a way of assessing. If that process can be taught to teachers, has some validity...and is reliable across the province, then we're taking a step in the right direction in terms of lending credibility to the assessment that we do outside of our respective rooms.

Despite the fact that the Integrated Resource Packages were written by music educators in the field (Appendix T), the comments above indicate that band directors have a mistrust of the documents that govern their curriculum. They do not want to feel like an isolated island, but would like to be part of what we might call a “chain of islands,” connected by a directive thread, from the various levels of administration, with built-in flexibility for their own needs. Such direction might help them connect with other teachers’ assessment ideas and allow their students to compete on a more level playing field.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Band directors do believe that they should be assessing their students. However, as discovered through the interviews of band directors, assessment appears to be lacking in variety beyond a few performance tests and a smattering of theory assessments. Additionally, the inclusion of a number of non-achievement factors (attendance, effort, participation, attitude) demonstrates an apparent deficiency in directors’ understanding of the purposes of assessment for student learning.

In British Columbia, the current Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) for Music provide band directors with many ideas for the inclusion of comprehensive musicianship structures into programs. Method books are a means of providing some semblance of non-performance musical connections and can fulfill some of the Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs). However, most band directors do not seem to utilize the materials embedded in them.

Band directors indicated a less than favourable account of governmental oversight with regard to curriculum despite the fact that, as noted above, the Integrated Resource Packages for Music were written by practicing music educators. If band directors are not incorporating the PLOs from the IRPs into their instructional programs, what connections are students making to music beyond performance skills?

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of this sequential explanatory, mixed methods study were presented with the quantitative data from the survey (descriptive statistics) first, followed by the qualitative data (narrative). The findings of the study indicate that band directors, as noted in the survey, appear to use a wide range of strategies in their assessment of students. At the same time, most of the participating directors believe that assessment is either “fundamental to the teaching/learning process” or “important for student learning” (see Table 2, p. 99). They also were shown to believe (81% *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*) that “assessment as an integral part of lesson planning” (Figure 8, p. 96). However, band directors who participated in the survey also indicated the use of non-achievement factors as a substantial component of their instructional program. In fact, the survey found that, of the top eight assessment types used by directors, four (participation,

attitude, attendance, and effort) were non-achievement based (Table 4, p. 102) and were weighted anywhere from 5% to 40% of a student's grade (Table 6, p. 106).

During the interviews, most of participating directors described their knowledge base regarding assessment as wanting, which, perhaps, stems from a deficiency of basic instrumental structures, or what Shulman (1986) describes as *pedagogical content knowledge*. Even Katherine, who indicated feeling quite prepared following certification, uses non-achievement based assessment in her classes.

The beliefs that band directors have regarding assessment are quite varied (i.e., finding truth in assessment, transparency for reporting purposes, a necessity for student participation), but all indicated that, in order to be more accountable, some direction from administrative bodies would be welcome, though they are skeptical about what that direction should be and who would supply it.

The following chapter (Chapter 5), will restate the problem and the purpose of the study, and further discuss the findings and conclusions of the study framed by the research questions. Chapter 6 will present the implications for music education, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the current study and discusses its findings. The previous chapter presented the findings of the study, with some discussion of the collected data as per the methodology. The current chapter will restate the problem and the purpose of the study, and further discuss the findings and conclusions of the study framed by the research questions. Implications for music education, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research will be presented in Chapter 6.

Problem

As we were told by Carini (2001), “*assessment drives education*” (p. 171, emphasis in original). The need for greater accountability in the education system has been driven by a skeptical public that demands better “bang for its buck.” To date, the main source of such accountability has been through large-scale student assessments and “every province and territory...with the exception of Nunavut, administers some form of mandated large-scale assessment” for high school graduation (Volante & Ben Jaafar, 2008, p. 203). Music, so far, has not been a target for these assessments though it has been relegated to the fringes of curriculum because of a number of factors, not the least of which is its inherent subjectivity. Colwell (1970), as I noted earlier, established the need for the use of criteria as a means of assessing musical objectives and performances because, “musicianship is made up of such a variety of skills, the only way to estimate student progress is to evaluate many of these skills” (p. 102) where “evaluation presupposes a set of standards or criteria” (p. 11). Swanwick (1999) agreed that there is

“a need for reliable touchstones, for explicit standards,” but also “for a shared language of musical criticism” (p. 72).

With little to no music education specific research relating to assessment in band having been found relating to Canada, the present research sought to help determine needs for music classroom assessment training, and specifically band classrooms, for undergraduate music education students, pre-service, and in-service teachers, by examining the current uses of classroom assessment among secondary school band directors in British Columbia.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director’s teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices. The study also sought to discover any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in designing and implementing those assessment procedures as well as any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director’s career stage. At the same time, the study focused on determining the purposes, and uses, of band directors’ assessment methods with respect to current governmental mandates, as well as potential implications for teacher education related to the use of classroom assessment.

Method

This study was organized using a sequential explanatory mixed method design, the first phase of which was a web-based survey developed for secondary school band directors in a stratified random sample of 12 school districts in British Columbia. The second phase was a set of naturalistic, semi-structured interviews based on the idea of using the participants' narrative to explain their experiences, events, and assessment practices.

Research Questions

Question One - What types of assessment practices are used by band directors in British Columbia?

This study found that, demographically, band directors in this study, from all career paths, qualifications, school populations, and regions of British Columbia appear to use assessment in a similar fashion. In other words, neither the level of teaching experience possessed by participating band directors (beginner, mid-career, or veteran) nor where a student goes to school in British Columbia revealed any difference in the assessment structures encountered by students as a component of their musical education. The most common types of assessment found were technique (100%) and repertoire performance tests (93%), as illustrated by the survey. Despite 73% of survey respondents indicating the use of theory quizzes, they seem to be used rather infrequently, as noted in the interviews:

- *I do try to incorporate, also, some theory tests...we do some theory things*
- *so once a term they do a multiple choice theory test*
- *writing a theory exam in January and June each year*

Self and peer assessment were reported as components of the band directors' plan during the survey, but the interviews revealed a split in that they are only used formatively and most often to gauge non-achievement based factors. Such assessment would, in fact be appropriate if used in a conference or portfolio assessment structure. However, only 53% of band directors indicated the use of more authentic forms of assessment such as conferencing, which would include "interactions between assessor and assessee. Tests ask the student to justify answers or choices and often to respond to follow-up or probing questions" (Wiggins, 1993, p. 207). No band director indicated the use of portfolios despite the availability of articles, such as Goolsby (1995), that extoll the value of using portfolios as an assessment tool. This study found, similar to Hanzlik (2001), that band directors rarely use such assessment tools as student journals, portfolios, or reflective writing.

Band directors in this study, as noted above, do use performance testing as a means of student assessment. In fact, the survey found multiple formats used by directors for assessment. What is not clear from this is whether or not, or even how, students might receive a grade for such testing.

The use of technology for assessment in band class has been on the rise in the past decade. Simanton (2000) found that 6.6% of participants used computer technology as a forum for student assessment. Kancianic (2006) found that the number had risen to 18.08%. This study found that 47% of band directors surveyed use some form of digital technology for assessment (CDs, Digital video/DVD, MP3, Other). This result may be due to a number of factors, including a decrease in the cost of technology, a push from districts and government for greater technology usage, and the growing availability of

software. The benefit of better technology led one director, David, to explain, “at least now it's digital but...10 years ago, it was cassette so there was that whole aspect of trying to pitch on cassettes.”

Band directors also indicated a range of assessment types related to non-achievement factors (Participation, 87%; Attitude, 80%; Attendance, 73%, Effort 67%).

It appears that most band directors assess students with some regularity though, in the words of Olivia, assessment occurs, “not enough, definitely. I don't do it regularly enough.” A number of assessment types were indicated although these tended to be mostly steeped in performance. As noted above, there is some paper and pencil musical theory assessment occurring, though rather infrequently.

Question Two - Are the grades that band directors assign to students based on the use of varied assessment strategies?

Question one indicated a number of types of assessment that band directors use in their classrooms. Having said that, do the strategies that directors use provide a varied representation of a student's achievement for grading? It appears that directors use limited assessment strategies for the purposes of assigning grades to students. The study found that, while band directors believe that they are using a variety of assessment strategies (Table 5, p. 104) for grading students, little is completed in the way of variety beyond performance testing, some theory testing, concert performance (as part of performance testing), and a number of non-musical achievement assessment structures were brought forth during the interview stage. For example:

- *half the mark is...if you show up and you are doing your best, you get all the marks*

- *even small things like pencil check. Do you have your music? Do you have your instrument? If they don't have this, they get a little X beside their name, and three X's could lead to a letter grade down*

What substance, then, does a grade hold for students? Brookhart (1991) reported that teachers often used a “‘hodgepodge’ grade of attitude, effort, and achievement...[that] falls down under a validity check” (p. 36).

So, while band directors assess students using varied assessment strategies, those strategies must come under scrutiny when used for grading purposes.

Question Three – What are band directors’ understandings of the purposes of classroom assessment, and, in particular, music?

Band directors believe assessment to be important as a tool in their work, and, as noted by one director, “it's a necessity in some ways” (Harold, personal communication, February 2013). The survey found the greatest importance attributed to student assessment by band directors was:

- to provide feedback to students
- to determine whether instruction has been successful
- to determine what concepts students are understanding

Most often, however, such judgement is completed in the guise of formative:

from the podium assessment, there's the constant observation of students for the purpose of, initially, or perhaps superficially...rehearsing the music or making the music better.

This type of assessment directs students to perform the given repertoire according to the directors’ concept of the music. While this type of assessment may assist in creating a

more cohesive and, perhaps, better performance of the piece, does it provide students with knowledge and understanding of music? Indications are that, no, it does not. Student assessment, as a summative process, takes place infrequently despite the nearly 67% of band directors who responded to the survey indicated that they assess students every day, or once per week.

Earl and Katz (2006b) tell us that “during the past 50 years, massive cultural, social, economic, political, environmental, and technological changes have meant that every facet of schooling has been subjected to investigation and rethinking, including classroom assessment” (p. 3). Traditionally, educational practice, especially in band, has been the “Sage on the Stage” instructional model, where the teacher delivers information from the front of the class (podium) to be consumed by the student, and to a great extent, this still exists. The movement from a teacher-authority model to a “Guide By The Side,” or more student-centred, constructivist educational model has taken place over the past decade or two, which, “places students at the center of the process—actively participating in thinking and discussing ideas while making meaning for themselves” (King, 1993, p. 30).

For the purposes of assessment in a more collaborative, and constructivist, band class, student involvement, including, and beyond, performance is vital to student learning. In the survey, 80% of responding band directors promoted the idea of reflective practice in their classes. However, during the interviews, it became apparent that students have limited opportunity for personal investiture in their learning as directors revealed that student involvement, especially in terms of reflective practice, is used:

- *not as much as [it] should be*

- *sometimes*
- *at times...but I don't use those all the time*
- *Yeah, the written stuff is something I'd like to, I should pay more attention to it*

Despite those British Columbia band directors who participated in this study having a knowledge of the need for assessment, the understandings of the purposes of classroom assessment, and, in particular, music, appear to be somewhat lacking in practice.

Question Four – Are the assessment structures that band directors design and execute supportive of *best practice* (as determined by experts)?

As noted in Chapter 2, much has been written by experts with regard to the alignment of the purposes of evaluation in music education with practice. The most common of these writings has been a focus on “how to assess,” or the “techniques of assessment,” including the use of criterion-referenced rubrics and the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. Among the expert discussions, Asmus (1999) provided music educators with a rationale beyond the assignment of grades based on non-musical objectives:

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

However, “some music teachers reject the idea of assessment on the grounds that music learning is highly subjective” (MENC, 1996, p. 3).

A number of studies found that band directors use non-achievement factors in their assessment of students. The most comprehensive (largest samples) of these are Russell and Austin’s (2010) survey, which found that band directors in the Southwestern United States ($N=324$) “based grades on a combination of achievement and non-achievement criteria, with non-achievement criteria receiving greater weight in determining grades” (p. 37) and Lacognata’s (2010) survey of band directors in the United States ($N=454$) that found “the four most frequently selected components were also assigned the most weight in the directors’ overall assessment method: *performances* (26.63%); *participation* (22.27%); *performance-based tests* (20.54%); and *attendance* (18.67%)” (p. 93, emphasis in original).

The current survey found little difference between the responses of band directors in the United States and those band directors from British Columbia ($N=16$) who participated in this study. Findings from both the survey and the interviews indicate that band directors, for the most part, tend to use many of the same non-achievement factors as their counterparts in other jurisdictions. Russell and Austin (2010) explain that, in the US assessment in band is minimally:

aligned with expert recommendations (e.g., development and dissemination of formal grading policies, use of written assessments to capture a wide range of music knowledge, frequent performance assessments, and varied tools used to increase reliability of performance assessment).” (p. 49)

In light of such expert opinion, band directors in this study appear not to be employing *best practice* in their assessment structures.

Question Five – What importance do band directors assign to the purposes and uses of assessment?

Edmund et al. (2008) explain that new teachers, especially, “are left with few tools to draw upon during their own teaching experience and, as future teachers, may not understand the importance of assessment” (p. 53). Band directors in this study appear to have conflicting understandings regarding the importance of student assessment. On the one hand, directors in the survey signaled overwhelmingly that their “thinking about students, teaching, and assessment” was geared toward *helping students become effective learners, developing critical thinking about music, helping teachers improve their teaching, and to see how the students are learning*. Only about half of the teachers surveyed believed that *assessment is fair to students*. This is an area for further study.

From a cognitive point of view, *helping students become effective learners, developing critical thinking about music, helping teachers improve their teaching, and to see how the students are learning* seem rather positive. It is in how band directors connect with, or use, assessment, practically, that indicates the value that they place on assessment. Again, band directors in this study do assess their students in classes. However, the majority of that assessment occurs formatively as part of performance in class/rehearsal. Summative assessment tends to be focused on performance skills (technique performance tests and repertoire performance tests), some theory assessment, concert performances (as part of performance assessment), and a number of non-musical achievement assessment structures (as noted earlier).

The importance that someone has in a given idea is based on their beliefs and their actions. As such, how band directors choose to spend their professional development time may serve as an indicator of the importance they place on aspects of their career, including assessment. Of the participating directors in the survey, 69% indicated that they sometimes “had opportunities to participate in professional development related to assessment” or “have participated in classroom assessment related professional development in my school, district, or elsewhere.” In terms of “reading books or articles, watching videos or webcasts about classroom assessment,” 50% did so sometimes, while no directors indicated having “been part of an assessment committee at my school or in my district” sometimes or often and 62% had never taken part on an assessment committee. Such a result could mean that band directors did not have opportunities to engage in such committee work or that no such committee existed in their school(s). Despite this, all band directors indicated, during the interviews, a desire to participate in further discussion about assessment at the district level.

It seems that the band directors in this study do assign some importance to the purposes of assessment in their classrooms, at least from a theoretical standpoint. Practically, however, they tend to perpetuate past traditions by using non-achievement factors as a strongly weighted component of student grades. As Charles lamented, and likely others, it feels “a bit ridiculous...listening to a kid play an instrument and then trying to reduce it to a number.” The quantification of musical achievement, as noted by this director, would be an area for further study.

Question Six – What are band directors’ understandings of the purposes and uses of their classroom teaching and assessment methods, with particular emphasis on a comprehensive musicianship³³ model?

Surveyed band directors’ reported instructional processes that include the use of a method book to assist in the delivery of their programs. These method books include “enhancers” that connect students with material that connects performance (psychomotor domain) with the cognitive and, to a lesser extent, the affective domains in order to deepen knowledge and understanding.

The implementation of a comprehensive musicianship instructional model, using appropriate method books, may improve overall performance proficiency. A study completed by Whitener (1983) discovered that, between two groups of beginning band students, one instructed using a comprehensive musicianship model, the other solely performance, students exposed to the comprehensive musicianship model exhibited no significant difference in the performance level but were superior in other aspects, such as interval and meter discrimination.

Many resources exist, currently, for band directors regarding the inclusion of comprehensive musicianship into their programs. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 1, a sub-culture of educational vendors has emerged, providing music educators with pre-made curricula, units, and lessons. Books and materials written by leading music educators have been available for many years. For example, in 1976, Robert Garofolo’s book,

³³ Again, comprehensive musicianship is defined as “a program of instruction which emphasizes the interdependence of musical knowledge and musical performance. It is a program of instruction that seeks, through performance, to develop an understanding of basic musical concepts: tone, melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, expression, and form. This is done by involving students in a variety of roles including performing, improvising, composing, transcribing, arranging, conducting, rehearsing, and visually and aurally analyzing music” (Wisconsin Music Educators Association, 1977).

Blueprint for Band, updated in 1983, set the standard for the implementation of comprehensive musicianship into curriculum design for band. It provided band directors with numerous ideas and strategies for connecting performance skills with other types of musicianship. All band directors in this study indicated that they use method books as part of their instructional program and contemporary method books (*Standard of Excellence*, for example) have their roots in books such as *Blueprint for Band*.

Band directors in the current study do not use, at least in a regular manner, the comprehensive musicianship materials connected with method books nor do they seem to use other comprehensive musicianship ideas during teaching, except for a smattering of theory-based instruction.

Question Seven – Do band directors provide for the implementation of a standards-based curriculum in relation to assessment?

A standards-based curriculum establishes the minimum standards that are to be met during instruction in the school of any jurisdiction. In British Columbia, the assessment structures during instruction are to be reflective of the PLOs and based on criterion-referenced performance standards. Lehman (1998) wrote that, “the long-standing practice of many music educators of commingling criteria based on music skills and knowledge with criteria not based on music-including attendance, effort, behavior, and attitude—is not compatible with standards-based grading” (p. 38).

Directors participating in this study commented that, for the most part, they are left to their own devices when it comes to instruction, and assessment because, as I was told by Katherine, “there's nothing!...we're very free to do, to go as we want.” David said, “I haven't spent enough time to look in those IRPs...probably, most of us are guilty

of not looking at the IRPs enough.” This speaks to a larger issue in education, and especially music education—a lack of oversight; budget restraints have eliminated music, and/or fine arts co-ordinators, in many districts. In fact, one school district chair said that, “the district used to have a music coordinator who oversaw band programs in elementary schools across the district, but this position was eliminated in the 1980s as part of a string of budget cuts” (McGarrigle, 2012, para. 13). If band directors, as Charles said, “have no professional accountability to anyone, in terms of assessment or anything else,” the likelihood, then, that assessment structures are congruent with published standards and best practice is minimal and continues to be a combination of mostly scattered performance assessments, non-achievement, behavior-based factors, and a modicum of theory. As such, band directors continue to graduate students with little knowledge about music beyond “which buttons to push on a saxophone.”

Band directors associated with this study appear to have little provision in their instructional methods for the implementation of a standards-based curriculum in relation to assessment. This is likely due, in part, to a lack of supervisory oversight regarding their instructional and assessment structures, but also, and more likely, a minimal knowledge base regarding the implementation of assessment more broadly into their programs.

Question Eight – Do band directors base their assessment practice(s) in relation to undergraduate/graduate coursework, providing such coursework existed?

Because “teachers garner knowledge from a multitude of sources and...it is often difficult to delineate the domains from which teachers draw while teaching” (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 49), there tends to be a sizeable degree of variety when dealing with teacher judgement. As Charles revealed, “there's no uniform [description of what],

an 'A' at that school means in relation to an 'A' at this school; they're not related, in any way." Yet, during the survey component, a majority of respondents, as shown in Figure 7 (p. 96), indicated that they had taken some coursework related to student assessment in their pre-service teacher education. If band directors have taken full courses in assessment (50% of survey respondents indicated affirmative) or instruction in assessment is a component of music methods classes (again, 50%) at the post-secondary level, and 19% have taken more than one course solely on assessment, what, then, is contributing to the apparent lack of consistency in assessment and grading of students?³⁴ Two reasons stand out, I think, for this incongruity: a) music, and music education, are beset with subjectivity, which is highly personal; and b) band directors' knowledge base about assessment is deficient and they have a dearth of pedagogical content knowledge.

As for the idea of subjectivity as a contributing factor to assessment, despite instruction in assessment in their pre-service teacher education, "some music teachers reject the idea of assessment on the grounds that music learning is highly subjective" (MENC, 1996, p. 3). Also, as Ross and Mitchell (1993) explain, "subjectivity has traditionally been regarded as invalidating the legitimacy of educational assessment" (p. 99). It appears, then, that teachers are not using the knowledge gleaned from their classes, professional development, or the many articles available that espouse *best practice* for assessing in music education despite Neil's thoughts that, "we're trying to mitigate some of the subjectivity."

³⁴ To clarify, the survey was cumulative, not singular. Directors were asked, "In your pre-service teacher education, what training, if any, did you have in regard to student assessment? Please check all that apply."

The second thought, pedagogical content knowledge, or *informed professional judgement*, is more concerning. Band directors in this study overwhelmingly indicated a serious lack of knowledge concerning instrumental pedagogy:

- *I didn't have class brass, class strings, so I'm learning on the fly in the job*
- *not knowing enough about the instruments to be able to teach them properly*
- *knowledge of, and depth of knowledge on each of the instruments in terms of technical and idiosyncratic issues*
- *being ill-prepared for dealing with how to teach...instrumental pedagogy*

Mehta (2013) tells us that, “consistency of quality is created less by holding individual practitioners accountable and more by building a body of knowledge, carefully training people in that knowledge, requiring them to show expertise before they become licensed, and then using their professions’ standards to guide their work” (para. 11). Band directors are in need of a multi-faceted knowledge system. Earlier, we saw that Shulman called this *pedagogical content knowledge*; Fullan (2003) labeled it *informed professional judgement*. Elliott (1995) termed this *Educatorship*, a term that he says, “is the situated knowledge that allows one to think-in-action in relation to students’ needs, subject matter criteria, community needs, and the professional standards that apply to each of these” (p. 252). Therefore, multiple views of the world exist in which music teachers must reside. All music teachers are in need of a multi-faceted knowledge system—discipline specific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, which includes assessment (Kennedy, 1990).

Band directors participating in the study, for the most part, indicated that they had taken some coursework related to assessment, whether as part of their methods classes or

as a separate course. Such coursework, however, appears not to have prepared directors fully for the inclusion of a broad-based assessment system in their band rooms; deficiencies exist regarding knowledge of assessment (nomenclature, for example), pedagogical content knowledge (instrumental procedures), and/or *Assessorship*.³⁵ I will discuss this idea further in Chapter 6, under *Implications for Music Education*.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of this sequential explanatory, mixed methods study were discussed with reference to the eight research questions. From this discussion, it has been found that this study's participating band directors, many of which received undergraduate coursework in assessment, use assessment sparingly and the assessment they use is mostly steeped in performance and non-achievement factors. Also, despite these band directors possessing knowledge of the need for assessment, the understandings of the purposes of classroom assessment, and, in particular, music, appear to be somewhat lacking in practice. That is, in this study, participating band directors do not use *best practice* when implementing their assessment.

Additionally, band directors in this study appear not to use, at least in a regular manner, the comprehensive musicianship materials connected with method books nor do they seem to use other comprehensive musicianship ideas during their teaching, except for a smattering of theory-based instruction. As such, several of the PLOs from the standards-based curriculum, as issued by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, may not be achieved and students who may not be performers but have other musical tendencies could, perhaps, have their needs unfulfilled.

³⁵ *Assessorship*, in this context, is related to Elliott's (1995) *Musicianship* and *Educatorship* in that the practice of assessment is a component of music education—*Musicianship*, *Educatorship*, and *Assessorship*.

The following chapter (Chapter 6) examines the implications for music education, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment practices of secondary school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment. The study also sought to understand current practices in relation to a standards-based curriculum, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, the relationships between assessment and teacher knowledge and experience, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the teaching of assessment. This chapter examines the implications for music education, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. A conclusion closes the chapter.

Implications for Music Education

Music teachers have been searching for legitimacy within the curriculum for years (Mitchell, 2010). Band programs appear to be lacking public trust because of their continued resistance to include assessment as a regular, integral, and *musically-oriented* part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment in music, because of its inherent subjectivity, has been a related, and contentious issue, that continues to antagonize educational stakeholders (see Labuta, 1974, below) to this day. In the current climate that emphasizes standards-based curriculum, assessment procedures are, more than ever, under scrutiny. “The demand for accountability has grown with the rising costs of public education and the concurrent dissatisfaction of students, parents, politicians, and lay people with the results of [public] education” (Labuta, 1974, p. 19). Many of the

assessment habits of current band directors in British Columbia in this study are in contradiction to current educational practice. Thus, I present some implications for practice that may guide the future for music education in British Columbia related to three areas: a) in the band room; b) the overseers (district and Provincial administration); and c) post-secondary music education.

In The Band Room

Band directors in this study do assess their students, though usually in a limited fashion. Directors are both excellent at, and challenged by, assessment at the same time. On the one hand, they are great at assessing the musical structures from the podium (i.e., clarinets, a little more crescendo at B; trumpets, a little more length on the quarter notes at C). On the other hand, band directors have a difficult time assessing students' knowledge and understanding about, of, in, and through music. In general, they are cognizant of this dichotomy, yet continue with the *status quo*. In order to resolve this inadequacy, band directors, first of all, must be open to the idea of taking the necessary time to implement assessment in their classes and use assessment strategies that do not include non-achievement factors. Second, in order to immerse themselves in a more heuristic musical experience, students could be provided with opportunities to engage in the learning process, not just the results of instruction presented at concerts, with less teacher-directed instruction and more student-focused self/peer assessment structures. One possible approach to accomplishing this could be through a greater use of student led ensembles (chamber music, for example). Such experience, when coupled with intensive self-reflection would help to create a more authentic assessment experience for students. Musicians, in the "real" world, do self-reflect as part of their daily work (though,

generally, not in written form). Such an effort would constitute a means of creating authentic experiences for students because “faithful representation of the contexts encountered in a field of study or in the real-life ‘tests’ of adult life” (Wiggins, 1993, p. 206).

Band directors in this study noted that they do not tend to use available assessment materials, from method books or otherwise, that develop comprehensive knowledge. There is a need, then, for band directors to be more inclusive of all musical knowledge structures and not just performance skills. Some band directors fear the loss of student and ensemble performance ability should they use assessment more regularly or with different criteria. Unfortunately, “if this fear leads a band director to take short cuts...if this fear disregards the role of student as the focus of learning, it is inherently *mis-educative*.” (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 165).

The need for band directors to provide more achievement-based evidence of learning in a standards-based curriculum environment is paramount to the future success and accountability of music education. That is, in order to be seen as a core subject (a.k.a. legitimate), band directors must move away from using attendance, effort, participation, and attitude as weighted components of their assessment schema.

The Overseers

Administration (District, Ministry) is not exempt from providing guidance with respect to assessment procedures in music. This study found that teachers want some direction concerning assessment. Perhaps the most important implication here is *time*. Not only do band directors need time to provide appropriate assessment for students, but also they need time to discuss assessment so that assessment practice might be more

consistent across schools and districts. Professional development for band directors should be focused on providing them with: a) research-based assessment structures that have proven to be successful; and b) time to discuss their needs with each other.

It was noted in the study, by Charles, that what “an 'A' at that school means in relation to an 'A' at this school” lacks credibility. Different assessment practices within the discipline challenge its legitimacy with the public. As such, clear guidelines from district and Ministry level administration, as suggested by Neil, as to what constitutes “those qualities of the A, B, or C student as a rubric so that there is a fundamental guide from which [band directors] can then nuance for [their] own program” would be a means of clarifying standards across British Columbia.

Many band directors use festivals as a way of providing musical enrichment for their students. These festivals provide band directors with feedback about their ensembles' performances and are adjudicated by professional musicians, music education professors, and music teachers (current and retired) with a proven record of accomplishment. These adjudicators, generally, use a standardized form (rubric) that provides criteria for performance achievement. While many band directors use rubrics, there is no standard across districts. School and district administrators, in Katherine's experience, say, “I'm not a musician, I don't really don't know anything about this and, if what you're doing is working then we're good.” Districts, then, as a means of “legitimizing” music/band, could delegate outside adjudicators to provide more consistency (standardization) with respect to music teacher performance assessments. In fact, a precedent already exists for this as Faculties of Education already hire outside “experts” for the supervision of pre-service educators completing a practicum.

Additionally, in those districts that have eliminated them, a reinstatement of music, or fine arts co-ordinators, would be an appropriate action to take.

At the Ministry level, public and education professional consultation, at least every five years, about what the public wants from the education system might be helpful in establishing priorities, not only for band directors and assessment, but also for education as a whole. In some cases, IRPs, such as Music 8-10, for example, have not been updated for 18 years.³⁶ While there are current discussions concerning a new curriculum, advancements in technology and realignment of social structures necessitate more widespread consultation. Such a gesture could alleviate public calls for greater accountability and the elimination of band programs.

Elliott (2009) suggests that, “summative assessments or ‘achievement standards’ usually require us to step back from our students’ efforts in order to examine, test, judge, and otherwise reduce their musicing and listening to brief, fragmented tests of isolated skills and facts that we can ‘describe’ as numerical grades and/or brief verbal reports” (p. 173). The problem here is that, regardless of the intent Elliott has in raising this issue, teachers are still required to provide students with summative grades that are based on something and formative assessment with a grade attached to it *is* summative assessment.

While it would be good for band directors to search out appropriate assessment strategies on their own, it would be more appropriate, consistent, and efficient, for districts and the Province to provide materials and professional development time to directors for discussion and implementation.

³⁶ A new curriculum for the Arts is in process and should be available for implementation within two years.

Post-secondary Music Education

“Students enter teacher education programs certain there is very little to think about, discuss, or challenge throughout their pre-service education because, ‘Really...my band consistently won highest rankings at the [festival] competitions, so why should I change my thinking about my own band program and my wind band conductor?’”

(Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 163). This quote speaks to a potential lack of seriousness among pre-service music educators’ regarding their methods courses and the perpetuation of non-achievement based assessment. In essence, “most instrumental music teachers simply teach as they were taught” (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 52). As noted in this study, band directors, despite having taken undergraduate methods courses, indicate a lack of pedagogical content knowledge, which includes assessment knowledge. If future practice is to be “legitimate,” post-secondary teacher education in music should consider refocusing its curricular mandate to be more inclusive of practical instruction related to assessment. For band, that could mean closer alignment with the Canadian Band Association’s (2006) *National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (Band)* as a means of “provid[ing] an understanding of what school administrators, parents, musicmakers, and music educators might do to enable children to access all forms of musical thinking and knowing” (p. 4).

Undergraduate instrumental pedagogy courses could further embed assessment procedures into their curricula. That is, such courses should not be focused just on how to play an instrument, or what fingerings sound best in a given situation, but include opportunities for students to develop their pedagogical and assessorship skills by having them diagnose and problem solve appropriate corrective measures (formative assessment)

and grading procedures (summative assessment). Any pre-service assessment course should also include, beyond the theories of how to build a rubric, opportunities to use that rubric, in action, with either their peers or, possibly, part of a regular, in-the-schools, practicum experience.

Earlier, I suggested a triumvirate process to pre-service music teacher education, *Musicianship, Educatorship, and Assessorship*. An implication of the research in this study for music education would be creation of a standard curriculum for undergraduate pre-service music educators. Current pre-service music education equally emphasizes musicianship and pedagogy (educatorship). Educatorship, as postulated by Elliott (1995), “is a flexible, situated knowledge that allows one to think-in-action in relation to students’ needs, subject matter, criteria and community needs, and the professional standards that apply to each of these” (p. 252). While it may appear that “to think-in-action in relation to students’ needs, subject matter, criteria” would include assessment, I posit that they do not because pedagogy (upon which educatorship is based) and assessment, though connected, require different thought processes; pedagogy precipitates learning whereas assessment reflects on, or is the judgement of, learning. *Assessorship*, then, is separate component of the teaching process that requires its own set of procedures and knowledge.

Figure 15, on page 176, is a graphic representation of the proposed model for pre-service music education that includes assessment as a structural component of the program. The band director, then, becomes pedagogue, musician, AND assessor. In other words, a cyclical pattern of *teach, do, learn*. As suggested by this model, and because undergraduate music education students “are left with few tools to draw upon during their

own teaching experience and, as future teachers, may not understand the importance of assessment” (Edmund et al., 2008, p. 53), undergraduate music education programs should include assessment instruction at every level and in every music education course.

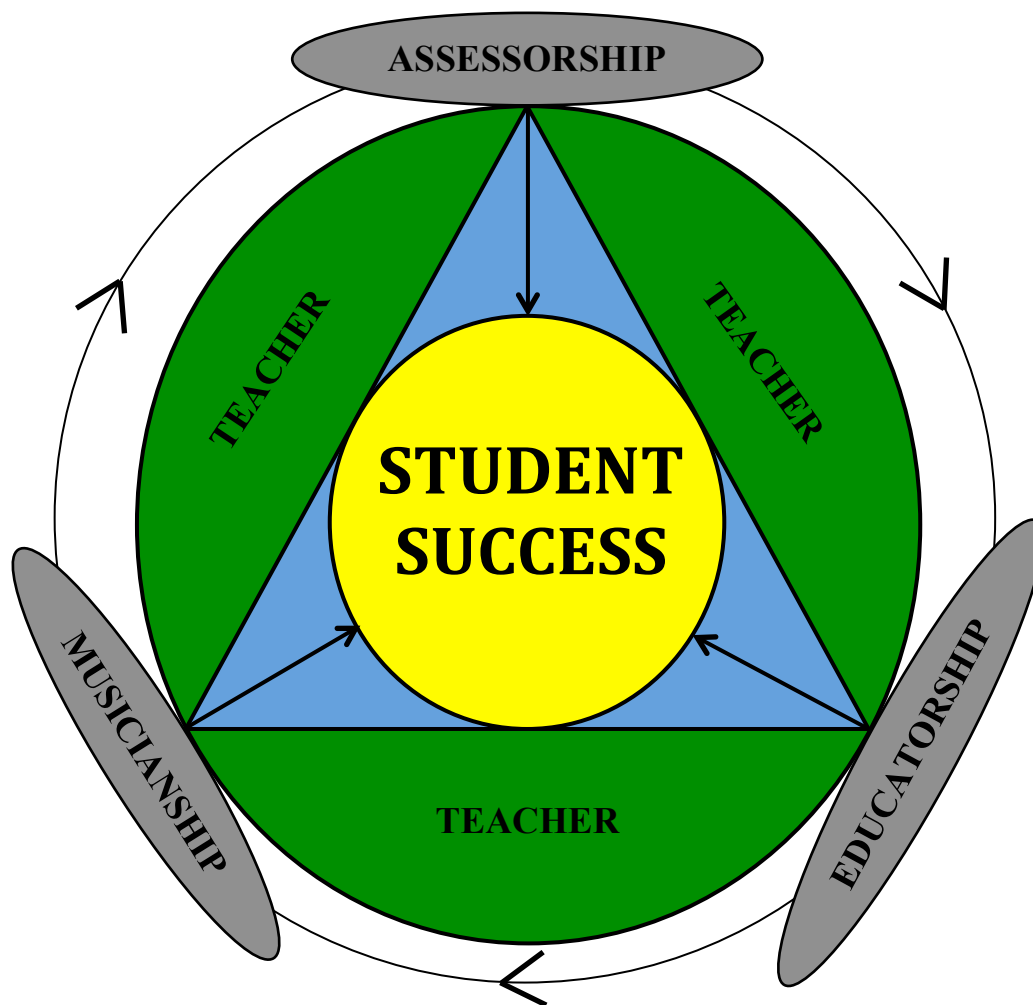


Figure 15. Pre-service Music Education Model

This model suggests that all courses in music education incorporate equal amounts of musicianship, educatorship, and assessorship. That is, because assessment is an integral component of the teaching process and, in order to develop more student-based assessment rather than teacher driven assessment (i.e., from the podium), pre-

service music educators need to practice assessment strategies in the same manner that they practice their instrument or practice teaching scenarios.

If all music education courses were to include assessorship as a major component of the educative process, pre-service music teachers would have much more practical grounding in student assessment from which to draw on following their professional teaching certification. To illustrate, a music methods course at the post-secondary level usually involves an instructor who provides guidance about a specific instrument (i.e., percussion). Throughout the course, the instructor develops and provides the appropriate protocols (*educatorship*) for how to hold the sticks, play various rudiments (i.e., rolls, paradiddles), and then assesses each student on his or her ability to perform the rudiments (*musicianship*). The missing element, and perhaps the reason so many directors participating in this study indicated a lack of pedagogical content knowledge (*assessorship*), or reflection-in-action, which connects both educatorship and musicianship. The instructor and student would then be able to work together to overcome problems that might stem from either cognitive or psychomotor difficulties.

Teaching educators to accept the role of assessor must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Knowing about an instrument, or how to play it, is not enough. With assessorship, the teacher establishes a kind of pedagogical phronesis, or practical wisdom, that bonds both educatorship and musicianship. That is, assessorship connects thinking with doing through reflective practice for the common good of both teacher and student, providing undergraduate music educators with

Assessment, regardless of its form (summative or formative), should be a conversation between student and teacher about the strengths, weaknesses, and next steps

of a given situation. It should never be a one-way exchange and as such, the use of portfolios as an assessment tool (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002; Elliott, 2009; Goolsby, 1995) can encourage student, teacher, and, in the case of elementary and secondary education, parent conversation and reflection, thereby providing an opportunity for greater legitimacy in music education with potentially less subjective, non-achievement based assessment and a more musically-oriented, authentic teaching and learning process.

The reflective process, then, provides a meeting place, so to speak, where depth of learning and instructional integrity convene. If the age-old debate of “process vs. product” in education is to become “process AND product,” then the use of *reflection-in-practice*—assessorship—during pre-service music education courses could then transfer to secondary school band programs giving band directors greater flexibility and reliability in the assessment of their students.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of this study are apparent. First, the timing of the initial dissemination of the survey was in late June, a time when band directors are “closing shop.” At that time of year, directors are tired and perhaps unwilling to participate in a research study. Future studies that require the participation of teachers should be disseminated at a time of year when they are not as busy or tired.

Second, because initial contact was made with school principals and not band directors themselves, it might be possible that directors did not receive the survey information from their principal. Despite concerns about anonymity, it might be better to make contact with the directors directly without an intermediary.

Third, even with anonymity, it may be that some directors did not feel comfortable answering questions about the assessment structures in their program because they felt that they might be judged negatively if they were not “doing it right.” Additionally, some directors might have felt that their assessment strategies should not come under scrutiny because they felt embarrassed about the lack of assessment that takes place in their programs.

Fourth, because of the sample size (N=16), the data collected in the survey did not balance in terms of beginning, mid-career, and veteran directors. Though this information could not have known beforehand, a larger sample might have included more data from all three subgroups. Because of this discrepancy, the content validity of the study may be skewed, which may call into question the reliability of the study.

Finally, in terms of mixed methods, some limitations should be considered. For example, the research questions might be pared down, differentiated, and balanced, so that only two questions were geared toward the quantitative method, two for the qualitative, and a question or two that are focused on mixed method.

Another limitation with mixed method is time. The timelines of mixed method in this study kept expanding because of administrative delays in gaining approval for the research and the availability of band directors due to the academic school year. Additionally, the necessary time required to analyze the quantitative data before embarking upon the qualitative portion, and the lengthy process of coding and analysis of the interviews, impacted on the research process.

Recommendations for Future Research

Asmus (2000) suggested that “substantive information about how best to prepare music teachers” in a new era of education is needed because “the field of music education is dramatically different than it was when the music teacher preparation programs were originally conceived in the last century” (p. 5). Colwell (2006) explained that “limited research and scholarship devoted to assessment in music over the past several decades” (p. 199) exists. In Canada, the dearth of research has been noted by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (2005), when it cited an urgent need for research into “evaluation and assessment in the arts” (p. 2). While this study sought to contribute to this, more is needed. Based on the findings of this study, I suggest the following areas for further study:

- *Research into the weighting breakdowns that band directors use in assigning final grades.* Beyond the types of assessment and beliefs that band directors hold, the final grades that band directors assign to students are based on some form of assessment information. In other words, how are grades assigned? Research in this area could include school-to-school, district-to-district comparisons to determine the consistency of band directors’ grading procedures.
- *Research into the instruction of assessment in pre-service music education programs.* As noted, many band directors in this study indicated a lack of pedagogical content knowledge, including assessment, upon graduation from their pre-service certification. Research in this area should explore undergraduate music education pedagogy and philosophy classes to determine the extent of assessment-related instruction occurring in those classes.

- *Research that provides a comparative analysis of provincial music guidelines.* A comparison of provincial music curricula could provide insight into the assessment structures mandated for, and used by, band directors in various jurisdictions across the country. This research could be aligned with a wider discussion of the Canadian Band Association's (2006) *National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (Band)*.
- *Research into the fairness of assessment to students.* Beyond the necessity of assessment in order to provide evidence for grading purposes, those most affected by assessment, the students, should have a voice. Is assessment fair to them? Research in this area could focus on the feelings students have about being assessed, their preferences about how they are assessed, or, perhaps, their inclusion in the process.
- *Research into quantification of musical/artistic achievement.* How do band directors translate performance into a grade for students? Research in this area could focus on how band directors develop their assessment tools, including rubrics, if applicable, and the way that directors use those tools in practice.
- *Qualitative research in music education.* Many quantitative studies, specifically US based research, have been conducted regarding assessment in band. One of the areas noted by British Columbia band directors in this study was the need for more discussion and collaboration between the various stakeholders in music education. Therefore, I suggest that the conversation begin with the initiation of more qualitative research into assessment and the aesthetics of music. It is important to begin the process of improving practice by incorporating current

band directors' needs and thoughts into pre-service and in-service professional development.

Conclusion

Everyone assesses, every day, whether it is what clothes to wear, what to eat, how to get to work, etc. Humans assess what they are doing and how they are doing it. They not only assess their own actions, they assess others, and that assessment is based on the beliefs that one holds. Teachers' beliefs, as we are told by Pajares (1992), "influence their perceptions and judgements, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom" (p. 307). Those beliefs are grounded in a teacher's theoretical and practical experience in, of, and about, a given discipline. Band directors come to the profession with varying degrees of experience in pedagogy, musicianship and assessment and their beliefs about teaching influence their instructional and assessment strategies related to students. Recent calls for accountability in education have refocused the spotlight on all teachers' assessment, but in particular, assessment in the arts because of their subjective nature.

In the past, non-achievement factors have played a substantive role in the assessment and grading of students. Currently, as noted from both the survey and interviews, non-achievement factors (i.e., effort, attendance, attitude, and participation) in the band classes of directors from this study can account for upwards of 50% of a student's grade. Recently, assessment of non-achievement factors in music/band has become a litigious issue in the United States (Russell, 2011). Band directors, "simply teach as they were taught" (Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008, p. 52), and, as products of non-achievement assessment in their secondary education, as well as the university system, they tend to grade in the same manner as they were graded during their

undergraduate program (Foyle & Nosek, n.d.). Hence, non-achievement assessment continues to dominate assessment and grading in band. Jorgensen (1997) tells us that:

each music teacher must fit the right instructional approach to a set of demands, in some measure, unique to a particular situation...If music teachers are apathetic and dependent on the leadership and instructional methods of others, it is because of how they have been prepared as teachers and what has been expected from them throughout their careers. (p. 92)

Band directors, then, require a new set of guidelines concerning the assessment of students. Dewey (1938) reminds us that what actions we take depend upon the previous experiences with which we have connected to particular situations:

The greater maturity of experience which should belong to the adult as educator puts him in a position to evaluate each experience of the young in a way in which the one having the less mature experience cannot do.
(p. 38)

Dewey's words represent an important philosophical focus for the manner in which education, explicitly, and assessment, implicitly, should be structured—experientially. In other words, the deeper the practical experiences of an educator in the discipline, including assessment instruction, the more solid a foundation for the assessment of those with whom he or she interacts. Assessment as a component of both pre-service and in-service education for the band directors in this study appears deficient. It is, therefore, necessary for pre-service music teacher education, to be restructured to be far more inclusive of assessment instruction and procedures and for in-service professional

development to be more practical regarding assessment. In other words, music teacher education programs should balance *educatorship*, *musicianship*, and *assessorship*.

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APPENDIX A

THE ONLINE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

British Columbia Band Director Assessment³⁷ Survey**Survey Start!**

Thank you for giving the time to complete this questionnaire.

It will take only about 15-20 minutes to complete. I appreciate and value your opinions.

All answers are completely confidential and will help me to understand better our assessment practices.

Please enter the unique, randomized password found on the letter you received.

Password

For the purposes of this survey, ASSESSMENT is defined as, "the systematic process of gathering information about students' learning in order to describe what they know, are able to do, and are working toward." This definition is taken from the British Columbia Ministry of Education (2002), Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for Choral and Instrumental Music, 11 to 12, p. 4.

The following page is a Letter of Information for Implied Consent. Please read it carefully.

Letter of Information for Implied Consent

You have been invited to participate a research study, Assessment in the Secondary School Band Programs of British Columbia, because you have been identified as a secondary school band director in British Columbia. Selection for this study was completed through a stratified random sample of school districts in British Columbia. The purpose of the study is to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia. That is, the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices. The study will also seek to discover any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in designing and implementing those assessment procedures as well as any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director's career stage.

³⁷ The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2002), in the Integrated Resource Package (IRP) for Choral and Instrumental Music, 11 to 12, defines assessment as "the systematic process of gathering information about students' learning in order to describe what they know, are able to do, and are working toward" (p. 4, emphasis added).

As a graduate student in Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Victoria, this study is being completed as part of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. If you decide to help with the study, you will be asked questions about your philosophy and practice to help my research.

The study consists of two separate and distinct parts: this questionnaire and, if you are willing, a potential follow-up interview. Participation in this questionnaire DOES NOT imply participation, obligation, or consent to an interview. This questionnaire should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be asked about your desire to participate in a follow-up interview.

If at any time you feel uncomfortable with the research process you are free to withdraw from the study without fear of penalty. A few questions, for demographic or participatory reasons, are labeled as required. Rest assured that, in order to protect your privacy, and because you will not be asked for your name or any identifying information (i.e., school district), all responses are anonymous and confidential—even I will not be able to infer who you are from the answers provided. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless participants specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link your participation to the study.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. However, please be advised that information about you that is gathered for this research study uses an online program located in the U.S. As such, there is a possibility that information about you may be accessed without your knowledge or consent by the U.S. government in compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act.

This project is for research study and degree completion purposes. However, participating in this study may lead to improvements for the future of the pre-service music teacher education in relation to assessment.

If you have questions at any time regarding this study or the procedures, or would like to be informed of the results, please feel free to contact Michael Keddy at mkeddy@uvic.ca or Dr. Gerald King at gking@uvic.ca. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca). By completing and submitting the questionnaire, YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without prejudice. However, because of the anonymous nature of this survey, should you decide to withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data cannot be eliminated from the results.

If you agree to help in this research project as described, please click "I AGREE to participate in this study." If not, please click "I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this study." Thank you for your time and participation in my research.

I have read the above information and:*

I AGREE to participate in this study I DO NOT AGREE to participate in this study

Background Information

Are you:

- Male? Female?

How many years have you been teaching?

- 0-5 years 6-15 years 16+ years

How long have you been teaching band?

- 0-5 years 6-15 years 16+ years

Certification

What education/certification have you completed? Please check all that apply.

- BMus
 PDPP - Post Degree Professional Program
 ARCT
 Specialist Diploma
 BEd
 MMus
 MA
 MEd
 PhD
 Other

Were you originally certified to teach in British Columbia? If no, where did you receive your certification?

- Yes
 No - Please state where you were originally certified

School Setting

Do you teach in a public or independent school?

- Public Independent (Catholic, Private, etc.)

In what type of setting is the school in which you teach?

- Large city (> 50,000) Town (5,000 – 15,000)
 Small city (15,000 – 50,000) Rural (< 5,000)

What is the population your school? If you teach at more than one school, choose the largest school population.

- <100 students 500-999 students
 101-499 students 1000+ students

Do you teach any courses outside of your music specialization?

- Yes - Please indicate which subject area(s)
 No

Professional Development in Assessment

In your pre-service teacher education, what training, if any, did you have in regard to student assessment? Please check all that apply.

- One course based solely on student assessment
- More than one course based solely on student assessment
- Assessment training included as a component of a methods course
- Conference(s) or workshop(s) that focused on assessment
- Self-study
- No formal training in student assessment

Have you taken a graduate course that focused on student assessment?

- Yes
- No

Professional Development, Part 2

The following statements refer to professional development in assessment during the past 3 years.

Please choose the most appropriate response for each statement.

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I have had opportunities to participate in professional development related to assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have participated in classroom assessment related professional development in my school, district, or elsewhere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have read books or articles, watched videos or webcasts about classroom assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have discussed, planned, and modified classroom assessment with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been part of an assessment committee at my school or in my district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have participated in web-based communities (blog, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) related to assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My Views on Assessment

I believe that assessment in the band class is (please choose the best answer):

- fundamental to the teaching/learning process
- important for student learning
- neither important or unimportant for student learning
- somewhat important for student learning
- a nuisance that impedes the teaching/learning process

My Views on Assessment

How important do you believe the following statements are regarding the following purposes of student assessment?

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

	5	4	3	2	1
to provide feedback to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to provide feedback to parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to provide feedback/evidence to administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to identify individual student abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to identify general class abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine whether instruction has been successful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine what concepts students are understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine what concepts students are failing to understand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine future instructional direction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to demonstrate student accountability for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to establish or maintain credibility for the band program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine the level of musical preparedness for performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to help students prepare for performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to determine whether students are practicing at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to motivate students to practice their instruments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to set or maintain class standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
to rank students according to individual performance levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My Views on Assessment

To what extent do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statement:

Assessment is an integral part of the lesson planning process in band.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

This series of statements refer to your thinking about students, teaching, and assessment.

Please consider each statement and click on your level of agreement (5 = Strongly Agree...1 = Strongly Disagree)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Assessment influences how students feel about themselves in band	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment has a significant impact on teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment helps teachers improve their teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment helps teachers see how the students are learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mandated assessment activities impede teaching and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching is about assisting students to gain credits and graduate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching is about helping students become effective learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment is fair to students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students will learn more if the teacher makes most of the decisions about their learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is as important for students to develop critical thinking about music as it is to "play the right notes"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Assessment in the Band Class

Do you assess (evaluate/grade) students in your band class(es)?

- Yes - please move on to the next page
 No - please see below

If you answered NO, would you please elaborate as to why you do not assess your students?

Assessment Policy

Are you aware of National Voluntary Curriculum and Standards for Instrumental Music (Band) developed by the Canadian Band Association?

Yes No

Does your school/district have an explicit assessment policy that you are required to follow?

Yes No Don't know

If you answered YES, how might it have affected your assessment planning?

If you answered NO or DON'T KNOW, please move on to the next question.

Assessment in the Band Class

How often do you typically assess your students?

- every day
- twice per week
- once per week
- every other week
- once per month
- once per term
- once per semester/year
- I do not assess my students in band

Which of the following assessment strategies, if any, do you use in your assessment of students during a typical school year? Please check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> technique performance tests | <input type="checkbox"/> listening test/quiz |
| <input type="checkbox"/> repertoire performance tests | <input type="checkbox"/> participation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> portfolios | <input type="checkbox"/> observation checklists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> paper and pencil theory tests | <input type="checkbox"/> student self-assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> computer-based theory tests | <input type="checkbox"/> student peer-assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> paper and pencil music history tests | <input type="checkbox"/> none of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> computer-based music history tests | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> student-teacher conferencing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attendance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> effort | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attitude | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> essays | |

Assessment in the Band Class

If you use performance tests as part of your student assessment plan, what format do you use? Please check all that apply.

- Playing exams, live & in-class
- Playing exams, live but outside of class
- Auditions
- Chair challenges
- Sectional performances in class
- Ensemble performances in concert
- Ratings at solo & ensemble festival
- Ratings at large-group festival
- None of the above

Do you allow digital recording of student performance tests? If so, what format do you use? Please check all that apply.

- CD
- Digital Video or DVD
- MP3
- Other
- I do not use digital recording

Do you allow students to email performance tests to you?

- Yes No

Assessment in the Band Class

If you indicated that you use effort, attendance, participation, and/or attitude in your assessment of student achievement, how do you factor this into the student's final grade (percentage of grade, extra credit, etc.)? Please describe in the boxes as necessary. If not, please move on to the next page.

Effort

Attendance

Participation

Attitude

Assessment in the Band Class

Do you use pre-structured assessment tools? Please check all that apply.

- from the Internet
 from a web-based design company (i.e., Rubistar)
 from colleagues
 from print sources such as journals, books, etc.
 from conference handouts, etc.
 other
 I do not use pre-structured assessment tools

Do you use reflective practice with your students? For example, students are given an opportunity to discuss or explain their performance/work.

- Yes No

Do students receive academic credit for participating in band?

- Yes No

Other Assessment

If you use performance tests in your program, do students have the opportunity to "redo" performance tests for a higher grade?

- Yes No

Do you use any of the following as part of your student assessment?

	Yes	No
Students write journals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practice log or journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students audition for admission into ensemble(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students audition for ensemble placement (Principal, I, II, III chair)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rubrics/Exemplars

Do you use rubrics as part of your assessment plan?

- Yes No

Do you use exemplars of student work as "standards of quality" for other students to reference?

- Yes No
-

Technology

Have you used computer-based assessment as a component of your assessment plan for band?

Yes No

You answered NO to this question. Is there a reason why you have not used technology?

- I am unaware of technology that supports assessment
- It is too time-consuming
- It is impersonal
- It does not fit into the structure of my program
- I do not have the appropriate support for technology
- Other reasons:

Assessment—Final Thoughts

Do you use any other type of assessment in your band classes? If YES, please describe what you use.

Do you have any questions or comments for the researcher?

Thank You!

You have indicated that you DO NOT assess your students in band class. The remainder of the questions relate to the use of assessment in the band room. Therefore, I wish to thank you for your participation to this point. If you clicked NO by mistake, please use the back button to return to the survey.

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your completely anonymous responses are very important to my research. I would like to follow-up this survey with some of you. If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview, please click the Yes button, which will direct you to a webpage not connected with this survey, thereby maintaining your anonymity in the survey. If NO, please click the No button and accept my thanks for your participation.
 Yes No

THANK YOU!

You're Done. Thanks for Taking This Survey.

APPENDIX B

PILOT STUDY – FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. Please take a moment and provide feedback about the survey.

1. How long did the questionnaire take to complete? _____ minutes

2. Were the directions clear? Yes No
 - a. If no, where?

3. Did any questions have spelling/wording errors? Yes No
 - a. If yes, which questions? _____

4. Does the format flow in a logical manner? Yes No
 - a. If no, could you be specific as to how?

5. Do the questions match the stated aim? Yes No
 - a. If no, where?

6. Please share any other comments you may have about this questionnaire:

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX C
LETTER FOR DISTRICT APPROVAL

May 27, 2012

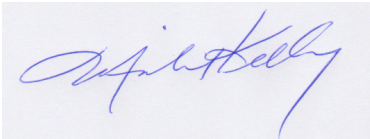
Dear Fellow Educator,

In an effort to assist current and future music educators, I am conducting a study to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices.

As I begin my dissertation research, it is my hope that you will accept this package as my research proposal for your district.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Keddy", is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Michael Keddy, PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria

APPENDIX D
DISTRICT APPROVAL RESEND

August 27, 2012

Dear Fellow Educator,

Some time ago, I sent a package of information to you regarding the possibility of conducting research (see below*) in your district. To date, I have not received a response to my query. As the new school year begins, I would like to resubmit my request in the hope that I may begin the research phase of my dissertation. If you would like me to send a new package (ethics approval, research instruments, etc.), I would be happy to do so.

**The letter below was included in the original package:*

In an effort to assist current and future music educators, I am conducting a study to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices.

As I begin my dissertation research, it is my hope that you will accept this package as my research proposal for your district.

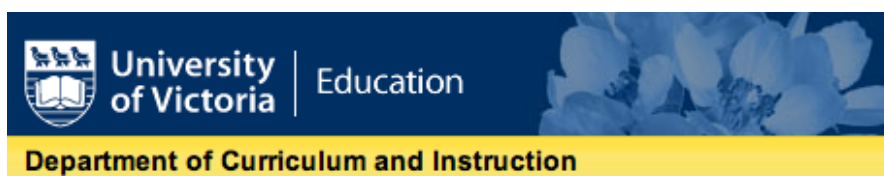
I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Michael Keddy, PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS³⁸

Dear Principal,

In an effort to assist the needs of future music educators, and because accountability in assessment is an important issue for educators in this time of public funding restraint, I am conducting a study as part of my doctoral research that focuses on assessment usage in the band classes of British Columbia. As a high school band director for many years, I realize that your time, and that of band directors, is at a premium, but hope that you will forward the attached letter regarding my *British Columbia Band Director Survey* to your band director(s). My hope is that each band director will spend about 20-25 minutes completing the survey, which can be found at the website included in the letter to directors. A unique, randomized password is provided so that only band directors who receive this letter are eligible to participate. If you have more than one band director, I would suggest that you forward this to your most senior director.

All responses will be completely anonymous and confidential—even I will not know the answers provided—and are critically important to my research. In addition, the participation of practicing band directors will help immensely in determining the current assessment needs and concerns of music educators. Also, pre-service music educators will benefit from teacher education that remains current and relevant. The survey will remain open until June 30, 2012, but I hope that directors will complete the survey as soon as practicable.

I would be happy to share the results of the survey with you and your band director(s) in exchange for participation. Participation in this study is voluntary, though I hope you will encourage your band director(s) to take an active role in shaping the future of music teacher education and assessment.

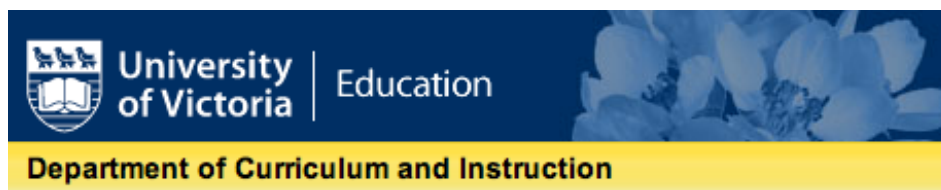
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Gerald King, at gking@uvic.ca. I sincerely appreciate and value your assistance!
Thank you so much,

Michael Keddy
PhD Candidate, Curriculum & Instruction (Music Education/Conducting)
University of Victoria

³⁸ The original letter is spaced at 1.5 rather than single, as shown here.

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO BAND DIRECTORS



BAND DIRECTOR SURVEY

Dear Band Director,

In an effort to assist the needs of future music educators, I am conducting a study, as part of my doctoral research, which focuses on assessment in the band class. As a school band director for many years, I realize that your time is at a premium, but hope that you will spend about 20-25 minutes completing the *British Columbia Band Director Survey* at the website below. A unique, randomized password is required so that only band directors who receive this letter are able to participate.

http://www.surveygizmo.com/xxx	PASSWORD: <<pin>>
---	-------------------

All responses will be completely anonymous and confidential—even I will not know the answers you provide—and are critically important to my research. In addition, your participation will help immensely in determining your needs and those of future music educators. The survey will remain open until June 30, 2012.

I would be happy to share the results of the survey with you in exchange for your participation. Be assured that your participation is voluntary and you may end the survey at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Gerald King, at gking@uvic.ca. I sincerely appreciate and value your assistance!

Thank you so much,

Michael Keddy
 PhD Candidate, Curriculum & Instruction (Music Education/Conducting)
 University of Victoria

APPENDIX G

SURVEY REQUEST TO PRINCIPAL RESEND

Dear Principal,

Earlier this year, I sent you an email regarding a research project, *Assessment in the Secondary School Band Programs of British Columbia*, which also serves as my dissertation. In the email, I enquired about the possibility of the band director in your school participating in my research. As a follow-up to my email, I would like to submit to you a paper version of the attachments from the original email, one for you and one for your band director. Having been a band director in the school system for 20 years, I realize how busy band directors are at this time of year. However, I would like to encourage them to participate, not only as a means of providing their own vision regarding assessment in the band class, but also so that they may help shape the future direction of assessment learning and teaching for pre-service educators in British Columbia.

If the band director in your school has completed the survey, please pass on my thanks. If not, I hope that he/she will complete, with full anonymity, the survey, which takes about 20-25 minutes to complete. Its purpose is to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices.

I hope that you will forward the survey sheet to your band director at your earliest convenience, and encourage them to participate, as their responses are vital to my research and for how we might change how we teach assessment to future music teachers.

Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Michael Keddy, PhD Candidate
Curriculum & Instruction (Music Education/Conducting)
University of Victoria

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

Interview

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in participating in a follow-up interview. Please fill out the following so that I may contact you.

First Name:

Last Name:

School:

School District:

City/Town:

Postal Code:

Email Address:

School Phone Number:

Cell Number (if you would prefer):

Years of teaching experience:

How would you prefer to be contacted? Phone Email**Do you have any questions?**

Thank You!

I am grateful for your interest and will be in touch soon.

APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background Questions

1. What type of band program do you have in this school?
2. Are you teaching full-time music?
3. Briefly describe your background (education, additional qualifications, etc.)
4. How many years have you been teaching band?
5. Have you changed schools, or school boards over the course of your career? If so, how many times?
6. Do you use a method book for your ensembles?
7. What would you consider to be your biggest challenges as a beginning band director? As an experienced director?

APPENDIX J
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Practical Questions of Assessment in the Band Class

1. How would you characterize your knowledge base regarding assessment:
 - a. during your first years of teaching? Explain why.
 - b. now? Explain why.
2. What components of your teacher preparation were most important in preparing you for your first years of teaching band? Was assessment an integral part of that preparation?
3. What assessment strategies do you use on a regular basis?
4. What would you say has changed for you, in regard to assessment, since you began your teaching career?
5. How much autonomy do you have when it comes to your assessment practices or are they prescribed by your school/district?
6. Are your students involved in the assessment process? If yes, how?
7. Do you use a method book in your band classes? If yes, is there an assessment component of the book that you use?
8. Please describe any feelings you have regarding assessment, either personally or professionally.
9. If applicable, how do you deal with the imposition of standardized assessment strategies on your program?

10. What would you like to see in the assessment policies:
 - a. of your school/district?
 - b. at the Ministry level?
11. What would you have benefitted from in your teacher education program in regard to assessment?

FOLLOW-UP/CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

1. Could you please clarify that?
2. Could you give me an example?
3. Could you tell me more about that?
4. What do you mean when you say . . .?
5. Why do you think . . .?
6. How did you feel about . . .?
7. Can you please elaborate?

APPENDIX K

INFORMED CONSENT WAIVER FORM

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study for my Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation, *Assessment in the Secondary School Band Programs of British Columbia*. The purpose of this study is to investigate the current assessment practices of high school band directors in British Columbia, including the purposes and uses of classroom assessment methods, and potential implications for teacher education with respect to the use of classroom assessment, as well as determining potential relationships between a director's teaching experience (i.e., beginning, mid-career, or veteran) and assessment practices. The study will also seek to discover any underlying assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes of band directors in designing and implementing those assessment procedures as well as any potential relationship between those assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes and the director's career stage.

INFORMATION AND PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

As part of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, a research study is being conducted that will look into the assessment practices of band directors in British Columbia. If you decide to help with the study, you will be asked questions about your philosophy and practice to help my research.

The study will consist of the previously completed questionnaire, and this follow-up interview. The interview should not take any longer than 60 minutes. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with the research process you are free to withdraw from the study without fear of penalty. Also, if, at any time, you would prefer not to answer a particular question, feel free to inform me. The interview will be performed only with your approval.

RISKS

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

BENEFITS

This project is for research study and degree completion purposes. However, participating in this study may lead to improvements for the future of the pre-service music teacher education in relation to assessment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All responses to any questions will remain confidential in order to protect your privacy. Your name will never be used, and in no way will you, or your employer, be identified. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless participants specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link participants to the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time regarding this study or the procedures, or would like to be informed of the results, please feel free to contact Michael Keddy at mkeddy@uvic.ca or Dr. Gerald King at gking@uvic.ca.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without prejudice. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

If you agree to help in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by signing and returning this document. Please retain this consent cover form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in my research.

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX L

EXCERPT: ONE TRANSCRIPT AND THEMATIC CODING

M - OK. First of all thank you for offering to be part of this.

D - My pleasure

M - The first part of this will be just some background questions so I can set this up. So, I'd like to ask, what type of band program do you have here at this school?

D - OK, has four concert bands, which includes Grade 8s, and within the Grade 8s there are some students that are beginners, that came as beginners, with no musical knowledge; some that came with piano but no wind, brass, or percussion knowledge; and some that have played up to three years in elementary school. So, they're all lumped together in one band, which this year is approximately 45 students. There's a Grade 9 band, which is mostly those students that played in Grade 8 band. This year we had, maybe, three students come and ask if they could join the band in Grade 9, so we set them up with some books and told them to take some lessons in the summer. Um, then there's a Grade 10 band and we have one boy who started on string bass this year. um, but I think he's the only one that didn't have any, he played violin so, he, at least, had string concept. Then there's a wind ensemble which is Grade 11 and 12 and those students have played either since Grade 8 or some of them in elementary school. And additionally we have two jazz bands, junior and senior. Junior band is usually Grade 8 to 10, maybe the occasional Grade 11 player. Most kids play on their, ah, first instrument, but a few kids play on their second. And, Senior jazz band this year is Grade 11 and 12.

M - OK, great. That's a lot. That's wonderful. And you're teaching full-time music?

D - Yes

M - OK. Um, could you briefly describe your background in education and any additional qualifications, or anything that you might have?

D - Ah, after, actually, I did not take band in high school. I took it in elementary school, briefly, playing trumpet but was not really successful and then wanted to play drums, percussion, but never ended up doing that for one reason or another. After coll., after high school, I went to . . . It's . . . now, but and did a, a performance diploma as it was in those days. After that, I went to . . . for one year, transferred to Calgary for two more years, and then went out in the professional world as a performer. Played for five years, did all sorts of things. The decided to go back and get my education degree. I did the one year degree at . . . That was in '95, '96. Started teaching in September of '96. Taught elementary band and some secondary, within three years was doing all secondary, and then 2006, I started my Masters at the . . . and did that for three summers, completed that in 2008.

M - OK

D - In between, conducting seminars, symposiums, that sort of stuff.

M - Just like the rest of us

D - Yeah

M - So, you've been teaching band for 16 years, 17?

D - I guess, since '96

M - '96, so this will be the 17th year basically?

D - Wow.

M - Wow yeah, I remember that time too. So, have you changed schools or districts at all?

- large program
- 8-12

- no high school band experience

- personal study
- after the fact

- 17 years experience

D - Not too much. I've always been teaching in . My first three years were at and I taught our two feeder schools and one other feeder elementary school.

M - OK.

D - and since '99 I've been at

M - So, what would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a beginning director and now as an experienced director?

D - Hmmm

M - And it doesn't have to be related to anything specific.

D - Right. Well, I guess, uh, challenges as a beginning director are so, there's so many. Ah, learning the instruments and knowing how to deal with all the instruments at every single level. How to get a good tone, the fingerings, I think, were huge. And just, the confidence of not knowing enough about the instruments to be able to teach them properly. I know I re-, in my first few years, I really made an effort to take up the bass and the, you know, um, take up the trombone when I didn't, when I came here there weren't any, there weren't very many trombone students and, I thought, what are we gonna do? So I, you know, tried to learn the instruments. As a percussionist, I never really learned about tuning, believe it or not. Other than tuning the timpani.

M - I'm a percussionist, I agree.

D - So the whole concept of even beats and waves and everything only became apparent to me when I watched some other people teach and especially my first year here when, um, the music room had not been built yet and the, and I was still teaching in the gym and the choir teacher, ah, he was taking the Grade 9 bands and, and he, I watched him, and then I, obviously I got some books and, I thought, geez, I better learn, I mean, I kinda knew what tuning was but I had no idea how to get them to play in tune, what to listen for. So, there were those challenges. Um, and, I guess the organization of the whole thing, you know, takes a few years before you have to think about a 5-year plan, in terms of your instrumentation. Um, so, dealing with the amount of paperwork that's involved with running a band program, like the rental of instruments and the reeds and the, dealing with the school board on repairs and all those sort of things. Um, you know, conducting and just trying to figure out what kind of sound you want. I came from, primarily, a jazz background and it, my wind ensemble experiences in university were not always that, what I call, would call inspiring probably, like you, a percussionist, you sit at the back, you wait around while the director works with the, the other 90% of the band. So, ah, there was that developing of sound concept and trying to figure out what exactly, what, what is it that I want? And, yeah.

M - How about now?

D - Now, ah, challenges? Well, challenges. I guess it's trying to keep, keep the kids there all the way through. Oh, there's still many challenges, but trying to keep the kids there until they get to the level where they can really enjoy the musical experience, where they're a little more freed up from the confines of technical restriction. Um, you know, I've had so many kids, when they get to Grade 12, they're just, they're just so happy and they're just, wow, finally, now yes, now I realize what you were trying to say to us all those years with, with, you know, embouchure, with tuning, with technique, or with ensemble, you know, all those ideas and you really, they enjoy and you, of course, as the teacher get the benefit of having an ensemble that can play at a high level, moderately well in tune, with expression and, you know, some type of technical precision. So, it's convincing them, some of them of that, and, I guess, ah, challenges are always trying to make the things that are necessary to make a great sounding band not be boring.

- a few schools

- instrumental pedagogy
- lack of knowledge
- personal study due to a lack of preparation

- personal study program organization
- pedagogy
- develop a sound concept

- make music
- move beyond technique

Anthologies, which, ah, ok, you know what those are so, [I do] and, so, the first thing when I got into the school I bought those. There's the two-volume conductor's one and then when I got here, um, the Instrumentalist was, and I think they're still blowing them out but the, the Instrumental Anthologies as opposed to the Conductor's Anthologies so, you read through there and, you know, you're reading articles by Dale Cleaverger and by, you know, Peck, and, like, you know, it's this Midwest, Chicago school; the Chicago Symphony thing and that, that was incredibly inspiring for me to read those. So, I mean, I guess it's all those things, just trying to search out, the Edward Lisk book, just trying to find, find resources.

M - Great, was, so in that teacher prep, was assessment any part of that whatsoever?

D - Yeah, definitely. Um, I mean there was, there were, ah, there were different types of assessment, like, how do we, how do we assess phrasing, I mean, how do we, there was a, how do we assess articulation? I mean, again, the concept of what's fair, I mean, how, how far do we go? How minute do we get at the Grade 8 level as opposed to the Grade 11 and 12 level? How specific?

M - Umhmm

D - And then, what about standards? What do we accept at a Grade 8 level? What do we accept at a Grade 11 and 12 level? Expectations, I suppose, too.

M - OK, good. Um, so, what assessment strategies do you use on a regular basis?

D - Right, so, a variety of things. Um, we do sometimes a scale test. We do playing tests, ah, recently, we've done units on key signature and circle of fifths, we do some theory things. Um, I try to teach from a very concept-based philosophy. That is, we're gonna study the concept. We're gonna hope the concept applies to all the pieces so we're not redo, reteaching the same concepts in every piece. So, we'll do a, a unit on, like, or I'll, I, myself or my student teacher, who just finished a unit on phrasing so, we have a hand manual here at _____, which is things that I've come had over the years, stolen from the great teachers of the world, including _____ . But anyway, but, _____ had a, I remember I went to one of his sessions at DONATE A

on marches and so, he had a handout. So, between that and other things I've compiled a march page. So, when we're doing a march, the wind ensemble, we did National Emblem at the beginning of the year. So, we talked about, re-reviewed w' at its march style, ok? So they have a page and, so, they'll be, you know, there's little written quiz or that. We'll talk about phrasing. We've been dealing with that with the Grade 10 band. OK, what a phrase? Right to that basic, what is a phrase? What does it do? How do we shape it? How do we, how do we find the high point of the phrase, section and so forth. So there's, we go from the concept and then, um, there'll be practical, there'll be, like, a theoretical, so they have a page of a, of a test, theory test on phrasing. Then they'll have to demonstrate they can actually perform, um, like a, British, I have these sheets of legato melodies, so, like, "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," or, um, "A Wide With Me," or things like that, that are correlated, ah, to the Frank Erickson's 66 Festive and Famous Chorales. So, we work on unison, try to shape the phrase through that and then we go on, we work on it in chorale format. Um, what else? Sometimes there'll be, doing things on intonation. So, with the senior groups, they've had to get together, in groups of three and tune octaves and fifths. So, root, octave, get those beatless and the third player comes in and plays the fifth. And then we, eventually, we add in the third, trying to achieve that beatless tuning.

So, I try to have a variety. At the younger level, it's probably a little more simplistic, ok, we have to learn this scale. Some, some scales will be memorized, there's a kind of mastery component. Other scales, ah, will, or even other testing things will be, basically, you know, notes, notes and rhythms, articulations, tone. At the Grade 8 level, I mean, obviously tone can, in

• personal study

• PROBLEM? there is a discrepancy here. See page 4

• Standards

• Strategies: performance & theory

• Comprehensive Musicianship

• personal study

• pedagogy

some cases, there's beginner tone, right? And there's I've played two or three years tone. So again, it comes back to that aspect, what is fair, what is appropriate, what fits the learner's experience?

M - OK, Great. Ah, you touched on this already, earlier, but, um, what would you say has changed in regard to assessment since you began your career? Is there anything that you thought of since you mentioned that earlier?

D - Well, that, not too much really, I mean, I, I consider most of what I've done to be the things that I've done here. Ah, just trying to think if there's anything exciting or innovative. Well, the kids have to, they've, many years ago, I mean, I had them do recorded tests. The thing is, when you have so many kids, it's hard to get through the volume. I mean, if you, let's say, I mean, my wind ensemble, it's not really a wind ensemble but, senior band, 67 kids, you know, how do you listen to each one of those kids, ah, throughout the course of a term on an individual basis and give them really appropriate feedback, so? Unfortunately, many times I have them record their tests and send them in and, again, you run into those, at least now it's digital but, you know, 10 years ago, it was cassette so there was that whole aspect of trying to pitch on cassettes? But, in terms of things having changed, I guess I just added on, like, try to have some more group assignments. Again, with the more senior grades, um, I'll give them a, like, um, a I-IV-V chord thing, I-IV-V-I chord thing voiced out. And they have to get together in their section. It might be, like, the four trombones, it might be half of the clarinet section and, and they work on playing through those chords, trying to get them balanced, blended, and in tune and then they have to present that to the class. I suppose it's at different levels where we try to experiment with different, different things.

M - Great, how much autonomy do you have when it comes to assessment? Is there anything prescribed by the school or the district?

D - No, it's fabulous. I mean, I guess I get to swim in my own quagmire but no, ah, no.

M - OK, that's fine, um, are your students involved in the process at all, and if they are, how are they?

D - Right, um, sometimes, ah, the, the most recent wind ensemble test, I asked them to do a self-evaluation, and I think the biggest reason was, for that was, in hopes that they would actually listen to what they played before they sent it in. Sometimes I think they just play and they think, OK, that's, I guess that's, sound good. But they listen to it while they're playing it. They're not listening to it back so I had them do self-evaluation and, and in the past, I've used that and I kind of, I might merge the marks together or I might average out the marks. [ok] Um, but I wanna see where they think they're at in terms of their playing.

M - OK, um, do you use a method book at all?

D - Yeah, a whole bunch of different method books. Um, for the Grade 8s, we use Essential Elements 2000. For the Grade 9s, we use I Recommend, and I have this, kind of, band manual thing I made up so that has a bunch of stuff in it. We used to use Essential Techniques, but I found that for, at our Grade 9 level they're playing at about 2, 2 and a half, that it was a bit too hard for them. Grade 10s, we use Standard of Excellence, Book 3. Um, in the Grade 8s, for the beginners, we use Standard of Excellence and Essential Elements 2000, Book 2. Um, Grade 10s, we also use I recommend as well as, um, like I said Standard of Excellence, Book 3. Wind ensemble, sometimes, we've used the Claude T. Smith, ah, Symphonic Chorale things, ah, last year, I did a year where we used, ah, Gary, ah somebody-or-other, marching band guy out of the States. It was a book, one of the things I want, I want to do over the years is, how do we, getting playing in tune. How do we incorporate more singing within the band context in order to keep intonation? So he, he had a book out that I, I've got some copies of, so we use that, and it's basically you play, and you sing, and, you know it starts in unisons then it goes to small intervals, and so on. I've

- cognitive dissonance/ beliefs
- technology
- lack of time for assessment beyond individual assessment (Question for future: how assessed?)
- pedagogy
- prescription – NO
- Assessment AS Learning (reflection)
- pedagogy, method book
- Comprehensive Musicianship

got these Japanese training things that I took off of the Basic Training in Concert Band, back in 2004/2005. Um, so there's a bunch of different exercises there: tuning, primarily, balance, blend, tuning, a few rhythmic things, and have that in major and minor. Did that all in Finale. Ah, what else, sometimes, but not often, I'll use Finale to make up exercises. Um, I use Finale for a lot of things, like, if we're doing a piece, um, for, for trying to establish ensemble unison pitch, and phrasing, um, because, how, I mean, how many times do the tubas or the bari saxes get the melody? So, we're doing some Spanish guitar pieces that have been adapted for band, in our Spanish repertoire, so I took the melodies from the original guitar parts, put them into Finale and tried to, ah, and then everybody has a unison part so there's three pieces there.

M - Ok, great, in those, any of those books that you use, do you use any of the assessment structures that are in that? I know Standard of Excellence has some, um, Essential Elements has a little bit.

D - Um, I would say no.

M - OK, well, that's fine.

D - I mean, in Essential Elements, they do have those, kind of, um, playing quiz things. Ah, like, that's, kind of, a composite of the last few songs together and sometimes those fit well for assessment, sometimes they don't but, but I, in terms of, ah, using what's written there, if I, probably not.

M - OK

D - But we do use, like, um, in I Recommend, there's a, there's a lot of studies in the back half of the book. I mean, once you get technical things there's, they're great for teaching concepts so, yeah, we do the eighth and sixteenth note etude, we do the 6/8 etude, the accent etude, um, I use those as, as, I guess more in terms of, as the tool to test, not necessarily.

M - Because inside those books, there's embedded some assessment activities. I'm thinking of Standard of Excellence outright that at the back of the book, they've got, each one, they've got a whole bunch of these little Medal things and each one of those has three or four little check boxes. Um, and they also have theory quizzes and stuff in there like that and, um, but I haven't met a lot of people that use the stuff that's in there, but...

D - Maybe I should do a little more digging

M - Well, there's a new one out now by Brian Balmages, *whisper* which is really good
Ah, ok

M - It's called Measures of Success. It looks really good and it's got a fantastic percussion book
Right

M - Um, would you describe any feelings you have regarding assessment either personally or professionally?

D - Well, yeah, I guess that it's always a challenge. It's, it's always a, trying, trying to find the thing, you know, is, again, is it a matter of fairness? Is it appropriate to test the tubas on the same thing that, that the clarinets have to be tested on? Well, yes and no, I mean, we don't want to develop any musician with, we don't wanna miss out on the opportunity to develop any musician to their potential, but at the same time, what's fair? The clarinets have to play fast, and a lot of notes and articulations all the time; the tubas and the bass section don't and the tenor section, look at the euphoniums. Start out playing bass lines and then they get to grade level three music and ok, a few melodies and they get to grade 4/5 music and, wow, you know, so, um, yeah, I mean, the, the challenges of how to, how to assess fairly. Repeat the question cuz I...

M - Ah, it's just your personal or professional feelings regarding assessment

- pedagogy, method book

- pedagogy, method book. NO usage of embedded

- assessment. Also,

- Comprehensive Musicianship performance – formative assessment pedagogy

- cognitive dissonance/ beliefs

D - Yeah, right. How to, yeah, how to adequately do it? Do we assess against the world standard or do we assess against the class standard? I remember going to Hawaii to the Pacific Basin Festival and thinking that I had a pretty good band, but there was Tim Foley, and there was Kazuyoshi Akiyama, and there was, ah, you know, Jeffrey Brandt, right? And, you know, we ended up with, like, a 74/75% and I was thinking, Oh My God and then I realized, well, that was the first time I saw the Japanese bands. Well, this is, they're, they're rating against the finite, right? The real, you know, that, that, that 90%, or above, is really good. Whereas, here, um, you know, I, I have to say also, assessment is, to a certain degree, of course, can result in whether you have a band next year, or not, and to a certain degree numbers are a little skewed. Sometimes I I, if I'm feeling somewhat mean, I might say to the class, well, I'd like you to play better than this or I'm gonna give you the grade that you actually deserve, instead of the one that, that, you know, I mean, in a, in a, I would say most schools but certainly this one, where, and, ah, there's another problem, I guess, of the modern ages that, competition to get into university, right? And the challenge and, and so, knowing that those kids need to get 90, or above, in order to try to get into schools. So, I would say that things are probably skewed a little bit on, on the high side. I rarely give 100%, um, I mean, is there such a thing as perfection in music, is it possible, but yet, what about the, how good can a grade 11, what about a Grade 10 boy whose playing in a Grade 11 and 12 wind ensemble, you know? Do you, do you give him, do you cut him some slack, or do you say, well, you know, compared to what it says on the page, compared to, if you're in this band, therefore you should be rated at the same level as everyone else? So the, I guess it's, it's again, finding those challenges of what is fair, what is appropriate, what is, um, you know broad, broad-based? And finding a, you know, finding a balance, how much should tone be worth? I can show the, those kind of templates I use, you know. If we're making out of 80, you know, I have tone, these days, at 20 out of 80. Um, and, so, what, you know, how to, how to balance? Not, not all the tests necessarily, especially at the younger grades, some might focus just on articulation, so the, um, but, mostly once they get into 9 to 12, there's a sheet but, you know, there's at the bottom, there's a musicality component. I think a lot of this came, maybe from , but the Kiwanis rating sheets, right? They had it broken down into these basic categories. Um, and so, I think that's, that's how this sheet developed. Well, at the bottom, there's musicality. Well, there's, you know, there's dynamics, there's energy, there's phrasing, there's, you know, emotional content. Well, how much emotional experiences have Grade 9s and 10s have that they can bring to a piece of music? That's the one hand, on the other hand, listen to, listen to the Japanese bands, listen to the kids in elementary school or, or junior high play some of those pieces. Is it programmed, do they feel it? I don't know. Do they do it 100 times? Um, so it's, it's trying to find what is true. How do you define truth, right?

M - Fair enough. Absolutely. If at all applicable, is there any imposition of any standardized assessment strategy in your program? And I'll clarify that. Some people use festival standardized things as part of their weighting. Um, and so, I wonder if you have any of that here?

D - Standardized, um, no. I mean, if I use it, sometimes I will, I will factor in, if we go to a festival and, um, we get a grade at a festival, I will tell the kids that I will be factoring that in as part of their, one of their performance grades. I mean, I have a course outline and then it's broken down into certain, certain categories, and performance is probably 10% and most of that performance, obviously, you have to show up but how, again, what's just? How can a, how can a band director, in the middle of a performance, assess a band when you're doing "Variations On A Korean Folk Song"? Are you gonna notice whether the bass clarinet played the ticks right? So, but, in the case where somebody else is doing it, um, yeah, I brought it and and said

- STANDARDS
- grade inflation, lack of truth in assessment
- cognitive dissonance/ beliefs
- pedagogical shift/ beliefs
- pre-structured assessment
- Belief system
- performance assessment/ attendance/ belief standards/ outside of classroom

APPENDIX M

SAMPLE EXCERPT OF PRELIMINARY CODE GROUPINGS
(MULTIPLE INTERVIEWEES)

Assessment strategies –

Not enough, definitely. I don't do it regularly enough. But, I think at high school and middle school level, it's really important that, if they show up and are prepared, ready to work, that's a huge chunk of it. So, everyday with my younger groups and I might introduce it to my older groups, they give me a mark for attendance, I think a lot of teachers do it. So, do they have their instrument, do they have their pencil? So then I can look through, at the end of the term, and see, this kid had all 10s, this kid had mostly 4s, you know. Well, they obviously, they're not going to be learning the complicated passages if they only brought their instrument, passages if they've only brought their instrument in twice in that term. Music is so much practice then performance, so, so you get the chance to fix the problems that you have until you get up to the summative, which is the concert in my opinion.

I'm finding I definitely need to do more, um, more performance testing, whether formal or informal...

Mike - Are your students involved in the assessment process? You mentioned earlier about pencils and stuff, and...

- Not as much as they should be. A few years ago, I was doing a few more self and peer assessments. And, I think I've gotta do more. Ah, it's something that kind of slipped away in my preparing 'cause your, it's stupid when you think about it logically, that it's, no, I've gotta get ready for the next concert. Whereas if you, they said at this conference I went to this weekend, if you slow down you'll get there faster. So, you know, if you do the theory, and if you have them evaluate each other, and so on, yeah, you're taking that time away, but then it's teaching them things that they're gonna get there faster anyway, so, it comes down to being more organized, really.

Can you elaborate on what you mean by performance-based?

- Showing up, trying. You know, you can't have the kid who never comes to class and comes in and writes a test. Because they might know their notes perfectly but, they don't know what I want, they don't know that I've changed something here because, stylistically, I wanted to hear something different, you know, so, they need to be there through the process.

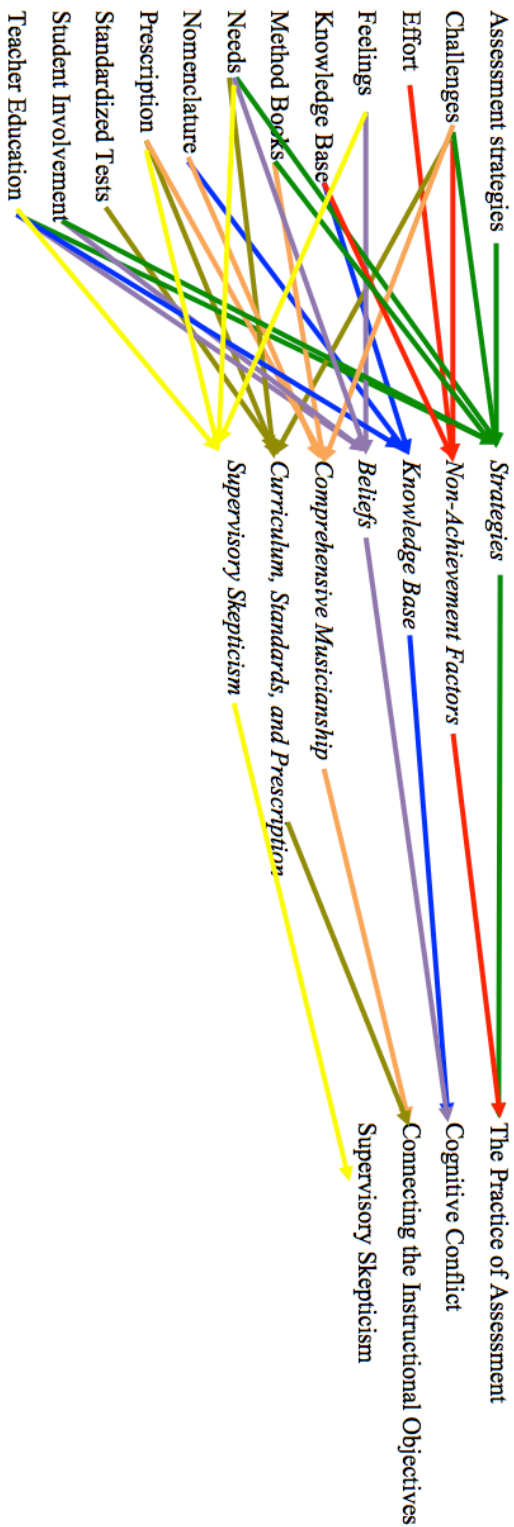
now, it's a lot more broad-based, it's a lot more, you know, I try to find different ways to assess them but, kinda once I got here, I think after the first three or four years, I mean, I've kind of made a template, of which we use for playing tests. I, you know, when I, the first thing I think of assessment, I think playing test. Right? Um, but I have, um, I do try to incorporate, also, some theory tests.

“Whereas, I have to say also, assessment is, to a certain degree, of course, can result in whether you have a band next year, or not, and to a certain degree numbers are a little skewed. Sometimes I, I, if I'm feeling somewhat mean, I might say to the class, well, I'd like you to play better than this or I'm gonna give you the grade that you actually deserve, instead of the one that, that, I mean, in a, I would say most schools but certainly this one, where, and, ah, there's another problem, I guess, of the modern ages that, competition to get into university, right?”

“Right, so, a variety of things. Um, we do sometimes a scale test. We do playing tests, ah, recently, we've done units on key signature and circle of fifths, we do some theory things. Um, I try to teach from a very concept-based philosophy. That is, we're gonna study the concept. We're gonna hope the concept applies to all the pieces so we're not redo, reteaching the the same concepts in every piece...”

APPENDIX N

GRAPHIC OF EMERGENT THEME CODING STRUCTURE



APPENDIX O

TEACHING LOAD – OPEN-TEXT RESPONSES

The following responses are from the “YES” category of the question, “Do You Teach Any Courses Outside Of Your Music Specialization?” found on page 5 of the survey.

- Biology General Science
- Dance and class guitar
- English
- Planning 10
- Earth Science 11, SS7, SS8, SS9, SS10, SS11, Comparative Civilization 12, Sci 7, Sci 8, Ma 7, Ma 8, En 8, En 9, PE7, PE8, PE9, PE10, PE11-12, Alt Ed

APPENDIX P

NON-ACHIEVEMENT FACTORS – OPEN-TEXT RESPONSES

Attendance

Count	Response
2	10%
1	5%
1	All "affective" areas make up 10% of grade in total.
1	Attendance in mandatory. Work in class (rehearsal) cannot be made up.
1	Part of effort grade
1	See above
1	percentage of grade
1	It isn't formally graded (ie a mark out of 10), but the students will lose 10% for more than 3 unexcused absences in a term
1	20% of their term mark. Show up on time and be ready to go at the beginning of rehearsal gets you 20/20. Lates subtract 2%; unexcused absence subtract 4%; skip a performance, lose all 20%

Effort

Count	Response
1	10%
1	40% of grade is effort
1	5%
1	All "affective" areas make up 10% of grade in total.
1	All 4 are roughly 20% of final grade
1	Observable improvement during rehearsals daily
1	Scalar descriptor for report card
1	percentage of grade
1	Effort/attitude/participation is 10% of term mark. Have all materials, not disruptive in class, playing when they are supposed to be, to an observer they should appear to be engaged and trying to improve.
1	it influences their grade. Effort is crucial, regardless of success. 40% of grade combined with attendance/participation/attitude. Other 60% is playing ability and level of improvement through the year.
1	Effort on the report card of G/S/N based on the willingness to take risks with their learning, as well as showing up prepared and ready to work
1	I have students assess themselves at the beginning of each class. They give me a mark out of 5 (one mark per item) based on whether they have the following items: instrument, instrument supplies, music, pencil, positive attitude. If students have forgotten their instruments, they receive a "0" for the day.

Attitude

Count	Response
2	10%
1	5%
1	A positive attitude always results in superior performance, even if things are difficult
1	All "affective" areas make up 10% of grade in total.
1	Attitude is everything. Try your best, treat everyone with respect, be positive and helpful.
1	Preparedness for learning - this does not factor into a grade, but is assessed
1	See above
1	part of effort grade
1	percentage of grade
1	All of attitude, effort, attendance and participation are very closely linked in my opinion. You don't generally have a student with a great attitude who misses many rehearsals, unless it's for things like prolonged illness. I don't give formal marks for any of these areas, but they are all melded together in what I call "attendance and participation" which makes up 20-40% depending on the term. But they are all conglomerated together instead of being assessed individually.

Participation

Count	Response
1	10%
1	30-40%
1	40 %
1	5%
1	All "affective" areas make up 10% of grade in total.
1	Measure of daily contribution in class
1	See above
1	part of effort grade
1	percentage of grade
1	I ask the students for a daily participation/preparedness grade out of 10. That serves as their attendance and it helps me keep track of who is prepared to work. This closely ties in with the effort component as well.
1	Same as attendance. Students are expected to attend all classes with music, pencil and instrument. No participation=no grade.

APPENDIX Q

PRE-STRUCTURED ASSESSMENT – OPEN-TEXT RESPONSES

The following responses are from the “Other” category of the question, “Do you use pre-structured assessment tools? Please check all that apply,” found on page 17 of the survey.

- I have adapted a lot of resources that were left behind from past teachers at my school
- Ones I have developed
- I have a rubrick [*sic*] that I developed myself
- playing tests from method book mostly
- I glean ideas from sources, such as conference handouts, print sources, etc. but adapt them for my personalized needs

APPENDIX R

OTHER ASSESSMENT – OPEN-TEXT RESPONSES

The following responses are from the open-text question, “Do you use any other type of assessment in your band classes? If YES, please describe what you use.” found on page 21 of the survey:

- Solo competitions Small ensemble performances Performance of original compositions
- I think band is one of the few classes in school where [sic] they are being assessed constantly. Every time we give a direction on phrasing, or ask student suggestions for meaning we are assessing informally. Considering how much there is to do in the day as a band teacher, I find report cards rather redundant. If we are doing our jobs, the parents are informed about the ongoing progress of their child through emails and/or meetings. They also get to see their children perform on a regular basis which helps them see ensemble and student progress. I find that report cards don't give me the flexibility I would like to assess. However, I am a strong believer that music should be credit courses. It helps them be taken seriously by colleagues, administration, parents and students. Non-credit courses tend to be looked at as "optional" and unimportant.
- Other than the ones just mentioned? I have students assess (adjudicate) group and individual performances, as well as conducting strategies and techniques.
- Mostly playing tests, sectional work, it's an ongoing and informal process. Doing an individual test is time consuming and takes me away from rehearsing everyone.

- It is difficult to asses [*sic*] students in band class that have had a variety of different musical experiences: piano lessons, elementary band, cadet bands, private lessons. Each student has had different experiences and I often grade both against a standard and how much progress they have shown over the term.

APPENDIX S

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE – QUIZ 6

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE QUIZ 6

Name _____ Score _____

◆ Label each of these areas or countries on the world map with the number.

1. Australia

2. Czech Republic

3. Latin America

◆ Match each area or country to the statement that describes it. (Letters may be used more than once or not at all.)

_____ 4. People of this area speak the same language as those in Mexico.

A. Australia

B. Czech Republic

C. Latin America

_____ 5. People of this area speak the same language as those in the West Indies.

_____ 6. Maracas often accompany songs.

_____ 7. This is the homeland of composers Smetana, Dvořák, and Janáček.

◆ Listen as your teacher plays a short song. Does it have 3 beats or 4 beats per measure? Circle your answer.

8. a. 3 beats b. 4 beats

9. a. 3 beats b. 4 beats

10. a. 3 beats b. 4 beats

11. a. 3 beats b. 4 beats

◆ List two reasons why composers write dynamics in their music.

12. _____

13. _____

◆ Write in *one* note or *one* rest to balance each scale.14. 15. 16. 

APPENDIX T

MUSIC 8-10 INTEGRATED RESOURCE PACKAGE (1995) WRITING TEAM

LEARNING OUTCOMES WRITING COMMITTEE

- Joe Berarducci School District No. 44 (North Vancouver)
- Jodie Esch School District No. 62 (Sooke)
- Susan Garret School District No. 38 (Richmond)
- Peter Gouzouasis University of British Columbia
- Mary Kennedy School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
- Frank Ludwig School District No. 39 (Vancouver)
- Gwenda Murray School District No. 36 (Surrey)
- Judi Palipowski School District No. 68 (Nanaimo)
- Sharyn White School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)

LEARNING OUTCOMES REVIEWS

- Al Balanuik School District No. 68 (Nanaimo)
- Sandra Davies University of British Columbia
- Betty Hanley University of Victoria
- Jan Manning School District No. 57 (Prince George)
- Ian McDougall University of Victoria
- Bette Otke School District No. 36 (Surrey)
- Frances Smith School District No. 70 (Alberni)
- Owen Underhill Simon Fraser University
- John Willinsky University of British Columbia

MUSIC 8-10 IRP WRITING TEAM

- Allan Anderson School District No. 38 (Richmond)
- Jay Bigland School District No. 57 (Prince George)
- John Churchley School District No. 24 (Kamloops)
- Sydney Griffith School District No. 24 (Kamloops)