

Assessment of Vocabulary Knowledge in Middle School Band Students

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Broad Problem

Over countless years, music is a tradition that has been passed down and refined with each generation. As the young learn from the old, they also bring their own ideas into the discipline, and only the best of those ideas survives to the present. The same is true for teaching. Time is something we do not have the luxury of wasting when teaching students. Therefore, efficiency of practice is a key issue that most music educators find themselves needing to improve.

Narrow Problem

For music educators, especially those who deal with ensemble-based learning, every second must be used to its fullest potential. One of the biggest time-sinks that uses up the vast majority of rehearsal time is, obviously enough, the act of rehearsing. However, while students can be successful in learning a selected piece for a concert well-enough to perform at a concert by rote, the musical concepts woven into that piece may not necessarily translate. As a result, most music educators spend a great deal of time making sure that: 1.) Students can play their instrument proficiently, 2.) Students can perform both solo and in groups, and 3.) Students understand how to interpret what is on the page (called reading music) without the music educator “holding their hand.” If this were an English class, a similar parallel to draw between students who cannot read music but are able to memorize a piece to play for a concert is an English teacher reading a book aloud and expecting the students to recite it from memory. While it shows the appearance of academic excellence (if they can pull it off), the students are not actually

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learning anything about English or music. They are simply being parrots. That is why one of the most dangerous questions for a music educator to answer is “How does this go?”

Like the English teacher, one of the ways that a music educator can ensure that students are reading music is to introduce vocabulary and review it as needed. This takes some time out of the rehearsal, but in the long run, the students are learning more and will be able to apply their knowledge to future pieces. Over time, as the students learn more and more vocabulary and improve on their instruments with experience, they can begin to tackle difficult pieces with much more visual information than what they are used to. Such information includes non-verbal symbols with unique names and meanings, as well as a plethora of words and phrases in Italian most commonly, but also German and French. Thankfully, most publishers rate music on a scale from easy to hard, which makes it easier for music educators to introduce vocabulary gradually, provided they choose their pieces wisely and take the level of their ensemble into consideration. With this additional time spent on vocabulary, it is the goal of the music educator that students will become “fluent” in reading music and be able to read pieces independently.

Specific Research Problem

There are a variety of different methods that one can teach vocabulary. The most common ones are used in English and other foreign language classes, where the emphasis is put on the vocabulary itself. In the ensemble-based class, however, the emphasis is always on performing. As a result, the usual process of learning vocabulary is by slowly encountering it through experience with different styles of music. For example, if a student encounters the term "legato" in a piece, but has no idea what it means, then they will likely play through it without changing their style. In the rehearsal band class, this is when the conductor (music educator) asks the students to look at the word and use their

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pencils to write "smoothly" next to it, then try playing it again, this time following the musical instructions. In this way, students learn vocabulary "on the job" because they apply what they've learned immediately, and instead of being tested on their vocabulary knowledge, they show their understanding by learning what the directions in the music mean and following them. As the students get more advanced in music, eventually they can associate previously-learned terms with their meanings very easily and don't think twice about it while rehearsing. This has been the tried-and-true method for teaching vocab on the fly in rehearsals with limited time for decades, maybe even longer, since musicians are notorious for passing down traditions. Instead of relying on this method, another method may be more efficient at teaching vocabulary in the given time.

Statement of the Problem

There are a few areas that a music educator must address in order to teach vocabulary successfully in an ensemble-based class. First, the time that the proposed method will take should not be more than the time used for rehearsal. Second, the method must ensure that students are introduced to the vocabulary gradually and can apply it to the piece for immediate effect so that the meaning of the term is given purpose and an audible comparison to how the piece sounded before the vocabulary was introduced. Third, the music educator must be able to assess students on their understanding of the vocabulary to measure if it was learned or not, and to what degree that it needs more review. If the music educator fails to address one of these three areas, the students will not be able to learn the vocabulary and improve their ability to read music.

Time efficiency. It is imperative that the time spent on vocabulary does not take up more than half of rehearsal time. While it may be tempting to drill a vocabulary word

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until the students are reciting the definition in their sleep, most students take ensemble classes to rehearse and perform music, not experience the same vocabulary-driven environment of most language classes. Then, there is also the fact that students who do not rehearse will not improve their ability to perform the piece, which can cause a concert to flop spectacularly. This can have the added effect of student attrition in the music program, which is bad news for everyone. No matter what, most of rehearsal time should be spent rehearsing.

Student understanding and comprehension. English teachers introduce most new vocabulary words with an example phrase to help students understand it. The same is true for music, except the example is considerably more auditory instead of linguistic. Furthermore, students must be able to apply the vocabulary's meaning almost immediately to understand the full context surrounding it. In some cases, this can be avoided by having a prerecorded audio example of the vocabulary's effect on music to show to the students, but listening to the difference does not mean that students understand how to produce the same effect themselves.

Assessment. The last, and most crucial, step to teaching vocabulary successfully is assessing the students' knowledge. Without assessment, there is no way for the music educator to measure if they were successful in teaching the vocabulary or not. Usually, music educators incorporate mini-assessments by listening to the ensemble as they try to demonstrate how it impacts the notes written on the page, much like how a normal rehearsal is run. However, this is not a foolproof method, since by nature an ensemble masks some individuals with the volume of sound produced by other students. In this way, students can "get lost in the shuffle" and avoid detection by the music educator. It is

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important that this is circumvented to make sure that all students understand the vocabulary that they are certain to encounter in the future.

Vocabulary requires music educators to balance understanding and assessment with the limited resource of time. Both areas must be comprehensive enough to show improvement, but concise enough to allow enough time for rehearsal. It is easy to overstep either way while trying to teach vocabulary, so music educators should be very careful when they plan how to make sure their students are successful.

Introduction

Most of the problems that are encountered when trying to teach vocabulary have a variety of solutions that have been discovered and refined by music educators already, but each solution should be calculated to not encroach upon rehearsal time. Time is indeed the most important area of concentration, but most of the decision-making occurs when ensuring student understanding and assessing them on their knowledge.

While the time allotted for rehearsals can vary, the standard class time is about 45 minutes. 10-15 minutes should be spent on warm-ups, with the remaining 30-35 minutes left for rehearsing. If a music educator condenses the warm-ups to 10 minutes and rehearsing to 30 minutes, that leaves 10 minutes left over to be used on vocabulary, 1/3 of the time spent rehearsing. This is the goldilocks zone, since five minutes is not enough time to truly enforce the meaning of the vocabulary and 15 minutes is half of the rehearsal time, which is too much. If a music educator follows this rehearsal layout, there is enough time to warm-up, rehearse, and review vocabulary without losing student-interest.

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The solution to ensuring student comprehension is giving the students experience in applying the vocabulary to music by performing it. When first introduced, many vocabulary words require some groundwork examples by the music educator to help the students understand what the word is modifying about the music. Much of the time spent teaching the vocabulary word can be spent using hand-gestures to help students visualize how it is supposed to sound. The music educator might also demonstrate it on their instrument with careful exaggeration or describe what they should do physically to produce it. There are a variety of methods to do this, with some methods working better depending on the word.

Since music vocabulary is applied to music in performance, the easiest way of assessing students on vocabulary is to assess them in performance. Sometimes, this might mean recording a concert and grading it with a rubric, but a music educator can also assess individual proficiency with solo recordings. The other, much less effective method of assessing vocabulary is by administering a written test with definitions. While this might be a perfectly acceptable method for testing vocabulary in language classes, music is primarily an auditory language, and the end-goal of learning vocabulary is being able to apply it to music. However, there is something to be said for checking for understanding on a linguistic method, since it can easily show misunderstandings among individual students that can be cleared up without asking every student to perform the same passage to discover the same thing. Possibly the best way of teaching vocabulary incorporates both methods to gather the most data of student understanding.

By carefully selecting a method of introducing and reviewing vocabulary and assessment, music educators can rest assured that their students can read music.

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However, these methods must not exceed 10 minutes, or else the educator risks losing the students in the program. Again, most of rehearsal time needs to be spent rehearsing if the music educator wants to be able to improve upon the knowledge of current students in the future, when they are more experienced and ready to take on harder music.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to find the most-effective and time-efficient way of teaching vocabulary in a music ensemble class

Need/Rationale for Study

Time efficiency is a very difficult limiter for most music educators, and while there are many different methods to teaching vocabulary, there is very little research on which methods are the most time-efficient. This study will compare two different methods to find which is most-efficient with time, while also ensuring that the material is being learned.

Description of the study

Using two different middle school band classes, methods of teaching the vocabulary will be varied between them. Data will be collected using two different assessment tools to better measure which combination of teaching method and assessment works best, as well as how much time it takes to complete the process. Each combination of methods should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Expected Outcomes

The results should show which method is most time-efficient while also forming comparisons between different combinations of teaching methods and assessments to find

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the best content. Since each method should be under 10 minutes, the most efficient combination of these will be the best solution to the problem.

Research Questions

Which methods of teaching vocabulary can be condensed into 10 minutes with maximum effectiveness? Which method has the most amount of students engaged at the same time? Are 10 minutes enough to effectively learn vocabulary? Which assessment strategies are most effective at gauging student understanding?

Significance to Field/Significance of the Study

This study will provide evidence-based research on the time-efficiency and effectiveness of two different methods of teaching music vocabulary. The results of this study will provide the field of music education with tested methods to apply to teaching vocabulary in ensemble-based classes. These methods will allow music educators to need less guesswork when finding a method to teach vocabulary, although there will likely still be variations due to differences in music programs.

Benefits for participants

The students being used for this study will benefit from experiencing different ways of learning vocabulary, when otherwise they would only be exposed to one or two methods. This way, different methods may benefit different students, depending on their learning style. While the goal of this study is to find the method that benefits the most students, there may be a few who learn better with other methods. Experiencing a variety of these will allow each student to excel, no matter his or her strengths and

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weaknesses.

Define terms used in study

A music educator must teach a variety of vocabulary terms to their students. Since there are so many, only a few will be defined here. **Legato** - (*Italian adv./adj.*) in a smooth, flowing manner, without breaks between notes; **staccato** - (*Italian adv./adj.*) with each sound or note sharply detached or separated from the others. Some other terms that are important to know are **aural** - (*adj.*) relating to the ear or sense of hearing; **sight-read** - (*verb*) read and perform (music) at sight, without preparation; **rote** - (*noun*) mechanical or habitual repetition of something to be learned; **rehearsal** - (*noun*) a practice or trial performance of a play or other work for later public performance; it might also be helpful to state the two accepted definitions of **music** - (*noun*) 1. vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion, 2. the written or printed signs representing vocal or instrumental sound.

Limitations

The limits of this study are the number of weeks available to test different methods of teaching vocabulary, which also puts a limit on the variety of methods that can be tested in that time period. Results of the effectiveness of each method can also be skewed by individual preference and special circumstances (for example, an absence on the day of an assessment). The time period in question is from 1/16/18 to 4/7/18, just over 11 weeks. After this point, no more assessments can be made, only analysis. Therefore, it is imperative that the research is done with maximum efficiency.

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Ethical Considerations

Each method of teaching vocabulary does not coerce, force, or trick students to participate in the learning process. The results of the assessments used in the study do not count towards their final class grade, and is only meant as a measurement tool for this research. The students and their parents will each sign a consent form to ensure that they are willing participants. This research is taking place as a part of the researcher's teaching practicum as well, so some data may be used for evidence of learning in a goal and implementation plan.

Music Vocabulary Study Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study of the most time-efficient method of teaching vocabulary to music ensemble students. We are asking you to take part because you are a part of one of two band classes at Leicester Middle School. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn which method of teaching vocabulary is most time-efficient to ensure that the majority of rehearsal time is spent rehearsing. You must participate in all learning activities and assessments to take part in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we will use the results of your assessments to determine which vocabulary teaching method is most effective by comparing it to results from another ensemble class. No results will count towards your final grade in the class, but it is expected that you try your best with each activity and assessment to ensure that results are not skewed. This also means that cheating will not

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be tolerated. Performances of the ensemble may be recorded to be graded with a rubric.

These recordings will be kept private between the researcher and the usual class teacher.

Risks: We do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

Benefits: An increased understanding of how to read music as more vocabulary is introduced, and your skills as a musician will improve.

Compensation: Those who participate will be allowed to participate in Fun Friday (a trip to the gym instead of rehearsal) on the last day of the study.

Confidentiality: Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked drawer that is only accessible by the researcher and the usual teacher. Recorded videos will be destroyed upon completion of the rubric.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Anna Maria College. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Ciara O'Connor. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Ciara O'Connor at occonnorc@lpsma.net or at 1-617-335-4140.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to

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any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

Your Instrument _____ Grade Level _____

Band Class (*circle one*): Symphonic / Concert

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having rehearsals video taped.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge is an essential element in a student learning to read. It is well known in education that students learn new words as they advance in their reading skills. In addition, when a student begins learning a second language, vocabulary is necessary for a student to understand, speak, read and write in the second language.

Music has a language of its own as well. In order for students to read music, the student must learn essential vocabulary that guides them through the musical piece. In addition to the notes on the page, there are symbols, words and abbreviations of words. Some of the symbols are for crescendo and decrescendo, coda, da signal, da capo and pause. Words and abbreviations of words would include ritardando, piano, forte and fortissimo to name a few. As students read the notes, they must also be reading these symbols, words and abbreviations and most importantly, they must be watching the conductor. These are a lot of things the student must do while playing their instrument all

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at the same time. Understanding the vocabulary so that they can read it easily is extremely important.

Assessment of Vocabulary in Education

An extensive review of the literature on assessment of reading was performed. Allen (1983) discussed different techniques in teaching vocabulary to students. The information in this text validates the need for vocabulary to be taught. Other educators have studied the need for students to learn vocabulary in order to improve reading skills. Hiebert and Kamil (2005) discussed using the knowledge gained from research that analyzed teaching and learning vocabulary needs to be put into use in practice. Johnson (2001) focused on vocabulary building in elementary and middle school children. These are the formative years and students are eager to learn new words so they can read the exciting books that an increasing vocabulary opens up to them. Richek (2005) discussed the importance that an increasing vocabulary is an excellent predictor of reading achievement. However, Richek (2005) cautioned that it is important for teachers to actually teach vocabulary. New vocabulary must be learned before concepts in different subjects are introduced or the student will not understand the reading assignments. Words are learned slowly and the more actively they learn the words, the more deeply they will understand the meaning of the words. Activities that make learning new vocabulary fun will result in the students having an excellent vocabulary developed. The newest methods to teach vocabulary in education are to use fun, interactive methods. Richek (2005) describes one of these methods. It is 'semantic impressions', where the teacher chooses between 5 and 20 words that are central to a plot or story. The words are listed in the order they will appear in the story. The students work in a group and will write a story of

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their own using these words. After all students have had input and the story has been revised, it is published.

Diamantes, Young and McBee (2002) noted that music is effective in teaching children to read. Singing is a merging of music and language. In Diamantes, et al. (2002), Glasgow (1999) had students use music to respond to literature. The student would select a short musical piece and explain how it related to the piece of literature that the student had recently read. Music can capture the intangibles like, feelings and communicating them from the performer to the listener.

Another technique is the 'word wall'. Jackson (2018) accurately described a word wall as a method to build their vocabulary and overcome any vocabulary gaps. The student focuses on defining the word as well as using it, in context. It works on the idea of 'practice makes perfect'. The word wall centers on the main idea and then organizes the vocabulary around this main idea. Jackson (2005) further described the word wall as a specific place for vocabulary and the definitions. The teacher plans the word wall, selects the vocabulary and decides on the sequence of the building of the word wall. The word wall is completed in class where they actively learn the meaning of the vocabulary and connect it to other activities. This pedagogy requires the teacher to focus on four topics; "teach a few well-selected words directly", "Teach word learning strategies", "Provide 'rich and varied' language expressions" and "Foster 'word consciousness'" (Jackson, 2005, 44). Green (2003) also advocated for using the word wall to teach vocabulary. His technique was similar to Jackson's.

Rosenbaum (2001) also advocated the use of a word map as a method to teach new vocabulary to middle school students. This is essentially a concept map, where the

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student puts the new word along with the page number in the center of the page.

Immediately above the word, the student writes in the meaning along with 2 synonyms above it. Next to the word, the student writes the antonym on one side and a unique expression or example on the other side of the word. Below the word, they write the sentence that the word is used in from the book. At the bottom of the page, the student must write a sentence using the word (Rosenbaum, 2001).

Stahl and Kapinus (1991) encouraged students to predict word meanings within a sentence to teach vocabulary. This method had the students try to predict the meaning of a word by its use in the context of a sentence. This gives the student a method to figure out the meaning of a new word while teaching the actual content. Stahl and Nagy (2006) elaborated on this original research in their work to teach the meaning of words.

When teaching students a second language, vocabulary is also vital to learn to communicate as well as read in this second language. Meara (2009) discussed using word associations to help students increase their second language vocabulary. Using word associations is beneficial because it is taking the student from words that they know and getting them to learn new words (Meara, 2009).

Nalli, Ammaji and Jayaprada (2017) discussed the need to use strategies to teach vocabulary to disadvantaged learners in India. Children with learning disabilities and other disadvantages present more challenges than usual. Finding strategies to assist this population is essential so that these children can become productive members of society as they grow into adulthood. Berman (2014) studied how learning the language in music could influence English Language Learners (ELL) in the ability to learn English. Music is

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a universal language and this may make a bridge between the primary language and English for the population of ELL.

Assessment Concepts in Music Education

Asmus (1999) adeptly points out that “assessment is an integral part of the instructional process that can inform both the teacher and the learner” (19). Assessment is essential to the instructional process. Asmus (1999) points out that some music educators have great difficulty assessing teaching and learning. This can be attributed to the teacher having an underdeveloped level of detail as to what the student is supposed to know and be able to do after music instruction. It is important to develop specific learning outcomes the both the teacher and student know and lead to a specific method to evaluate the achievement of the outcomes. Instead of using broad, general outcomes, it is important to use specificity in developing the learning outcomes (Asmus, 1999). Asmus describes the types of assessment. The first two types are ‘Student Assessment’ and ‘Program Assessment’. Student assessment evaluates the student’s learning and helps to plan future instruction. Program assessment evaluates a particular program, such as band. It is used to evaluate how well it meets student, parent and community needs (Asmus, 1999). ‘Authentic assessment’ is assesses student progress while involved in real-world activities such as a community concert. ‘Portfolio assessment’ is a method of assessment that involves recording and is done over time. It should include musical programs, written evaluations, recordings and self-evaluations by the student (Asmus, 1999). Asmus (1999) points out that four simple steps will lead to valid, reliable outcomes measurements. These four steps are; “clearly define what is to be measured, clearly define the rules or rubric for characterizing the attribute to be measured, be as consistent

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and objective as possible, and use a recording system that minimizes disruption to the ongoing classroom activities” (22).

Goodnite (1995) agreed that it is necessary to develop an accurate assessment of band students’ learning for grading. In order to be able to assign a grade, the teacher must first present clearly defined learning outcomes that reflect the school’s curriculum design. All aspects of the grading rubric need to be clearly communicated to the students. The attitude of ‘everyone gets an A’ just eradicates the student who truly deserves the A. Assignments and tests can be designed to measure the knowledge gained in the areas of performing, listening and creating music (Goodnite, 1995). ‘Performance’ tests should be administered about every 9 weeks. This is when any student having a particular difficulty can be detected and individual attention can help the student progress. The performance test focuses on different aspects in music. These include; “technical skills, expressive playing, and understanding music theory through scales, chords and interval playing” (Goodnite, 1995, 54).

Along similar lines, Goolsby (1999) emphasizes assessment of music learning. This author points out that too often band directors rehearse music for concerts and find that they are repeating the same comments on the particular piece. This indicates that the student is not achieving maximum learning. Creating musicians should be the goal of music educators. In order to achieve this, there are four types of assessments.

Placement assessments include auditions, challenges and seating auditions. These are assessing a student’s ability in order to properly place the student for concert performance (Goolsby, 1999). Summative assessment is the actual concert, festival, recital or other event where the students are presenting the final product of their learning.

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During the actual event, the students are demonstrating their abilities publicly and therefore they are being evaluated during their performance (Goolsby, 1999).

The other two assessments are more closely associated with the daily instruction in band. Diagnostic assessment determines where there are difficulties in learning the musical piece. When the band director conducts the group of students, the band director is identifying problems in learning and then a remedy. The most common diagnostic assessment is error detection. The band director is able to hear where the errors are occurring in the musical score (Goolsby, 1999). The fourth assessment technique is formative assessment. Formative assessment is focused on monitoring that learning is occurring. Feedback is the key to this assessment. The ability to measure the feedback provided to the student in relation to what has been asked of the student. In order for this to be achieved, the student must know what the specific goals of the rehearsal are (Goolsby, 1999).

Another two tools that Goolsby (1999) revealed are checkpoints and checklists. A checkpoint is a specific selection of the musical piece is communicated to the students. Without pressure or anxiety, the band director uses the idea of cooperative learning in class to give students many chances to play solo for the teacher and their peers. These solo opportunities provide an assessment of individual progress, including tone quality, and reducing performance anxiety (Goolsby, 1999). A checklist is used in intermediate and high school classes. The checklists include technical exercises, solo selections, small ensemble selections, written assignments and essays on historical themes or composers. Worksheets can also be used for homework assignments. These worksheets can assess beginning music theory and music notation. It was noted that many band directors believe

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students already have learned, but many of these students have simply learned the simpler tunes by ear (Goolsby, 1999).

Burrack (2002) found that many band teachers use the attendance list and the sound of the music played in the concerts along with the variety and range of the music that was performed to be the outcomes measurements of learning. There is an emphasis on the performance in concerts with a wide variety and range in music presented. Band directors need to use a higher level of thinking skills such as problem solving and creative thinking (Burrack, 2002). They developed an enhanced assessment that included a self-assessment by the student. The process for this self-assessment is to tape themselves and then critique their performance in terms of tone quality, pitch accuracy and intonation, rhythmic accuracy, musical interpretation, articulation and technique and goals for personal improvement. The student submits the tape and the self-assessment to the band director. The band director reviews the submission and adjusts the goals to be goals for further music education. In middle school, these self-assessments occur twice per year (Burrack, 2002).

They have also developed a group assessment where the students evaluate a taped recording of the group practicing. The students are assessing the rehearsal on elements of tone quality, intonation, rhythm, balance and blend, technique, interpretation and articulation. After doing this, they write at least one specific observation in each category. The students then share their observations, share comments and suggestions for improvement. The director reviews all of the tapes and uses them to grade each student (Burrack, 2002).

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The final piece to this enhanced self-evaluation was asking for the students' reactions to these self-assessments. It was evident that the students were able to recognize the correlation between these assessments and their progress. They believed that they have a more comprehensive understanding of their ability and goals. They developed motivation to improve (Burrack, 2002).

Menard (2013) discussed a creation of a creative thinking in music program that was developed in Eastern Ohio. General music had been dropped from the curriculum for the sixth grade. The idea was to reach students who do not participate in band, orchestra or choir. Creative thinking in music through composing music was the focus of the teaching. These students had limited experience in music. The students composed a simple melodies and played it three times. Then these were shared among their classmates. They also developed a composition map, which was similar to the word mapping discussed earlier in this paper (Menard, 2013). Collaboration and continuing work on their composition to increase complexity was very exciting for the students. Finally, they had to teach their melody to another student. The students were proud of their work and were excited to be creative (Menard, 2013).

Strouse (2007) discussed improving rhythm reading in a middle school band. He talked about the count-chant process, which has the students evaluate the proportional counting process in reading the music. Since middle school students have a desire to learn with fun activities. Friendly competition between instrument sections for best performance during rhythm sequences works very well in this age group. This is an essential piece in learning to sight read music and making the process fun means that the students will progress well (Strouse, 2007).

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Waymire and Snead (2007) presented ideas to motivate band members to keep increasing their skill. The main theme for any successful, talented band program is a commitment to excellence. Nine tips to achieving this commitment to excellence were presented. The first tip is to identify a core group of students who share the vision of a successful, talented band. These students will help to keep the energy and excitement going. The second tip is to make tangible, measurable outcomes. Authors that were previously discussed in this paper have presented this theme. Tip number three is to identify band programs that are similar to the band program. The fourth tip is to develop a slogan that reflects the program. This is a marketing strategy and using the goals and objectives of the program to propel the group toward the common goals is imperative. The fifth tip is to meet frequently with the students for a short period of time to review their progress. This keeps the student engaged with the program and the goals. Number six is making sure to give positive feedback. Many times, the band director points out the areas that need work and they also need to make sure to point out positive aspects as well. Tip number seven is that rehearsals need to be very organized and have predictable expectations. The band director should role model the behaviors that are desired. The eighth tip is to invite local community members to be active. Involving the parents as band boosters is a valuable resource. Producing a monthly newsletter is a wonderful way for the band director to connect with community leaders. The last tip is to encourage students to accept responsibility for the success of the band (Waymire & Snead, 2007).

The literature discusses the importance of vocabulary in reading and when a student is learning a second language. In music education literature, there is a plethora of ideas of how to assess student achievement in instrumental techniques and in

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performance. Student self-evaluation is also included in creating a positive learning environment for students. The most important factor in assessment of learning is to ensure that the student and the teacher have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes. This researcher did not find any literature using music vocabulary as an assessment for learning in music education. However, since it is discussed as an important link to advancing reading, it can be inferred that increasing music vocabulary is an important link to advancing sight-reading in music.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative methodology to time-efficiency and effectiveness of two of different methods of teaching music vocabulary. The results of this study will provide the field of music education with tested methods to apply to teaching vocabulary in ensemble-based classes.

Setting

The setting of this study is in Leicester Middle School in Leicester, Massachusetts. The students are 6th, 7th and 8th grade students attending the school. There are two bands; Concert Band and Symphonic Band. The students in the both bands attend class on a daily basis. They are taught music theory appropriate to their level of playing as well as practicing scales, rhythms, sections of music as well as the complete pieces of music. They are preparing for a concert during the Leicester School System's "Evening with the Arts" that was held on April 11, 2018. All of the children participating live in Leicester and attend the Leicester Middle School. The students in the Concert Band will be taught the vocabulary with the Word of the Day exercise.

Participants

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Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are asked to participate in this study looking at how efficiently students learn vocabulary used in music scores. Those students who have had consent signed will be the participants of the study. There are 23 possible participants in the Concert Band and 29 possible participants the Symphonic Band. No students are English Language Learners.

Intervention

The independent variable is selecting a method of introducing and reviewing vocabulary and assessment not to exceed 10 minutes by using the Word of the Day teaching method in the Concert Band. Students in the Symphonic Band will learn the vocabulary in the traditional rehearsal time. The students will spend most of rehearsal time rehearsing and putting the vocabulary words into practice.

The dependent variable is the individual student's ability to learn using a particular method of introducing and reviewing the vocabulary.

Materials

The materials that will be used for this study are the vocabulary words that are used in the music scores that will be played in the "Evening with the Arts" program. These words and symbols are as follows: Moderato, Allegretto, Fermata symbol. *Mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), *f* (forte), *cresc* (crescendo), *accel* (accelerando), *decresc* (decrecendo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mp-mf* (mezzo-piano and then mezzo-forte), Majestically, *Rall* (Rallantando), *Soli*, *A Tempo*, *Molto Rit* (Molto Ritardando), accent, *fp* (forte-piano), *ff* (fortissimo), *pp* (pianissimo), *subito*, *staccato*, *marcato*, *piu mosso*, *molto rall* (molto rallantando), Tempo I, Vivace, a Key signature, time signature, *senza rit* (senza ritardando), roll-off, triplet, legato and tenuto. A pre-test will be administered to

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students in each band to evaluate their knowledge of each of these vocabulary words. The method used to teach each word in the Concert Band is the ‘Word of the Day’. These students are asked to find the Word of the Day in the musical score. This researcher will explain the meaning of the word. The students will then play that part of the musical score so they practice the word with their instrument, using it in context. Once all words have been studied in the Word of the Day and put into practice, a Post-test will be administered to evaluate student learning of the vocabulary. The students in the Symphonic Band will learn the vocabulary in the traditional manner, by learning it as it is played in rehearsal. The students in the Concert Band and the Symphonic Band will be videotaped during the first practice with the musical score as well as during the Evening with the Arts concert. Validity and reliability have not been measured, as these are vocabulary words that are necessary for an instrumentalist to know in order to read music.

Procedure

This is a quantitative study examining the percentage of improvement on a pre-test/post-test sample.

Pretest: A pre-test of vocabulary words will be administered prior to introducing the musical scores to the students in the Concert Band and the Symphonic Band. The students in both bands will be videotaped playing the musical score for the first time and scored using a standards-based rubric, designed by this researcher.

Intervention: The students in the Concert Band will then learn the meaning of each of the vocabulary words that are used in the musical scores in a 10-minute “Word of the Day” section at the beginning of each class. The students will then be using the new vocabulary word as it is played in the musical score. A percentage of increase in vocabulary

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knowledge will be calculated from these results. The students in the Symphonic Band will learn the vocabulary words in the musical scores as they are rehearsed in the traditional method of practicing.

Posttest: One week prior to the concert, both groups will take the post-test. In addition, both groups will be videotaped during the concert and they will be scored using the same rubric.

Data Analysis

Data will be analyzed using a quantitative methods analysis. A percentage of improvement will be calculated for the pretest and posttest results. The data will be aggregated into the two different interventions. The videotapes will be reviewed and scored according to a rubric, which will give a numerical score. These scores will be aggregated into the two different interventions.

Results

Pretest/Posttest

All twenty-three students in the Concert Band and all twenty nine students in the Symphonic band participated in this study. All students completed the pretest and posttest as well as being videotaped while playing the musical score for the first time and at the Evening with the Arts. The students in the Concert Band scored 30% on the pretest and 90% on the posttest. The students in the Symphonic Band scored 40% on the pretest and 80% on the posttest.

| | Pretest Results Aggregate | Post Test Results Aggregate |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Concert Band | 30% | 90% |
| Symphonic Band | 40% | 80% |

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Videotape Rubric

All twenty-three Concert Band students and all twenty-nine Symphonic Band students participated in the “Evening with the Arts” concert. Each student was captured on the videotape. The students in the Concert Band had a greater improvement in their music performance according the rubric than the students in the Symphonic Band.

| | Videotape Rubric Results Aggregate | Videotape Rubric Results Aggregate |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Concert Band | 68.75% | 100% |
| Symphonic Band | 62.50% | 87.50% |

Discussion

Students who are learning to play an instrument and read music need to know vocabulary words in order to be successful in reading the music while they are playing and watching the conductor. The traditional method of teaching these vocabulary words is by the student learning the words as they are learning to play the musical score. This method can allow students to play the music without being able to actually know the vocabulary words that are on the musical score. Using a 10-minute “Word of the Day” method to teach each word on the musical score is an innovative method to teach middle school children the meaning of the words that are used in the musical score.

The students in the Concert Band were evaluated with two pretests; one was a vocabulary pretest and one was a videotape of their first attempt to play the music. After the “Word of the Day” intervention and one week before the concert, the students were evaluated using the posttest and then videotaped during the concert and scored according to a standards-based rubric.

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The students in the Symphonic Band were evaluated with two pretests; one was a vocabulary pretest and one was a videotape of their first attempt to play the music. They did not receive the Word of the Day intervention, but learned the musical score by practicing it as has been traditionally done. One week before the concert, the students were evaluated using the posttest and then videotaped during the concert and scored according to a standards-based rubric.

The results from this study show that the students who receive the Word of the Day intervention performed better than the students in the control group. The students in the control group started out with a higher score on the vocabulary test (40%) and performed on the video pretest worse (62.50%) than the Concert Band (30% for the vocabulary pretest and 68.75% for the video pretest). However, the Concert Band group had a greater percentage of improvement in both the vocabulary test (60% improvement: 90%) and the videotape rubric (31.25% improvement: 100%) than the Symphonic Band (40% improvement: 80% in the vocabulary posttest and 25% improvement: 87.50% in the video posttest), despite their video pretest being a higher score.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. The first limitation is that the children in the Symphonic Band are seventh and eighth grade students and so they have had more experience with reading musical scores as well as playing their instrument in rehearsals and concerts. The Concert Band consists of children in the sixth grade with some seventh grade students who were not ready for the Symphonic Band. These children had less skill with reading music and playing their instruments in rehearsals and concerts. Another limitation to this study is the small sample size and that it was performed in only one

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school. A larger sample size with a multi-center study is needed to further investigate the benefits of the “Word of the Day” intervention.

Recommendations for future research

Using the intervention of the “Word of the Day” should be researched two groups of students at the same level of music reading and playing. In addition, replicating this study using a larger sample size and in different schools would hopefully help support the hypothesis that using the “Word of the Day” intervention is beneficial to helping students learn music vocabulary in a time-efficient manner, 10 minutes on a new word, every day.

Teaching a child to play an instrument is not well researched. Traditional methods have been to teach scales, rhythms, difficult parts of a musical score and then rehearsing the musical score and re-rehearsing the more difficult sections of the musical score. At no point is the actual vocabulary that is written on the musical score taught to the student. When a student is learning to read, they are taught vocabulary. If vocabulary is not learned, then the student has difficulty reading. The same can be said for reading music. If the student doesn’t learn the vocabulary, the student will not learn to read the music. They will memorize the musical piece. When the music becomes too difficult to memorize, the student will quit playing the musical instrument. The results of this study support this fact. Students need to learn musical vocabulary in order to be able to sight read the music. They have to learn to read the music while playing their instrument and most importantly, watch the conductor.

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Appendix A

Pretest/Posttest

Please write the meaning of each of these musical vocabulary words.

1. Key signature
2. Time signature
3. Moderato
4. Allegretto
5. Vivace
6. Legato
7. Marcato
8. Majestically
9. Tenuto
10. Roll-off

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11. Triplet

12. *mf* (mezzo-forte)

13. *f* (forte)

14. *ff* (fortissimo)

15. *mp-mf* (mezzo-piano—mezzo-forte)

16. *mp* (mezzo-piano)

17. *p* (piano)

18. *pp* (pianissimo)

19. *staccato*

20. *accel* (accelerando)

21. *piu mosso*

22. *subito*

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23. Accent

24. *cresc* (crescendo)

25. *decresc* (decrescendo)

26. Tempo I

27. *A Tempo*

28. *Rall* (Rallantando)

29. *molto rit* (Molto Ritardando)

30. *molto rall* (molto rallantando)

31. *senza rit* (senza ritardando)

32. *Soli*

33. Fermata

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Videotape Standards-based Rubric

| Concert Band Pretest | 1 Does not meet standard | 2 Rarely meets standard | 3 Mostly meets standard | 4 Consistently meets standard |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Performs accurate pitches | | | X | |
| Performs with rhythmic accuracy | | | X | |
| Demonstrates accurate dynamics | | | X | |
| Uses appropriate expression and articulation | | X | | |

Total points: $11/16 = 68.75\%$

| Concert Band Posttest | 1 Does not meet standard | 2 Rarely meets standard | 3 Mostly meets standard | 4 Consistently meets standard |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Performs accurate pitches | | | | X |
| Performs with rhythmic accuracy | | | | X |
| Demonstrates accurate dynamics | | | | X |
| Uses appropriate expression and articulation | | | | X |

Total points: $16/16 = 100\%$

Improvement rate: 31.25%

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Videotape Standards-based Rubric (Cont.)

| Symphonic Band Pretest | 1 Does not meet standard | 2 Rarely meets standard | 3 Mostly meets standard | 4 Consistently meets standard |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Performs accurate pitches | | | X | |
| Performs with rhythmic accuracy | | | X | |
| Demonstrates accurate dynamics | | X | | |
| Uses appropriate expression and articulation | | X | | |

Total points: $10/16 = 62.50\%$

| Symphonic Band Posttest | 1 Does not meet standard | 2 Rarely meets standard | 3 Mostly meets standard | 4 Consistently meets standard |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Performs accurate pitches | | | | X |
| Performs with rhythmic accuracy | | | X | |
| Demonstrates accurate dynamics | | | | X |
| Uses appropriate expression and articulation | | | X | |

Total points: $14/16 = 87.50\%$

Improvement rate: 25%

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