

Research & Issues in Music Education

Volume 7

Number 1 *Research & Issues in Music Education*, v.7,
2009

Article 3

2009

Assessing Individual Performance in the College Band

Mark U. Reimer

Christopher Newport University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ir.stthomas.edu/rime>



Part of the [Music Education Commons](#), and the [Music Pedagogy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Reimer, Mark U. (2009) "Assessing Individual Performance in the College Band," *Research & Issues in Music Education*: Vol. 7 : No. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <http://ir.stthomas.edu/rime/vol7/iss1/3>

This Featured Article is brought to you for free and open access by UST Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Research & Issues in Music Education* by an authorized editor of UST Research Online. For more information, please contact libroadmin@stthomas.edu.

Abstract

Semester assessment of college wind band members is an issue that conductors would probably agree falls within their academic freedom. Institutions may award as little as no credit or even a percentage of a credit for ensemble participation, although the time and effort required of the students and their conductor is undoubtedly equivalent to, or exceeds, that of a three-credit course. If an academic administrator, seeing a large percentage of A's in an ensemble, were to question the assessment process of the conductor and/or the rigor of the course, could that conductor produce tangible evidence, such as grades or numeric scores, to justify each student's grade? As improbable as this might sound to college wind band conductors, it was, for a brief period, a serious issue at the author's institution. The following article describes the situation that occurred and the resulting procedures and outcomes that put the issue to rest.

Richard Colwell, Professor Emeritus of Music Education at the University of Illinois and the New England Conservatory of Music, in reference to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain, wrote, "When skills are considered to be subsidiary, specialized, and not applicable to all, then little thought is given to whether the program is fulfilling its expected objectives."⁽¹⁾ In step with this, earning an "A" in band is probably expected by most college conductors and their players, knowing that the ensemble requires highly specialized skills and a strong commitment of time and effort and falls well beyond the purview of the traditional academic course. But not all administrators accept the premise that most ensemble members deserve an A, regardless of the amount of skill and time required. If there is no clear assessment procedure or, perhaps of greater concern to administrators, no diverse grade distribution, then offering the ensemble for academic credit would appear to be fundamentally inappropriate. Thus the dilemma for college band directors--to award most, if not all, members an A, to adopt rigorous assessment procedures that could result in lower grades and higher attrition, or to bring their assessment and grading procedures into line with those of traditional academic courses.

Members earning college credit deserve to undergo rigorous assessment, and rehearsal preparation, performance, attitude, and attendance are evaluative areas that provide tangible scores necessary to measure their growth. Of great value to the conductor is the opportunity to evaluate individual performance and determine if the student is grasping style and musical nuance. Assessment motivates students to improve their performance, heightens their critical listening skills, and affords conductors the opportunity to assess, student by student, the effectiveness of their teaching.

Assessment

As stated by Colwell, "Music education has few leaders who champion any role for assessment."⁽²⁾ Yet frequent assessment is precisely what is needed to assist college musicians in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to evaluate their own playing skills and to transfer this knowledge to all music they study and perform. The goal of individual assessment in the college band should be the continued improvement of the players and, accordingly, the continued improvement of the ensemble.

College students must develop and refine habits of self-evaluation, and it is the role of the conductor to build their musical independence. In a study by Martin Bergee, director of music education at the University of Kansas, that focused on self-evaluation in applied music, both self-evaluation and peer evaluation scores were higher than those given by the instructors.(3) As stated in the study, “Periodic assessment of performance skills is critical to the development of musicians and music teachers. Students must have access to high-quality performance evaluation.”(4) A similar study conducted by Steven Morrison of the University of Washington, Mark Montemayor of the University of Northern Colorado, and Eric Wiltshire of the University of Oregon sought to discover whether or not ensemble members improved after listening to both their own performances and to those by model ensembles. Through listening to and evaluating their own performances, the college performers in the study tended to become more objective and critical of their own performance and to focus more on individual musical elements.(5) The outcomes of both studies confirm that individual improvement occurs when students focus on their own performance skills but that qualified professionals are more likely to give accurate scores.

Of concern to administrators is grade inflation, the appearance that too many students in a course, a discipline, or an institution earn high grades. The implication is that either content or assessment is not of sufficient rigor to sort out the highest achieving students from those with lesser ability or success in the subject. Administrators may question the motives of the professor, suspecting that high grades are an attempt to curry positive student evaluations, to boost course enrollments, or simply to lessen the professor’s work in assessing student progress. As stated by Darwin Walker, author of the textbook *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*, “Music performance loses respectability in the eyes of school administrators because of the lack of viable grading criteria.”(6) As Walker states, “The downside of student evaluation is that some administrators feel that an element of grade inflation has crept into the system. Some professors, consciously or subconsciously, are reluctant to award low grades to students even when they are deserved, for fear of receiving low scores on their student evaluations in turn.”(7) An argument supporting a high number of A’s implies that the grade is a reward, or compensation, for time and effort and not reflective of individual achievement. Unlike students enrolled in a lecture course, members of an ensemble learn separate parts of equal importance but of varying levels of difficulty--each part must be played with precision, but the parts over which the members are tested are not comparable. And students in the top ensemble are chosen through audition, therefore excluding those who would likely earn B’s and C’s. Conductors and administrators probably share the desire of producing outstanding ensembles, but each may hold quite different perceptions of their value in and relevance to the academic curriculum. Administrators may perceive ensembles as enjoyable, desirable, and highly time-consuming activities but, nonetheless, activities that fall outside the academic curriculum. As Teresa McCreary stated in her Ph.D. dissertation, “If band and orchestra directors continue to measure music learning progress on non-music criteria such as attendance and attitude, we are perpetuating the view that music is not on equal ground with academics.”(8) Thus, the need to assess band members is three-fold: students must focus on developing their individual skills, the conductor must evaluate each player individually, and administrators must see tangible evidence of student learning.

Developing an Instrument of Assessment

Thomas Goolsby, professor of music at the University of Victoria, writes that there are four types of assessment in instrumental music: placement (chair determination), summative (performances), diagnostic (rehearsals), and formative (examinations).⁽⁹⁾ Conductors are undoubtedly engaged in evaluation regarding chair placement, rehearsals, and performances, but an objective assessment tool is needed to measure performance skills.

To this end, the Department of Music at Christopher Newport University--a liberal arts institution of 4,800 students, 140 music majors, and 12 full-time music faculty, offering the Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Arts, and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees, and located in the ocean resort of Hampton Roads, Virginia--created the Applied Music Juror Form. With assistance from the university's department of assessment and evaluation and its director of music education, Dr. Keith Koster, the form was modeled after those used at regional universities in the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. The intended outcomes were to engage more rigorously applied music faculty by requiring objective assessment of specific elements of performance that would result in a wider grade distribution and provide valuable data. The form accomplished all of these goals--faculty became more engaged listeners during juries, grading became more objective, the department was able to assess better the musical development of students (e.g., comparing entrance audition scores to jury scores at the end of the first year), and jury grades lowered considerably. The form proved to students, colleagues, and administrators that the study of music is a rigorous, detailed, and an assessable pursuit that demands high achievement in every category of evaluation.

To assist conductors in developing consistent and rigorous grading standards, the department emended the Applied Music Juror Form in creating the Ensemble Member Assessment Form. The grading rubric of the form not only lists the musical and behavioral elements being assessed but also describes the typical level of proficiency and performance characteristics associated with each grade. Supporting Colwell's belief that evaluation consisting of only two or three examinations is inadequate,⁽¹⁰⁾ it was determined that performance not be the sole determining factor of the final grade. Instead, the category Preparation and Performance comprises 50 percent of the student's final grade, including the scores earned on the playing examinations, the student's preparation for rehearsals, and the quality of the student's performances. The remaining 50 percent is the category Participation and Attitude--including demeanor, attentiveness, and attendance--qualities vital to the spirit and success of the ensemble and commonly assessed in grading college and university students.⁽¹¹⁾

Playing Examination

The playing examination, a component of the Ensemble Member Assessment Form, focuses on nine elements of performance--tone quality, intonation, rhythm, note accuracy, tempo, articulation, dynamics, style, and fluency--and presents the results in a format that is easily understood. During the playing examination, the conductor evaluates each element of performance as being excellent, above average, average, poor, or failing. By simply tallying the

number of points, the conductor determines quickly the grade, and the student, viewing the checks in the columns, sees clearly the elements of performance requiring improvement. Although a checklist using numbers 1 through 10 is considered to be less subjective,⁽¹²⁾ the terms “Consistently,” “Frequently,” “Sometimes,” “Infrequently,” and “Seldom” that qualify the grade categories of “A, Excellent,” “B, Above Average,” “C, Average,” “D, Below Average,” and “F, Failing” assist adjudicators in determining their marks. Copies of the completed form are given to the student and to the applied music instructor, with the understanding that the instructor and the conductor will work together toward monitoring, assessing, and improving the musicianship of the student.

Results of the Playing Examinations

A total of three playing examinations, preceding each of their three concerts of the Fall 2008 semester, were administered to the 38 members of the Christopher Newport University Wind Ensemble. The students were told approximately one week before the examination which of the band works scheduled for the upcoming performance were to be evaluated. Although they were not told what the exact excerpts would be, the students were evaluated on excerpts that were technically challenging and soloistic. The examinations were not blind, the author was the sole evaluator, and each of the three examinations took approximately three hours to complete (approximately five minutes per student). The following table compares the results of the first playing examination with that of the final playing examination:

Table 1.—Grades Earned on the First and Final Playing Examinations

| Area | Grades | | | | |
|---------------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | A | B | C | D | F |
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Tone | 66/84 | 34/16 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Intonation | 95/95 | 5/5 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Rhythm | 84/90 | 16/10 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Note Accuracy | 55/76 | 45/24 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Tempo | 66/87 | 34/13 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Articulation | 47/76 | 53/24 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Dynamics | 68/76 | 29/24 | 3/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Style | 74/100 | 26/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |
| Fluency | 50/66 | 47/34 | 3/0 | 0/0 | 0/0 |

The average score on the first playing examination was 33.03 out of 36 possible points, a grade of A-. The highest percentages of A’s were in the areas of Intonation (95 percent), Rhythm (84

percent), Style (74 percent), and Dynamics (68 percent), while the highest percentages of B's were in Articulation (53 percent), Fluency (47 percent), Note Accuracy (45 percent), Tone, and Tempo (34 percent each). The average score of the final examination increased over one point from that of the first examination, climbing to 34.5 out of 36 possible points, a grade of either A or A-. The highest percentages of A's on the final examination were in the areas of Style (100 percent), Intonation (95 percent), and Rhythm (90 percent), all three being high-scoring areas on the first examination, as well. The highest percentages of B's on the final examination were in Fluency (34 percent), and there was a three-way tie (24 percent) among the areas of Note Accuracy, Articulation, and Dynamics, categories that also earned the highest percentages of B's on the first examination. From the first examination to the third, most of the categories increased significantly, up to 30 percent, in the percentage of A's and decreased significantly, down by as much as 29 percent, in the percentage of B's. The grade distribution for the Wind Ensemble for the Spring 2008 semester, using only the ensemble grading rubric, was 3.49. Surprisingly, the grade distribution for the following Fall 2008 semester, using both the ensemble grading rubric and the playing examinations, rose to 3.8. The author's rehearsal techniques never changed; so, the more rigorous assessment procedure appears to have generated more effort by the students in preparing for the playing examinations, resulting in higher grades.

Near the end of the semester, after all three playing examinations had been completed, the author administered a questionnaire to the members of the Wind Ensemble. Before reading the questions to the ensemble, the author told them that their responses were anonymous and that it was critical that their responses and comments be honest and forthright in order for the results to be valid. The ensemble knew that the questionnaire was part of the author's research project and that the results would have an impact on whether or not the author would continue using the playing examinations for the Wind Ensemble. Each of the ten statements, read aloud by the author to the ensemble, began with the phrase, "Owing to the playing examinations in Wind Ensemble," with the author stressing to the students that their responses be based solely on their perceived impact of the playing examinations. The ten statements include:

Table 2.—Questions, Based on Playing Examinations, Presented to the CNU Wind Ensemble

1. I practice my Wind Ensemble music more.
2. I am more aware of areas in my playing that need improvement.
3. I personally perform better in Wind Ensemble concerts.
4. The overall quality of Wind Ensemble performances is improving.
5. My applied music instructor is helping me prepare my Wind Ensemble music.
6. My applied music instructor is showing more interest in my musical growth in Wind Ensemble.
7. There is a greater feeling of accomplishment among Wind Ensemble members.
8. The reputation of the Wind Ensemble is improving.
9. The playing examinations in Wind Ensemble should continue.

10. If the playing examinations in Wind Ensemble are discontinued, then the quality of the ensemble will decrease.

The students then marked one of the following responses to each of the questions:

Table 3.—Response Choices for Each of the Ten Questions

- A) Strongly Agree
- B) Agree
- C) Not Sure
- D) Disagree
- E) Strongly Disagree

The results of the responses were as follows:

Table 4.—Results of the Responses to the Questionnaire

| Question | A | B | C | D | F |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| 1) | 26 | 40 | 3 | 18 | 13 |
| 2) | | | | | |
| 3) | 18 | 42 | 11 | 24 | 5 |
| 4) | 8 | 29 | 47 | 8 | 8 |
| 5) | 3 | 5 | 8 | 17 | 67 |
| 6) | 3 | 11 | 22 | 19 | 45 |
| 7) | 0 | 32 | 47 | 16 | 5 |
| 8) | 11 | 47 | 34 | 5 | 3 |
| 9) | 34 | 42 | 13 | 8 | 3 |
| 10) | 16 | 44 | 16 | 21 | 3 |

Over three-quarters of the ensemble, 76 percent, responded that the playing examinations should continue. 68 percent of the students agreed that the Wind Ensemble improved owing to the playing examinations, 60 percent felt that the quality of the Wind Ensemble would decrease if the examinations were discontinued, and 58 percent felt that the reputation of the Wind Ensemble improved owing to the playing examinations. 66 percent, nearly two-thirds of the ensemble, responded that the playing examinations caused them to practice their Wind Ensemble music more, and 60 percent agreed that the examinations made them more aware of

the areas in their playing that needed improvement. 84 percent disagreed that their applied music instructors helped them with their Wind Ensemble music, and 64 percent disagreed that their applied music instructors showed more interest in their musical growth in Wind Ensemble owing to these examinations (applied music instructors were given the results of their students after each playing examination).

Supporting Bergee's findings, 47 percent, nearly half of the students, responded that they were unsure as to whether or not they personally performed better in concerts owing to the playing examinations, and 63 percent were either unsure or disagreed that the playing examinations helped their personal performances in concerts. In other words, even though 68 percent of the ensemble felt that the examinations improved the performances of the ensemble, almost half of the ensemble questioned whether or not the examinations affected the quality of their own playing. One-third of the membership, 32 percent, agreed that the playing examinations had increased the ensemble's feeling of accomplishment, but nearly half, 47 percent, were unsure as to the impact the examinations had on their own feeling of accomplishment, and 21 percent disagreed that the examinations had an impact on their feeling of accomplishment. It would appear that although a majority of the ensemble felt that the playing examinations improved the ensemble and that the examinations should continue, only half believed that they had benefitted personally from the examinations.

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, the students were given the opportunity to include additional comments. The majority of responses were positive:

Response 1

I really like having the examinations more for the ensemble as a whole. Personally, I always marked and practiced parts that needed attention. I have often felt like other people haven't or they felt they didn't need to, for they felt they weren't the ones who were making mistakes. I think exams help this. I like the extra challenge and feel that the ensemble will benefit heavily from the exams.

Response 2

I really appreciate the Wind Ensemble playing exams. They help me make sure to take the extra time to practice those parts in the music in which I need work. I am so busy that it is helpful to be given credit for my work outside of class. I really like this idea because it helps reassure me that some people are practicing the music.

Response 3

As much as I hate having playing tests for Wind Ensemble, it does force me to practice the sections I have problems with in class.

Response 4

The concept of playing examinations is good. I think that over time the amount of influence the playing examinations have will increase and be more beneficial to the ensemble.

Response 5

I think Wind Ensemble music is practiced more because not much, if any, Wind Ensemble music was practiced outside of class to begin with. I do believe these tests are helpful for some sections of music that are difficult. They should continue because they make people practice difficult sections that otherwise would never work on them.

Response 6

I believe the exams are extremely beneficial. Without the exams, I feel as though people would take their normal attitude towards things here, that they wouldn't care. The exams help to legitimize our department by raising the level of playing in the ensemble.

Response 7

As a student, I don't like the playing exams, but I can see and hear how they help.

Response 8

I think it's important to have a playing exam. If you are not tested, you tend to get lazy.

Response 9

I love the playing exams. We sound amazing this year.

Response 10

I know for a fact that before the playing tests, there were several students who never practiced their music on their own. I have heard it said from more than one student on multiple occasions. I always try personally, so it is another A for me, but I know without the test, many wouldn't practice.

Response 11

Honestly, I do not enjoy having to play a Wind Ensemble test, but I really do think that the exams are not only improving my performances, but the overall performance. It is for this reason that I think they should continue.

The comments of a negative nature included:

Response 1

Playing tests cause me to practice once before a concert rather than none, but I think they are inconvenient when they are not during class and more stress than their worth.

Response 2

I believe everyone will continue to practice even if the exams are discontinued. I am doing Wind Ensemble for fun and would continue to participate, but would enjoy it more if I didn't have to stress over exams.

And three comments were suggestions:

Response 1

I feel it would be beneficial to have tests involving a whole section in order to test how an individual deals with intonation and listening to others.

Response 2

In general, I feel that the group should have at least one required sectional on parts if the director feels it necessary, such as in Cheetah. Some section leaders don't take initiative and should be reminded with a grade, such as playing exams.

Response 3

It might be helpful to do the examinations farther in advance than a few days before the concert to avoid the playing version of "cramming."

Conclusion

As stated by Jere Brophy, distinguished professor of teacher education at Michigan State University, "Well functioning classrooms result from consistent teacher efforts to create, maintain, and restore conditions that foster learning."⁽¹³⁾ Providing opportunities throughout the semester to evaluate and reward hard work and a positive attitude, individual assessment motivates students to practice, encourages a positive and professional demeanor, improves rehearsal and performance, and, most important, strengthens the desire to strive for perfection. Students become better aware of their musical progress, the conductor evaluates the effectiveness of his or her teaching, communication between the conductor and the applied

music faculty strengthens, and administrators possess tangible data of assessment. The survey taken of the CNU Wind Ensemble shows clearly that students really do want to improve, both individually and collectively, and that they are willing to follow the attendant evaluative procedures regardless of whether or not they believe that those procedures will improve their own performance skills. As seen in the As Colwell stated, “Students who believe that education is for learning accept setbacks when they recognize that they are developing strategies, skills, and knowledge that move them toward worthwhile objectives.”(14) If there is a “catch” in what some might fear to be an overly indulgent method of individual assessment, it is that these examinations do take approximately three hours each to complete. However, considering the enormous impact that the process has on the preparation of individual parts, the generation of assessment data, and the esprit de corps of the ensemble, the time required of conductors to evaluate their students is relatively insignificant when compared to the educational benefits reaped by the players, the tangible evidence of individual evaluation and growth produced for the administrators, and the enhanced quality of the ensemble enjoyed by all. After all, to quote Goolsby, “Monitoring student learning is still a primary task of teachers.”(15)

CNU Ensemble Member Assessment Form

Student’s Name _____ Semester Fall Spring Summer Year _____
 Instrument _____ Major _____ Ensemble _____
 Adjudicator’s Name _____ Date _____ Repertoire _____

Examination

| EXAMINATION MARKS | |
|--|------------|
| Total marks from Column A: | : _____ |
| x4= | |
| Total marks from Column B: | : _____ |
| x3= | |
| Total marks from Column C: | : _____ |
| x2= | |
| Total marks from Column D: | : _____ |
| x1= | |
| Total marks from Column F: | : _____ |
| x0= | |
| TOTAL GRADE POINTS > | (9) |
| _____ / 36 | |
| GRADING SCALE: A (36-35), A- (34-33), B+ (32-30), B (29-27), B- (26-24), C+ (23-21), C (20-18), C- (17-15), D+ (14-12), D (11-9), D- (8-6), F (5 or below). | |
| <hr/> | |
| Examination Grade: | |
| Attendance Grade: | |

| A - EXCELLENT (4) | B - ABOVE AVERAGE (3) | C - AVERAGE (2) | D - BELOW AVERAGE (1) | F - FAILING (0) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| CONSISTENTLY | FREQUENTLY | SOMETIMES | INFREQUENTLY | SELDOM |
| Demonstrated Proper |
| ___Tone | ___Tone | ___Tone | ___Tone | ___Tone |
| ___Intonation | ___Intonation | ___Intonation | ___Intonation | ___Intonation |
| ___Rhythm | ___Rhythm | ___Rhythm | ___Rhythm | ___Rhythm |
| ___Note Accuracy |
| ___Tempo | ___Tempo | ___Tempo | ___Tempo | ___Tempo |
| ___Articulation/Diction | ___Articulation/Diction | ___Articulation/Diction | ___Articulation/Diction | ___Articulation/Diction |
| ___Dynamics | ___Dynamics | ___Dynamics | ___Dynamics | ___Dynamics |
| ___Style | ___Style | ___Style | ___Style | ___Style |
| ___Fluency | ___Fluency | ___Fluency | ___Fluency | ___Fluency |

CNU Ensemble Grading Rubric

Attendance

Attendance is required at all rehearsals and performances. All CNU ensembles adhere to the departmental attendance policy. Late arrival, early departure, and absence from rehearsals and performances may affect the final grade, as determined by the instructor.

Participation and Attitude (50 percent of the final grade)

Each student is expected to come to rehearsals and performances with a singular focus to perform at the highest level of musicianship while engaged in ensemble.

Grade of A - The student consistently watches the conductor, consistently responds to the conductor's requests, and consistently strives to perform his or her best.

Grade of B - The student usually watches the conductor, usually responds to the conductor's requests, and usually strives to perform his or her best.

Grade of C - The student sometimes watches the conductor, sometimes responds to the conductor's requests, and sometimes strives to perform his or her best.

Grade of D - The student seldom watches the conductor, seldom responds to the conductor's requests, and seldom strives to perform his or her best.

Grade of F - The student almost never watches the conductor, almost never responds to the conductor's requests, and almost never strives to perform his or her best.

Preparation and Performance (50 percent of the final grade)

Students are expected to prepare their ensemble music individually and outside of the rehearsals and to rehearse and to perform to the best of their ability. Musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, style, dynamics, dramatic interpretation, and memorization are expected to be mastered so that the ensemble may perform at the highest level.

Grade of A - The student consistently prepares his or her part for rehearsal and consistently performs it well. Musical elements are consistently performed correctly.

Grade of B - The student usually prepares his or her part for rehearsal and usually performs it well. Musical elements are usually performed correctly.

Grade of C - The student sometimes prepares his or her part for rehearsal and sometimes performs it well. Musical elements are sometimes performed correctly.

Grade of D - The student seldom prepares his or her part for rehearsal and seldom performs it well. Musical elements are seldom performed correctly.

Grade of F - The student almost never prepares his or her part for rehearsal and almost never performs it well. Musical elements are almost never performed correctly.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE "A" STUDENT

- Attendance is perfect.
- Pitch is consistently accurate.
- Rhythm is consistently precise.
- Dynamic markings are consistently adhered to.
- Music is consistently performed with specified phrasing and style.
- Parts are consistently practiced outside of rehearsal and ready for the ensemble.
- Music is consistently memorized as required.
- Attitude is consistently positive and enthusiastic with respect for colleagues and conductor.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE "B" STUDENT

- Attendance is almost perfect.
- Pitch is usually accurate.
- Rhythm is usually precise.
- Dynamic markings are usually adhered to.
- Music is usually performed with specified phrasing and style.
- Parts are usually practiced outside of rehearsal and ready for the ensemble.
- Music is usually memorized as required.
- Attitude is usually positive and enthusiastic with respect for colleagues and conductor.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE “C” STUDENT

- Attendance is at the maximum before failing.
- Pitch is sometimes accurate. Rhythm is sometimes precise. Dynamic markings are sometimes adhered to. Music is sometimes performed with specified phrasing and style. Parts are sometimes practiced outside of rehearsal and ready for the ensemble. Music is sometimes memorized as specified. Attitude is sometimes positive and enthusiastic with respect for colleagues and conductor.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE “D” STUDENT

- Attendance is at the maximum before failing.
- Pitch is seldom accurate.
- Rhythm is seldom precise.
- Dynamic markings are seldom adhered to.
- Music is seldom performed with specified phrasing and style.
- Parts are seldom practiced outside of rehearsal and ready for the ensemble.
- Music is seldom memorized as specified.
- Attitude is seldom positive and enthusiastic with respect for colleagues and conductor.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE “F” STUDENT

- Attendance is at the maximum before failing.
- Pitch is accurate almost never.
- Rhythm is almost never precise.
- Dynamic markings are almost never adhered to.
- Music is almost never performed with specified phrasing and nuance.
- Parts are almost never practiced outside of rehearsal and ready for the ensemble.
- Music is almost never memorized as specified.
- Attitude is almost never positive and enthusiastic with respect for colleagues and conductor.

Notes

1) Richard Colwell, *The Evaluation of Music Teaching and Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ:

Prentice Hall, 1970), 101. [view reference](#)

2) Richard Colwell, "Assessment's Potential in Music Education," in *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning: a Project of the Music Educators National Conference*, eds. Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 1152. [view reference](#)

3) Martin J. Bergee, "Relationships Among Faculty, Peer, and Self-Evaluation of Applied Performances," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 601-12. [view reference](#)

4) Bergee, 607. [view reference](#)

5) Steven J. Morrison, Mark Montemayor, and Eric S. Wiltshire, "The Effect of a Recorded Model on Band Students' Performance Self-Evaluations, Achievement, and Attitude," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 116-29. [view reference](#)

6) Darwin Walker, *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998): 186. [view reference](#)

7) *Ibid.*, 205. [view reference](#)

8) Teresa McCreary, *Methods and Perceptions of Assessment in Secondary Instrumental Music* (Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 2001): 110. [view reference](#)

9) Thomas Goolsby, "Assessment in Instrumental Music," *Music Educators Journal* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 31. [view reference](#)

10) Colwell, *The Evaluation of Music Teaching and Learning*, 5. [view reference](#)

11) McCreary, 28. [view reference](#)

12) Colwell, *The Evaluation of Music Teaching and Learning*, 112. [view reference](#)

13) Jere Brophy, "Perspectives of Classroom Management," in *Beyond Behaviorism: Changing the Classroom Management Paradigm*, ed. H. Jerome Freiberg (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999): 44. [view reference](#)

14) Colwell. "Assessment's Potential in Music Education," 1153. [view reference](#)

15) Goolsby, 35. [view reference](#)

References

Bergee, Martin J. "Relationships Among Faculty, Peer, and Self-Evaluation of Applied Performances." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 45, no. 4 (1997): 601-12.

Brophy, Jere. "Perspectives of Classroom Management." In *Beyond Behaviorism: Changing the Classroom Management Paradigm*, ed. H. Jerome Freiberg, 44. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Colwell, Richard. *The Evaluation of Music Teaching and Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970.

Colwell, Richard. "Assessment's Potential in Music Education." In *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning: a Project of the Music Educators National Conference*, eds. Richard Colwell and Carol Richardson, 1128-58. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Goolsby, Thomas W. "Assessment in Instrumental Music." *Music Educators Journal* 86, no. 2 (1999): 31-35, 50.

McCreary, Teresa. *Methods and Perceptions of Assessment in Secondary Instrumental Music*. Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii, 2001.

Morrison, Steven J., Montemayor, Mark, and Wiltshire, Eric S. "The Effect of a Recorded Model on Band Students' Performance Self-Evaluations, Achievement, and Attitude." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 52, no. 2 (2004): 116-129.

Norrington, Dannel. *Instrumental Music Instruction, Assessment, and the Block Schedule*. M.M. thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 2006.

Roldan, Nancy. "The Collaborative Experience: Ensemble Performance in Music Studies." *American Music Teacher* 54 (2005): 102.

Sherman, Craig. *A Study of Current Strategies and Practices in the Assessment of Individuals in High School Bands*. Ed.D. diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.

Walker, Darwin E. "Assessing and Grading Music Performance." Chap. in *Teaching Music: Managing the Successful Music Program*, 2d ed., 178-214. New York: Schirmer Books, 1998.

[About the Author](#) - Dr. Mark U. Reimer is Professor of Conducting and Chair of the Department of Music at Christopher Newport University. He has published numerous articles in national and international band and music education journals and serves as an evaluator for the National Association of Schools of Music. Dr. Reimer earned the Bachelor of Music Education degree from Drake University, the Master of Music degree

from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the Doctor of Music degree from Indiana University.