

Section Three

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning

Assessment and evaluation are essential components within all teaching and learning settings. Assessment and evaluation are integral to the teaching/learning process and instructional planning. Students need both ongoing and summative feedback that tracks and documents their progress in order to gain a sense of their achievement of learning outcomes. In order to develop a comprehensive system for recording and reporting, and to nurture student success, teachers will need to be both diligent and resourceful in determining student learning and developing appropriate materials and teaching strategies.

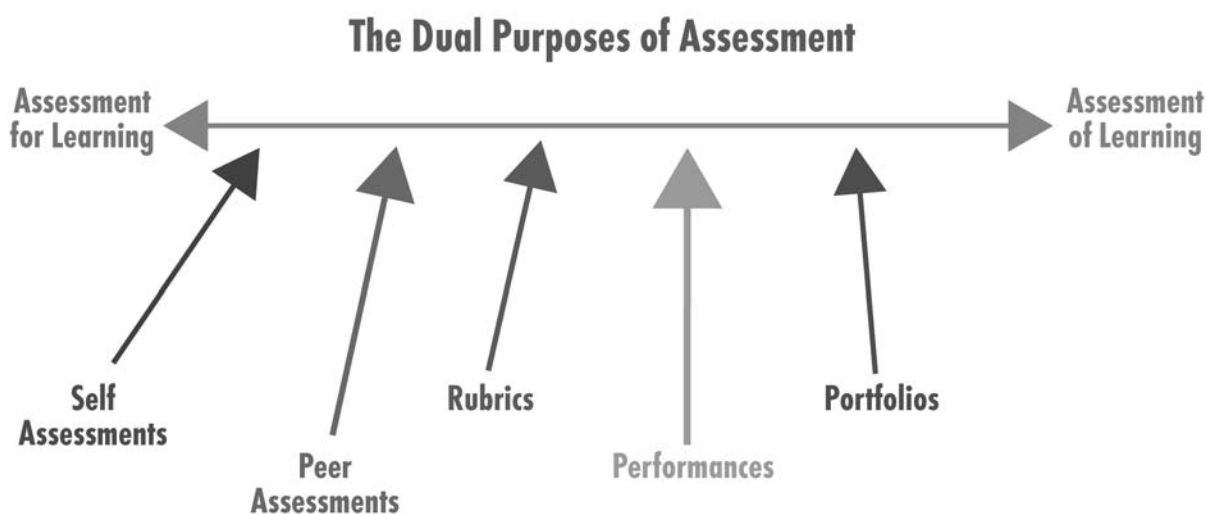
It is recommended that assessment and evaluation in music education be a continuous process and include strategies that address the following:

- process as well as product;
- feedback on student engagement, understanding and performance;
- teacher-directed strategies as well as student-based strategies such as self-management, self-assessment and reflection, and peer-assessment;
- listening, performing and creating;
- podium-based strategies (e.g., observation, questioning, analysis;
- both local and global contexts and traditions and
- utilization and integration of appropriate technologies (e.g., audio/video recording, software...)

A variety of assessment and evaluation strategies will be incorporated into specific settings for intermediate music education. Sample strategies are suggested later in this document. The combination of pre-instructional, formative and summative strategies will provide the data to measure and document student learning, as well as provide valuable information to support and guide teaching and learning.

Teachers are encouraged to share learning outcomes and expectations with students. Students and teachers work in partnership to set goals, develop assessment strategies and identify areas that provide quality evidence of learning as well as elicit a positive reaction to constructive feedback (Stiggins, 2007).

The following diagram illustrates the dual purposes of assessment and evaluation-Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning. Included in this diagram are sample assessment strategies for teaching and learning; self-assessment, peer assessment, rubrics, portfolios, and performances.



(Adapted from: <http://artswork.asu.edu/arts/teachers/assessment/index.htm>)

Assessment and Evaluation Strategies

Building on the diagram above, a broad range of strategies need to be utilized to reflect students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and needs, and to provide students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

A music portfolio will include examples of a student's musical work. Examples may include representative work, 'best' work, work in progress and assignments from a variety of contexts in which the learning occurs. Portfolios may be individual or group in nature.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize teaching/learning portfolios as a means to document and organize student work. The portfolio will include representative samples of student work that reflect both ongoing progress as well as assignments, tests, etc. This compiled material will provide the primary basis for ongoing assessment and summative evaluation.

Material collected for portfolios could include, but would not be limited to, the following examples of student work:

- student journals (print, video, audio)
- listening diaries/guides
- peer assessments
- reflective writing pieces
- self-assessments (e.g., performance critique, activity record...)
- worksheets (e.g., music theory)
- essays
- graphic notations
- compositions
- tests/quizzes (performing, listening, creating)
- demonstrations (audio, video)

Additional assessment and evaluation strategies may be utilized by the teachers in each of the settings for intermediate music education:

- student/teacher interviews and conferences
- formal and informal observations
- rubrics
- rating scales
- checklists
- anecdotal records
- teacher-made and other tests (e.g., using appropriate software programs)
- questioning
- observation
- solo/ensemble performances both within the class and in public settings
- individual/group presentations/demonstrations

Note: Intermediate music teachers may work with hundreds of students in a given year. Assessment strategies must be both realistic for the teacher and valid for the learner. In scenarios where more than one teacher is responsible for the delivery of the music curriculum, evaluation and assessment will be a shared responsibility.

Strategies for Collecting Data

Effective assessment of learning requires diverse strategies to gather information in a systematic way. In planning musical experiences, teachers should use a broad range of strategies that give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know, value and can do. The following represents a variety of ways in which students and teachers can assess learning in music.

Work Samples/ Performances

Students' products are an excellent source of assessment data. There are many opportunities to create work samples throughout the music curriculum and teachers should seek variety in output to enable students with different strengths and needs to illustrate their learning. Variety in types of assessment strategies also provides a more balanced picture of the learner.

- Oral - report, taped interview, personal response, performance
- Written - report, story, music journal, dictations, compositions, worksheets
- Aural - performances (live and recorded)
- Visual - construction, diagram, diorama, display, poster, graphic representation

Music Journals

Music journals are an important component of a comprehensive assessment plan in music. They provide opportunities to record experiences, inspiration, personal response, as well as a way to assess development. Music journals must be woven into the routines of the classroom and receive recognition when students use them for different purposes. Entries can be brief but there will also be times where a group journal entry will be more applicable. Some broad areas of use for music journals are:

Writing

- Keeping research notes: Students can take journals to performances or on field trip(s) to record information.
- Personal reflection: Music journals can be used for personal response to musical activities or events. The teacher can also ask students to record key ideas from learning. Journals allow teachers to determine how much a student has understood about a concept or learning event, and what they found interesting, challenging, easy or what they disliked.

- Lists: Students can keep lists of words that prompt sounds, titles of musical pieces they like or ideas for compositions. They may also be used to compile a glossary of musical terminology learned.
- Questions: As students listen and work they often have questions they want answered. If the teacher isn't immediately accessible, the question(s) can be recorded in their music journals for discussion later.

Portfolios

Portfolios - print and electronic - are essential to assessment in music. A portfolio contains samples of student work over a period of time. It is a powerful assessment form that represents a rich source of authentic information on projects and efforts. Depending on how portfolios are used within the class, they may contain:

- samples of work such as compositions, musical dictations, and quizzes
- responses to own work
- personal questions or comments about a piece of music or musical performance
- explanations of steps or procedures used and difficulties and solutions

There are two main types of portfolios.

- Process portfolios (work or storage portfolios) contain materials related to student achievement. The teacher decides what will be included in the portfolio but it is usually maintained by the student.
- Product portfolios (showcase portfolios) accumulate at specific times from items in process portfolios. Musicians can be student or teacher selected. The product portfolio demonstrates achievement of specific outcomes and it provides students an opportunity to reflect on their work.

Observation

Formal and informal observation is a very important assessment strategy. Watching students engaged in music activities gives valuable information on every aspect of student learning. The effectiveness of observation increases when teachers focus on specific curriculum outcomes and design ways to record what has been observed. Observation occurring naturally throughout the learning process can provide information about:

- students day-to-day performance
- work habits and attitudes toward music
- ability to work independently and collaboratively in music making
- preferred learning style
- development of ideas and understandings.

Questioning

Questioning within the context of music lessons and during student-teacher conferences, can provide valuable information about student learning. The kinds of questions teachers ask send powerful messages to students about what is valued in the learning process. High-level, open ended questions challenge students to think critically. Open-ended questions allow students to organize and interpret information, make generalizations, clarify and express their own thinking, understand concepts, and demonstrate originality and creative ability.

Student-Teacher conferences

Teachers meet with small groups or individual students to discuss various activities in music. These conversations yield valuable information and provide immediate opportunities for looking at work to date and recommending new directions. They allow for on the spot planning and goal setting.

Questionnaires/ Surveys

A questionnaire or survey might, for example, follow an interview or project to determine how well the team functioned and how well the individuals participated and contributed. These may be developed independently or collaboratively by teachers and students.

Peer Response

Responding to student work is useful for evaluating not only the works being viewed but also the understanding of the students who participate in the discussion. Valuable insights may be gained from students' assessment of, and responses to, the work and views of their peers.

Recording and Organizing Data

Assessment data must be organized / recorded if teachers are to refer to it to improve teaching or use it for reporting purposes. Such records give concrete evidence of students learning. Strategies for recording data include:

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records are short narrative descriptions of observations in the classroom. Teachers develop effective means of recording information within the context of teaching (e.g., at-a-glance sheets containing a small space of each student or post it notes). This information gathered informally is later organized in binders or files. Planned observations may be organized a little differently. Teachers decide which students will be observed, what is being observed and record the information in its final form within the context of observing.

Anecdotal comments should lead to interpretation and recognition of patterns of learning that emerge over time. Gathering, recording, and reflecting on anecdotal comments based on both systematic and incidental observations of students' leanings, yield rich information for making judgments.

Checklists

Checklists are another way to record information gathered through observation. They can be designed for use with an individual student over time or formatted for use with a small group or a whole class. Because checklists can be overwhelming if there are too many in use or too much is focused on at one time, teachers need to identify only important concepts, skills and strategies when creating them. Sometimes teachers devise formats that allow them to use both checklists and anecdotal notes together for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Rating Scales

A rating scale is based on descriptive words or phrases that indicate performance levels. As teachers observe they compare what is seen with a scale and choose the degree that best describes the observation. Rating scales usually offer 3 to 5 degrees of discrimination.

Rubrics

A rubric is a guideline for rating student performance. Rubrics can be holistic where one score summarizes many aspects of a performance or analytic where each aspect (criteria) of the performance is scored separately. Rubrics can be used to assess products such as portfolios, learning logs, multimedia work or performances such as a presentation, or a demonstration of a technique.

Rubrics can take a variety of forms but all contain common features:

1. focus on measuring a stated outcome
2. use a scale of values to rate performance, highest rating represents the best performance
3. describe graduated levels of quality to define specifically the range of performance possible

Forms to use with various assessment strategies can be found in Appendix B.

