

Beyond the Grade Reading Log

According to this text, assessment is an extremely hard part of a music educator's job. Many educators are afraid to assess their students because they are worried about what kind of reaction they might get from their students. They are worried that students will not like music after that or might have poor self-esteem. They do not realize that many of the students appreciate the feedback they receive and apply what they hear to their everyday practicing and performance. Once educators realize this, they will be willing to give feedback because it helps students instead of hurts them.

In order to have efficient assessment, it is necessary to have a well-prepared rubric, and a productive way of collecting information while students are being involved musically. There are many ways of making assessment fast and easy for the many students music teachers have to work with. Assessment as simple as pluses and minuses can work for this. Assessment doesn't have to be formal or summative all the time either. By seeing how students' voices or playing ability for instruments are for the grade level they are in, assessments can be made on a day-to-day basis. By doing assessment this way, students also do not know they are being assessed which allows them to be more confident and simply think they are playing.

It is also important to assess students for their abilities to do other tasks in the classroom and not just grade them on their performances. Not all students will decide to become music majors, so it is pertinent to adhere to those who will not become music majors as well. Students may simply love being in ensembles and

singing or playing instruments so they join musical ensembles and grading them by how well they perform is not fair if they are not as comfortable with this as other students. It is important to grade students on what is mostly done in the classroom, which is singing, playing on instruments, performing, and reading rhythms and pitches. As well as these necessary aspects, having students self-assess themselves may make them better musicians. By allowing students to record themselves and listen to how they sound and present themselves while they are performing is a great way to have students figure out what they can improve by themselves instead of having a director tell them what they need to improve all the time. They can also participate in peer-assessments, which allow students to grade each other on how well they do in the classroom and perform in front of each other. I think that allowing fellow peers to comment on how each individual is doing can be a great way for students to assess themselves and understand how they are doing from a peer's perspective.

All of these techniques are great ways to learn to assess students without simply looking at their performances. Students can be more comfortable with how they are assessed and make themselves better by figuring out on their own what they need to improve on. As a teacher, I will experiment with ways to assess students that will help them to learn how to improve themselves. I intend to imply the assessment of seeing how the students are doing on a day-to-day basis, and giving them grades based on this without the performance concept. I want to have my students not be afraid of assessment and to know their material whenever I give an assessment, such as part-testing their songs before a concert or performance. I

will grade my students on performances but not leave all the grading to just that one aspect of their musical ability. I like the idea of the peer-assessments also, because this allows them to see from their peers' point-of-view what they can improve on.