

ABSTRACT

Many students elect to study music as an important part of their education. The study of music that is received in the middle and high school levels is strongly based on the foundation that is developed through their early music learning in elementary school, and provides a strong musical background for students to succeed in their studies through band, orchestra or choir. However, when transitioning to from this elementary level to the beginning band, there can be a drastic change in the material of the musical instruction. The purpose of this study is to conduct a survey of Texas elementary music teachers and beginning band teachers to determine the musical materials they are teaching their students, and how the students are learning those musical concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Bridging the gap between elementary music and beginning band experiences is an endeavor many instrumental music educators face. Research has shown that methods adopted by elementary music teachers contain numerous approaches to various musical concepts that are critical to the student's musical education, such as singing, rhythmic vocabulary, and improvisation (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009). Research has also shown that band students are offered considerably fewer options in their beginning band methods in terms of how to learn to play their instruments, which does not always follow what has been established as the best way for adolescents to learn (DeVito, 2002). While music teachers strive to provide a meaningful music education experience for their students, protecting the transition from elementary music programs to beginning band and making this transition relevant is of key importance.

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to conduct a survey of Texas elementary music teachers and beginning band teachers to determine the musical materials they are teaching their students, and how the students are learning those musical concepts.

What music methods do Texas elementary music teacher use with their students?

- What music methods do Texas beginning band directors use with their students?
- How are the skills learned in elementary music instruction applied to beginning band instruction?

LITERATURE REVIEW EXCERPTS

In the elementary music curriculum, there is a large emphasis on musical concepts that the students need to learn. Elementary music educators typically focus on a given method or create their own through a combination of the standard methods. Some of the main line, traditional methods of elementary music are Dalcroze, Kodaly, Orff, and Gordon (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2009).



A third group to assess is the rare general music classes that are offered for adolescents who decide to not pursue study in band, choir, or orchestra, but still want to take a music class.

A crucial aspect of teaching adolescents is focusing on how to best work with them. One important aspect is to create student-centered learning environments. The lessons should also be based on problem-based learning where the teachers take on a facilitator role. Because adolescents long to be treated as adults, avoid activities that they will view as childish. Avoid excessively difficult tasks, by varying the difficulty to keep them interested and reacting positively (Gerrity, 2009).

The content should be organized in thematic units. This allows the students a chance to explore on their own. "These students have become architects of their own learning and contributing authors to the general music curriculum. Adolescents enjoy these roles, often steering learning towards concepts and ideas that go well beyond the expectations of teachers" (Gerrity, 2009).



In contrast to elementary music, beginning band methods tend to take a different approach to music education. Rather than using different techniques such as for elementary music educators, band directors select a preferred band method book. These three methods were selected as they include what DeVito called a broad approach; the series covers a large variety of music concepts and skills with fewer examples for each concept (DeVito, 2002).



METHODS

Subjects

- Elementary music teacher and beginning band teachers across Texas
- Includes urban, rural, and suburban schools spanning a range of sizes and socio-economic levels

Design

- Researcher-constructed questionnaire
- Content validity panel of three UNT faculty members in music education with backgrounds in elementary music and band
- Pilot study in local schools
- Evaluate consistency of accuracy
- Online survey distribution program
- Analyze results and discuss implications

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