

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE INTEGRATION OF MUSIC THEORY
INSTRUCTION IN SELECTED INSTRUMENTAL
MUSIC PROGRAMS IN TEXAS

THESIS

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Master of MUSIC

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis is to determine continuity of music theory instruction in Texas band students' education and to discover how band directors at various levels of music education integrate music theory in their band classes. A survey was sent to middle and high school band directors, asking about their music theory instruction practices, and college music faculty were interviewed to determine expectations of incoming freshman music students. Observations from the author's teaching experiences were also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

One of the important skills that most Western musicians cultivate is the ability to use notated music to learn new repertoire. Celebrated bandmaster Edwin Franko Goldman wrote about skills he believed high school band students ought to possess: “recognize and reproduce intervals, be able to identify major, minor, and dominant seventh chords (as a minimum), and be familiar with the elementary aspects of harmonic motion and tonality” (Goldman 1961, 247) His response to the objection that such a well rounded program would “consume too much time” was that “there are certain things for which time must be found” (ibid . 254)

Each year, students enroll in bands, orchestras, and choirs, where they are taught to sing or to play an instrument. At the introductory level, usually sixth grade for band musicians, students learn how to assemble and care for their instruments, how to produce a characteristic tone, and what their fingers, breath, and embouchures must do in order to produce specific pitches on their instruments. At the same time at which they are acquiring a new set of physical skills, these students learn the fundamentals of music theory: notation for rhythmic values, pitch notation, navigational symbols (such as the repeat, *D S al Fine*, or the Coda signs). Typically, sixth graders are taught using a method book that is designed for group instruction and eventual full-band playing.

Students progress from playing short homophonic pieces using simple rhythms and meters and few pitches to playing polyphonic (or at least “melody + bass line”) “full band” arrangements with three or more individual parts. The method books provide short written explanations of many fundamentals of music theory, which are introduced as they appear in the books’ exercises.

Many high school and advanced middle school students also learn repertoire for solo or ensemble competitions, and some take private lessons on their instruments. Once the band has “graduated” from the method book to “real music,” it is up to the band director to make note of new musical elements, terms, technique issues, and notational issues (the multi-measure rest, the fermata) that must be taught in order for students to interpret them correctly while playing. Students who understand music notation, scales, tendency tones, chords, and harmonic functions can use this information to help them make informed guesses about their pieces at home or in the practice room. They can learn their individual parts more efficiently at home and use band rehearsal time to learn how their part fits with other parts to contribute to the whole piece of music.

Once students reach high school, they are typically expected to “go home and practice” their music, refine timing, style, and technical issues with like instruments during sectional rehearsals, and refine ensemble performance skills during rehearsal. Carla Ann Tipton (1998) observed that by the time they reach high school, most students have received all the explicit music theory instruction that they will have until they enroll in college music theory classes (or take a separate course, such as Advanced Placement

Music Theory¹). High school students are expected to learn music that is more challenging (in terms of rhythm, form, harmony, and melody as well as in technique) than music learned in the middle school years, but they are not necessarily given the theoretical understanding to use the sheet music efficiently on their own and come to class prepared to participate in a rehearsal

Many of these students learn to perform with a high degree of technical proficiency on their instruments and to give performances of varying levels of “musicality.” They arrive on college audition days prepared for the audition and are also usually faced with a written test of music fundamentals. Some college and university music schools also give a test of basic aural skills. Often, these tests reveal gaps in the students’ theoretical understanding of music that is simpler than what they played in their auditions

Since students are admitted to college music programs on the basis of their auditions, failing these tests does not usually bar them from enrolling as music majors. Some institutions offer a leveling course for students who fail the music theory entrance exam. Other colleges and universities include an extensive review of fundamentals in their Theory I course, instead of offering a separate course in music fundamentals

¹ Advanced Placement (AP) Music Theory is a course developed by the College Board, which is also responsible for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). AP courses are intended to allow students to earn college credit by completing the course and passing an exam. AP Music Theory is not discussed in detail in this thesis because it is taught as a separate class, rather than in the context of a full-band rehearsal. In the *5th Annual AP Report to the Nation* (College Board 2009), AP Music Theory is not included in the discussion of 2008 participation in AP courses in Texas high schools.

CHAPTER 1.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 Introductory Remarks on the Review of Literature

Several approaches to music theory instruction in schools, relevant legislation as well as guidelines written by the Music Educators National Conference and the Texas Music Educators Association were reviewed. In addition, four categories of literature were studied: a) writings dealing with music theory instruction in middle school bands, b) those dealing with music theory instruction in high school bands, c) those dealing with college music theory and college bands, and d) published / commercial resources for teachers. The teacher resources include methodology books as well as music education and music theory journals

1.2. Approaches to Music Education

Comprehensive Musicianship (CM) uses music literature as the point of departure for teaching and learning about various aspects of music. This approach is a product of a Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and Ford Foundation project (Contemporary Music Project for Creativity in Music Education, called CMP). Students perform and analyze music, and teaching methods promote student engagement and

independence. Teachers help students find relationships among different aspects of music, such as how music theory relates to music performance. A succinct description of CMP and of Comprehensive Musicianship is found in MENC (1973)

Arts PROPEL was a five-year research undertaking of Project Zero, an educational research group in the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in collaboration with the Educational Testing Service and with teachers and administrators in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The resulting Arts PROPEL teaching approach integrates instruction with assessment. Students produce art (music, visual art, or writing), study works of art, and assess their own art using personal and field standards of excellence. For detailed information consult *Arts PROPEL: A Handbook for Music* (Davidson, et al. 1992).

Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory (1998) emphasizes the need for students to be musically ready to progress through various levels of competence with individual components of music. Gordon sees instrumental music as an extension of the performer's audiation, or mental "hearing" of the music without it necessarily being aurally or visually present. Gordon advocates teaching initially by rote, and using the voice rather than instruments, so that students internalize tonal and rhythmic patterns. After internalizing a repertoire of tonal and rhythmic patterns, the students can then begin to learn the patterns, and then songs, by rote and by ear on their instruments. Only after students have internalized the rhythmic and melodic patterns do they learn the verbal names and musical notation that represents them. Solfege and a system of rhythm syllables that Gordon has developed allow for communication without labels such as

“eighth note” or “B^b.” See Gordon’s *Preparatory Audiation, Audiation, and Music Learning Theory* (2001) and the related band method *Jump Right In The Instrumental Series – Teacher’s Guide for Winds and Percussion* (Grunow, Gordon and Azzara, 2001).

1.3 The *National Standards for Arts Education*

National standards for education in the arts (theatre, music, art, and dance) were developed by members of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. As part of this undertaking the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) developed the music portion of the Consortium’s voluntary *National Standards for Arts Education* (1994). The section of the *National Standards* that deals with music education describes what every American should know and be able to do in music. The standards do not prescribe specific repertoire, but provide content standards (the curriculum should include these items) as well as achievement standards (the students should demonstrate achievement in the content area by successfully performing certain activities). The full text of the *National Standards for Arts Education*, including the music standards, can be accessed online (<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/>) or in print (MENC 1994).

1.4 Legislation

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (hereafter: NCLB), in conjunction with a Policy Letter from the office of former United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige, stated that the arts are a core academic subject. Secretary Paige reinforces the arts' status as a core subject in his letter, stating "the term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading, or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography" (Paige 2003). NCLB requires that students meet state requirements for achievement in the core subjects. Reading and mathematics are the only subjects for which schools must report student achievement statistics. In some cases this has resulted in increases in time spent on teaching Reading and mathematics, and decreases in time and funding devoted to other, non-reported subjects (McMurrer 2007). Implementation of NCLB is left to individual states, as long as they adhere to the federal guidelines described in the Act.

The *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* (TEKS) is Texas' set of state requirements for learning in the core subjects. Enacted in 1998, the TEKS require that elements of music theory be included in general music as well as performing ensemble courses from Kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* is part of the Texas Administrative code. It is a legal document describing the State's requirements for learning in all school subjects, and at each grade level. The Music TEKS require that students learn about the cultural / historical background of music, that they improvise and arrange music, and that they compose and use music notation in addition to simply performing music. These areas of music instruction are

required at the middle- and high school levels in performance classes as well as in elementary school general music classes

1.5. Middle School Ensembles and Music Theory

Scott Eddington's thesis (1983) describes warm-up procedures for use with middle school bands to teach band students audiation skills. Using Edwin E. Gordon's music learning theory Eddington explains how typical band classes make cognitive and musical demands that are inappropriate for students' likely level of audiation achievement. Eddington proposes warm-up procedures based upon Edwin Gordon's music learning sequences. Eddington uses the example of learning to read the word "airplane" without knowing how the individual letters interact to produce the word or knowing anything about airplanes themselves. The student could identify the printed word when encountered, but would not be able to use that information to reason his way to a possible meaning for a related word, like "airport," or to recognize an airplane flying overhead. This, according to Eddington, is like teaching a student a pitch without providing a context for the pitch. Eddington explains that starting band instruction out of sequence with Gordon's stages of readiness results in students amassing quantities of isolated bits of information, rather than fitting that information into systems. Eddington's thesis is most concerned with helping students fit pitches and fingerings into the system of tonal music.

While Eddington's emphasis is on audiation, not music theory, he makes two points relevant to teaching about music as well as teaching performance skills

1. Emphasizing performance training over education results in inefficient rote teaching.
2. Emphasizing education (teaching a concept, and teaching students to work with the concept) helps students understand what they are doing, resulting in a more "meaningful" performance (Eddington 1983, 17)

The third chapter of Eddington's thesis provides a program of melodic units and rhythmic units for teaching audiation during the band's warm-up. The fourth chapter provides a description of methods that band directors can use to implement Eddington's program in their classes.

Carla Ann Tipton's 1988 thesis deals with four high schools and three middle schools and junior high schools in Austin, Texas. Tipton observes that although high schools can and do produce good players, these individuals are not necessarily well-rounded musicians. Many graduates of high school band programs lack understanding of the music they perform. The three most relevant inquiries Tipton makes are

1. Identifying ways that band directors can incorporate music theory instruction in their daily teaching,
2. Identifying theoretical elements (concepts) that can be taught in the band classroom, and
3. Describing methods of instruction used in the teaching of music theory in rehearsal.

The groups she observed include middle- and junior high school beginning band groups, middle school advanced and high school lower groups, as well as high school elite groups. Tipton notes (1998, 84-86) that music theory instruction decreases as the performing level of the students increases. Beginning bands receive the most theory instruction, while high school advanced groups receive mostly “theory related rehearsal comments” and very little explicit theory instruction.

Bruce Gleason (1995) investigated the effects of teaching beginning band students using a comprehensive, multicultural, interdisciplinary method. He compared two beginning band classes from the same middle school that were taught using the *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson 1993) band method book. This method book was chosen because it is a result of Pearson’s attempt to address the lack of comprehensive musicianship, multiculturalism, and interdisciplinary studies in beginning band.

Both groups received the same instruction regarding performance, but the experimental group received additional instruction in comprehensive musicianship and extra-musical areas related to the band literature they studied (language, geography, etc.). Music theory and music history were included in a category that Gleason uses the terms “comprehensive musicianship” and “whole music” interchangeably. The experimental group received lessons, developed by Gleason and implemented by the regular band director, based on supplemental materials in the teacher’s edition of *Standard of Excellence*. Music-theoretical elements found in Gleason’s lesson plans include rhythm (reading, counting, performing, aural identification), pitch (identification of notes on treble, bass, and grand staves, aural identification of motion by step, skip, or leap,

identification of accidentals, performance of music with accidentals, aurally identifying the “home tone” or tonic pitch of a phrase, transposition as demonstrated by playing a given melodic pattern beginning on different starting notes), meter (identifying, explaining, performing, and conducting 3/4, 4/4, and 2/4 meter, “write the missing barlines” exercise), key signatures, and form (aurally identify structures of pieces played in class) The format of the lessons alternates playing music with interactive segments of instruction In each lesson, students play music that features the music-theoretical concept being studied. Teaching methods include lecture, question and answer, performance, singing, clapping, counting, guided listening, and pencil and paper activities

Achievement in both music theory and music history, and several areas of extra-musical achievement were measured by tests developed by Gleason. Individual performance skills were measured by the *Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale*² (Watkins and Farnum 1962), and group performance was assessed by a panel of experienced band directors who evaluated recordings of both bands’ year-end concerts. Gleason found that the additional instruction did not have a negative effect on performance skills There was no statistically reliable difference between the groups in other studied areas This study corroborates other reports (by Lawler 1976, Swearingen 1993, Parker 1975, Gebhardt 1973, Whitener 1982) that adding non-performance information into band rehearsals does not adversely affect performance

² The *Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale* tests individual students’ playing skills by requiring them to play music of increasing difficulty until they make errors in most measures

Rachel Mercer (2000) developed a student workbook and teacher handbook for including music theory in beginning band classes. Her course is designed to be integrated into the regular rehearsal so that valuable practice time is not lost. The course includes treble and bass clefs, major key signatures (C, F, B^b, E^b), time signatures (4/4, 2/4, 3/4), note durations (quarter, half, whole, eighth, dotted half notes), major scale construction, intervals, binary and rondo forms, repeat sign, *D.C. al Fine*, and *D.S. al Fine*. The course is intended to be used after students have gained a “working range of notes” on their instruments (Mercer 2000, 17). It includes many playing examples and activities as well as composition exercises. Lessons are intended to last thirty minutes and combine group and individual activities. The Teacher Handbook includes suggestions for additional activities, including games, dictation, and arranging activities. Mercer states that teachers should draw students’ attention to the concepts being studied as they are encountered in the literature that is being rehearsed, so that students see that music theory is part of all music. (Ibid, 21) The literature used in Mercer’s course is limited to folk tunes, the theme from Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, and a few of her own compositions. Research has yet to be conducted comparing the effects of Mercer’s course to traditional beginning band methods.

1.6 High School Ensembles and Music Theory

For his Ph.D. dissertation (Music Education), Thomas J. Trimborn (1984) surveyed selected Illinois high school band directors for their opinions regarding band “masterpieces” that exemplify certain music-theoretical concepts. The band directors

were nominated by college band or music education faculty members who were familiar with the Illinois high school band program. These college faculty nominated high school teachers they considered “excellent,” based upon criteria furnished by Trimborn (ibid , 80). He found that none of the band directors in his study used any of the published curriculum guides, such as *Blueprint for Band* (Garofalo 2000), in their classes

The band directors were asked to list five band compositions that exemplify rhythm, five that exemplify melody, five that exemplify harmony, and five that exemplify texture. They then ranked the five nominations in each category according to their usefulness as teaching tools. One hundred ninety-nine unique pieces (original band compositions and transcriptions) were nominated, with many pieces being nominated in multiple categories. Trimborn’s respondents agreed more frequently on exemplars for rhythm and melody than on exemplars of harmony and texture. His findings show that many of the masterpieces identified by his respondents can be used to teach different musical elements. For example, he shows that according to his respondents Robert Russell Bennett’s *Suite of Old American Dances* (1952) can be used to teach its most prominent element (rhythm) as well as a strong secondary element (melody) (Trimborn 1984, 88)

In addition to the survey, Trimborn developed Model Instructional Units (MIU) to show how the selected musical elements could be taught using the compositions identified in the survey. Both the survey and the MIUs were critiqued by band directors in Palatine, Illinois. The MIUs were judged to be focused and useful; the critiquing band directors “unanimously indicated that they would use the plans in order to stress musical

concept [sic] in their rehearsals" (ibid . 104) They stated that they believed students would benefit by learning with the proposed MIU format. Four MIUs, grounded in Bruner's³ learning theory, are included in his dissertation

1.7 College Music Theory and College Performance

For his Ph.D. dissertation, Stephen Opfer (1996) surveyed California university band conductors to learn about their attitudes toward including musical disciplines other than performance in the band rehearsal. He found that most of the California conductors surveyed realized the importance of including music theory, aural skills, and music history in their teaching. However, the conductors were much less in favor of including technology, world music, and other arts in their lessons. While the conductors indicated that the band experience should include music theory, aural skills, and music history, they also emphasized that they did not approve of the rehearsal becoming a place for lectures.

All of the conductors believed that aural skills were "somewhat" or "very" important in band, and 95% of them believed that music theory was "somewhat" or "very" important. Opfer reports that several conductors commented that they believe bands play more intelligently when music theory and aural skills are intertwined.

Interestingly, most conductors claimed to make efforts to include music theory (90%) and aural skills (100%), but they did not include examples of how they did this.

³ Jerome Bruner's constructivist theory considers learning an active process. Students add new information to the body of knowledge and experience they already have about a subject. In the context of a unit based on a piece of band literature, this means that students can be prompted to observe different things about a piece each time they study it. For example, what students learn about *Suite of Old American Dances* when they first play it will provide background information for future studies of the piece. A thorough explanation can be found in Bruner's *Process of Education: Towards a Theory of Instruction* (1966).

Opfer includes his respondents' comments (ibid., 71-82), which generally support the synthesis of music disciplines in band rehearsals, but none of the comments provide descriptions of how the conductors actually do this in their classes. Although this dissertation does not deal with music education in Texas, it shows that college band directors are aware of the impact that various facets of music have on students' overall understanding of the music they perform in band. No similar study dealing with Texas university band conductors was available at the time that the present thesis was being prepared.

1.8. Resources for Teachers

Richard Weerts' *Handbook of Rehearsal Techniques for the High School Band* (1976) is intended to help band directors make efficient use of their rehearsal time. He includes a chapter on teaching rhythm, melody, and harmony during rehearsal, stating "It is widely accepted that a knowledge of music theory aids performance and is intrinsically intertwined with the development of musicianship" (Weerts 1976, 8). He suggests that brief music theory lessons be made a regular part of rehearsal, having been kept separate from music rehearsal until students have gained some knowledge. At that point, instruction should be woven into the music rehearsal itself, so that students will see how the theory relates to practice (ibid., 140). Weerts' suggested sequence of theory instruction begins with basics (clefs, pitch, note and rest values), before advancing to reading treble and bass clefs, singing four-part music, construction of major, minor, and chromatic scales, intervals, chords, and rhythm. Weerts notes (ibid., 147) that "it has

long been said that rhythm is the number one problem in music education today.” providing as examples his observations that “most bands do not execute a six-eight march as it should be played,” and that the “dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note in common time is usually played incorrectly.” Recommended activities include aural and visual identification of intervals and chords (arpeggiated and block), singing, composition, matching an aural example to its corresponding notation, and rhythmic dictation

The Band Director's Curriculum Resource (Ericksen 1997) is an excellent starting point for teaching music theory in band. Ericksen provides “concept statements” (succinct explanations of the concepts that band directors can use to teach their students), lesson plans, reproducible worksheets, group activities, and games. Her suggestion is that directors use the worksheets in class or as homework, rather than devoting the entire class period to music theory. The worksheets include a variety of question formats. The units could be taught as published, or out of sequence, and can be adapted to suit the individual class. Concepts include linear pitch, vertical pitch, duration, acoustics, style, and form. Ericksen provides thorough instructions for band directors and well-crafted “concept statements” for high school students. Middle school directors may need to simplify the language for younger students or spend more time on vocabulary. This resource is very well organized and sequenced.

The New ASBDA Curriculum Guide (American School Band Directors Association 1997) describes behavioral objectives for winds and for percussion in six areas: reading and interpreting notation, performance, analysis and composition,

evaluation “using critical thinking and listening skills,” history and cultural heritage, and participation in the musical life of the community through “involvement in local and regional music / arts opportunities” (ASBDA 1997, 14). While the *Guide*’s list of behavioral objectives for each level provides ideas that band directors can use to create their own curriculum, they focus more on motor skills than on music theory. Students are expected to perform music using specific rhythmic patterns, time signatures, and scales, but the band director is not given suggestions regarding how to teach these elements. Later in the *Guide*’s proposed framework, students are expected to identify form as well as harmony and to aurally identify whether specific elements are being performed correctly.

The *Guide* provides several good sample lessons or units and accompanying materials (ibid , 120-153) based on band literature. These samples can provide models for band directors to create their own lessons, utilizing literature to be performed by their own bands. Readers are provided with brief explanations of two approaches to band teaching: Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance (CM), and Arts PROPEL.

Blueprint for Band (2000) is another resource for teaching comprehensive musicianship through performance in band. Garofalo describes a curriculum that uses band literature as the basis for teaching various musical concepts and skills. Two types of instructional units are shown: the Unit Study (based upon one of the works being rehearsed for performance), and Special Study Units (for teaching general topics, or topics that do not apply to one specific piece). Garofalo explains how to analyze a piece of music that the director intends to use as a Unit Study. The director must analyze the

work's structural elements (harmony, rhythm, "bandstraton," dynamics, texture(s), and form), historical background, and technical demands. These analytical notes become part of the materials available for students to study during the unit. The director should also create a flow chart that provides a visual representation of the material in the analytical notes as well as a glossary of terms found in the piece and in the notes. Students should also receive study guides, showing rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic materials found in the piece, warm-ups, drills, or etudes based on the materials found in the piece, and instructions for assignments to be included in the Unit Study. In Chapter Four, Garofalo provides a nearly complete set of materials from a Unit Study based on Herbert Bielawa's band piece, *Spectrum* (1966). Activities included in Garofalo's proposed curriculum include listening assignments (as a class and individual), brief lecture, student performance, reading assignments, students marking instances of the concepts being studied in their parts, discussion, dictation (written or oral response), conducting assignments, field trips, performances by guest musicians, composition, and an assortment of projects.

Example Special Study Units dealing with conducting, transposition and scoring, as well as acoustics, tuning, and intonation are included in Chapter Five. The Special Study Units are intended to be used to teach topics that are broadly applicable. Garofalo specifically recommends that Units on sight reading, music fundamentals, music terms, as well as instrument care and maintenance be included every year.

Chapter Six explains how band directors can begin to implement parts of the proposed curriculum. Garofalo encourages readers to select the elements of his

curriculum that they find most useful or realistic and incorporate them first, rather than trying to overhaul the entire band program all at once. Garofalo provides guidance and model lesson materials, but band directors would need to invest time and energy into making their own analyses and lesson materials for pieces they select for their own students to play.

Teaching Musicianship in the High School Band (Labuta 2001) provides band directors with excellent theoretical and historical information as well as methods for teaching those concepts during rehearsal using band literature. It includes chapters on how to select and present music for the purpose of teaching musicianship, how to teach rhythm, melody and theme, harmony and texture, structure and form, how to evaluate students' learning in these areas, and how to "sell" a musicianship program to students and administrators. The teaching methods are drawn from Labuta's professional experience as a band music educator. He advocates using handouts so that all students have their own copies of the "musicianship" (theory, history, and aural skills) materials to which they can refer during lessons. Movement, listening, lecture, reading, analysis, arranging, and composition are components of Labuta's program. He stresses that teaching students about the music they perform helps them to be independent (ibid., 56). While there are many musical examples, all drawn from standard band repertoire, directors are encouraged to select additional literature and create their own lessons using the pieces selected for their ensembles. Labuta writes that band students seem to have more trouble with rhythm than with pitch, and thus rhythmic instruction should continue in high school (ibid., 42).

The *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band* series (Miles 1997-2009) may help with this process. The series provides band directors with preliminary analysis and performance information for hundreds of pieces of band literature. Volumes 1-7 deal with literature suitable for high school and advanced middle school bands, and the more recent *Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band* (Miles and Dvorak 2000-2007) deals with music appropriate for younger students. Each volume contains chapters written by band music educators, some of which include examples of teaching methods, but each band director must still design his or her own lessons. Companion recordings are available for each volume that include the pieces analyzed.

A study of the contents of the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, the *Journal of Band Research*, and the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* between 1998 and 2008 revealed one article dealing with teaching music theory in any instrumental music setting. This article, “The Effectiveness of Iconic-Based Rhythm Instruction,” discusses methods of rhythm instruction for the purpose of improving students’ performance in sight reading. The *Journal of Research in Music Education* contained articles that pertained to teaching solfege and sight singing skills to choral students, and the *Journal of Band Research* contained articles pertaining to teaching intonation skills to instrumental music students.

1.9. Materials Used to Teach Music Theory in School Band Rehearsals

The out-of-print *Essentials of Musicianship for the Band* by Maurice C. Whitney (1970) is not a method book, but rather a score and set of parts containing musical excerpts that

illustrate brief explanations of a variety of musical concepts. The *Essentials* contain ten units, five of which address topics relevant to this thesis: rhythm, melody, harmony, counterpoint, and form. A short written explanation of each topic and its component concepts is followed by at least one musical example, so that students can hear the element. For example, in the unit dealing with rhythm, the concept of meter is defined as “the measurement of beats by regularly recurring accent” (Whitney 1970, teacher’s edition, 8). Musical examples in 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, 3/8, and cut-time meters are included in student parts and in the conductor’s score (Whitney 1970, conductor’s score, 6). This text provides simple aural examples of the concepts, but does not include any written component in which students could practice constructing the scales, chords, or other elements shown. The level of language used in the explanations is appropriate for high school students, but the concepts and musical examples are appropriate for younger students. Musical examples include folk tunes, excerpts from classical music (J. S. Bach, Humperdinck, Purcell, Tchaikowsky), and the author’s own compositions.

Standard of Excellence is a band method book created by Bruce Pearson (1993) to teach beginning band using principles of comprehensive musicianship. Student books include written exercises for music fundamentals, music history, and general knowledge (world geography, foreign language). The conductor’s score includes frequent suggestions to the band director for including singing and aural skills activities in band rehearsals. Pearson’s suggested singing, aural skills, music history, geography, and language activities are succinct enough to be incorporated into a regular band class session. An accompanying text dealing with music history and theory is available to

supplement the introductory lessons in the *Standard of Excellence* method. Music theory activities include “fill in the note / rest,” note math, pitch, interval and scale identification, major scale construction, the keyboard, and brief composition assignments. Aural activities included in the conductor’s score consist of echo singing and echo clapping, error detection exercises, class discussion based on aural analysis of recorded or performed music, and dictation (having students learn songs by ear)

Five Minute Theory (Wessels 1998) is a set of student workbooks that provide short lessons and practice activities dealing with “basic music theory concepts,” rhythm reading, note spelling on the instrument” (ibid , cover). This music fundamentals text is suitable for groups of younger students. Certain worksheets would be suitable for homework more than in-class assignments. Several band directors whose survey responses are used in this thesis stated that they use *Five Minute Theory* with their middle school or high school bands. There are two books in this series, *Five Minute Theory Book II* continues the curriculum. Like the first book it is written in language that would be intelligible to middle school or early high school students

Essential Elements 2000 (Lautzenheiser, et al 1999) (hereafter: *EE2000*) is a widely used beginning band method book in the state of Texas. Book I will be discussed here because it is most widely used part of the three-level *EE2000* curriculum. After completing Book I, many bands “graduate” to a stage at which they no longer work with a method book; instead, they rehearse full-band literature and learn ensemble skills, rather than develop instrument skills, in rehearsal. The series can be used with homogeneous or heterogeneous classes and includes a few “band arrangements” that

include 3-4 independent musical lines. The lessons begin with a type of simplified music reading, in which the students learn a fingering and the name of its pitch and then “read” modified music notation. The modified notation at first shows only the pitch name and relative duration of the tone. Students are quickly introduced (on Student page 4) to pitch notation with note names shown inside the note-heads. On Student page 5, the pitch names are no longer shown inside the note-heads; meter signatures, clefs, and accidental signs are explained, and students are, presumably, reading the music.

Music theory instruction built into *EE2000* is presented as short definitions shown within colored boxes at the top of the page on which the element first appears in the music. In the introduction to the Teacher’s Edition (Lautzenheiser et al. 1999, 12), band directors are informed that *EE2000* has 36 history and theory features included in the student books. Some definitions are “simplified” enough to be misleading, or at least to require significant re-evaluation later in the student’s playing life. One example is the definition of “Key Signature” as something that “tells us which notes to play with sharps or flats throughout the music.” (Lautzenheiser et al. 1999, Conductor 45, Student 7.) Key signatures *do* give this information, but they do so in order to indicate tonality, not in order to instruct the player as to the fingerings of individual notes. A second problem with this definition is that it encourages students to think of B-flat as “B with a flat,” rather than as a separate pitch with its own fingering(s) and functions. The music in Book I is generally homophonic (textures including two to four independent parts appear occasionally in the second half of the book) and uses only simple meters.

Written quizzes focus on identifying and notating missing items, such as the meter signature or barlines. Composition exercises are also included much later in the text. “Teaching Tips” found throughout the Conductor’s Score suggest strategies for producing successful performances of the exercises.

By the time students have completed Book I, they have learned 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, common time, cut time, quarter note and rest, half note and rest, whole note and rest, eighth note and rest, dotted half note, dotted quarter note, B^b, E^b, F and A^b major concert keys, the concept of accidentals, generic intervals (2nds through octaves), the concept of a scale, the concept of harmony, and the concepts of antecedent and consequent phrases. In addition to the concepts listed above, percussionists learn sixteenth notes.

Aural skills are addressed in activities in which the teacher asks students to make observations about what they have played. The Conductor’s Score includes example discussion prompts to follow composition and arranging exercises, such as “Ask the class if they feel the composition’s last note is one that gives a feeling of finality or one that leaves the listener wanting more” (ibid., 102).

No research dealing with teaching music theory in middle school or high school band using unpublished materials created by band directors was found at the time that this thesis was being prepared. This area of research would require collection and analysis of the teacher-created materials.

CHAPTER 2.

METHOD

2.1 Development and Distribution of the Middle and High School Surveys

Two surveys including dichotomous as well as open ended questions were created and sent to middle school and high school band directors in six Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) regions in Texas.⁴ I developed the survey in collaboration with my thesis advisor, Dr. Nico Schöler. There was a small pilot survey of 5 band directors, some of whom were enrolled as graduate students in Texas State's music education program

Most survey questions were open ended so that the researcher's bias would not affect the band directors' responses. Questions regarding the music theory skills and concepts respondents considered "most important" for band members' success in class, music theory instructional goals, music theory instruction methods and their perceived efficacy, assessment methods, and rationale were open ended. Dichotomous questions included membership in a continuous multi-level music theory curriculum, whether or not music theory learning is assessed, use of published music theory instruction materials, and band directors' self-perception of their preparedness to teach music theory in band

⁴ Texas Music Educators Association provides competitions for students, advocacy for music education, and professional development activities for music educators

classes. Respondents were asked about their class duration, class time devoted to music theory instruction, and frequency of class meetings. The version of the survey sent to high school band directors included questions about the availability of Advanced Placement Music Theory at their schools. See the complete surveys in Appendices A and B.

The survey was distributed via postal mail because I was concerned that using online survey sites, such as www.surveymonkey.com, might create an unprofessional image of my research project. In retrospect, I believe that response rates might have been higher had I used such an online option. The Texas State University-San Marcos Department of Bands secretary provided me with mailing labels for all middle / junior high school band programs and all high school band programs in the survey area (see Figure 1.) Each mailout contained one copy of the survey, one addressed return envelope with postage, and a cover letter describing the research project, thanking the potential respondent for his or her time, providing instructions for completing the survey. Respondents were asked to return the completed form within two weeks of receipt. The rates of return were 5.3% for high schools and 6.3% for middle schools. The surveys were sent to band directors in TMEA regions 1, 7, 11, 12, 14, and 18, which include urban and rural, affluent and low-income areas, as well as areas with varying English language learner populations.

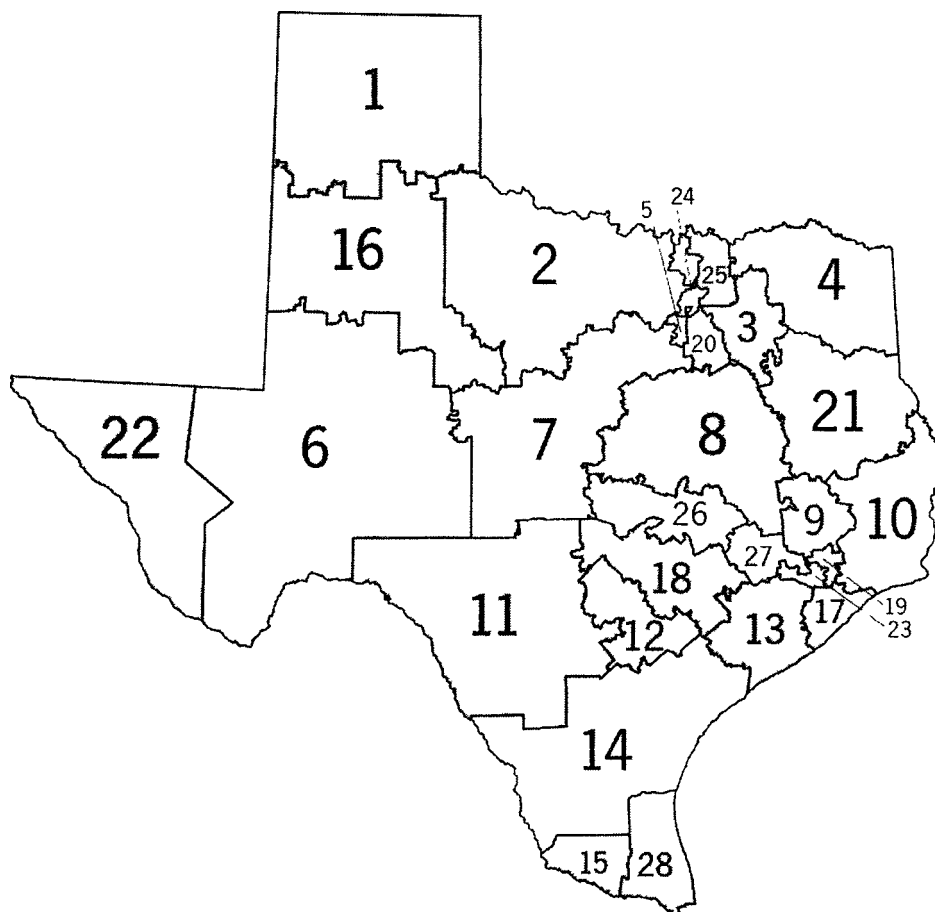


Figure 1. Texas Music Educators Association Region Alignment 2008-2009⁵

Potential respondents included band directors with varying levels of experience and with varying reputations. A goal of this study was to describe the integration of music theory instruction in Texas bands in general, not to limit the study to affluent or low-income areas, and not “excellent” bands or bands who tend to earn low ratings in performance competitions. The small sample makes it impossible to generalize the results

⁵ Used by permission from the Texas Music Educators Association

of this survey to the entire state, but the attempt was made to survey band directors teaching in a variety of circumstances

2.2 College Faculty Surveys

College music theory, music education, and band faculty were contacted via e-mail in order to gather information regarding their expectations of incoming freshman music majors. The institutions involved are four-year colleges and universities in Texas that offer Bachelor's programs in music education. Ten full time faculty members in each discipline were sent an e-mail survey consisting of open ended questions. Three music education faculty, four college band directors, and four music theory faculty responded.

CHAPTER 3.

RESULTS

3.1 Results of the Middle School Survey

Mailouts were sent to three hundred ninety-one middle school band directors in TMEA regions 1, 7, 11, 12, 14, and 18. Of these, twenty-five completed mailouts were returned, resulting in a 6 3% rate of return. Items shown in quotation marks in the following tables are exact quotes from the completed survey forms.

The first question on the middle school survey asked band directors to name the music-theoretical concepts they thought were most important for students in middle school bands. The responding band directors thought pitch was most important, followed by rhythm. Aural skills were significantly less important. Concepts that rely on an understanding of meter (such as “rhythm” or specific note values) were nominated, but only one respondent actually listed “time signatures” in his or her list of important concepts. Note identification, accidentals, and enharmonics (simple concepts) comprised nine of the pitch concepts, while key signatures, scales, and intervals (complex concepts) comprised fifteen. Table 1 shows responses to Question 1. Note that most of the survey questions, including this one, were open ended, so each respondent was able to list multiple items. Although only twenty-five middle school directors responded to the

survey, they listed a total of sixty music theory concepts in response to this question. In the following tables responses have been grouped by category.

Table 1. Most Important Music Theory Concepts Required in Middle School Band

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Pitch		25
Key signatures	8	
Intervals	4	
Accidentals	4	
Note ID	4	
Scales	3	
“Pitch”	1	
Enharmonics	1	
Rhythm		19
“rhythm”	11	
Note values	5	
“sense of time”	1	
Counting	1	
Time signatures	1	
Harmony		8
Chord structure	6	
Chord progressions	1	
“harmony”	1	
Aural Skills		2
“aural skills”	1	
Intonation aural skills	1	
Too vague to use		6
“notation”	3	
“transfer reading into performance skill”	1	
“reading skills”	1	
“all basic concepts”	1	

The second question asked whether the middle school bands were part of either a school district curriculum or a vertically aligned curriculum that included music theory. Less than half of the middle school directors ($n = 12$) reported being part of a school district-wide or feeder system-wide curriculum involving music theory. A feeder system is the series of elementary, middle, and high schools populated by students from a particular attendance area. In the Austin Independent School District (Austin, Texas), for example, this could consist of Brooke Elementary School whose students attend Martin Middle School. When those students leave Martin, they finish their mandatory school careers at Eastside Memorial High School. Table 2 shows responses to Question 2.

Table 2. Presence of a District-Wide or Feeder System-Wide Music Theory Curriculum as Reported By Middle School Band Directors

	N	%
Yes	12	48%
No	13	52%
Total	25	100%

The third question, asking band directors to describe a sample music theory lesson that they might teach during a rehearsal, provoked more vague responses than useful ones. Therefore, the question is not included in this discussion. Appendix C shows middle school survey responses as they were submitted by the band directors.

The fourth question asked what music theory goals the band directors had for 6th grade / beginning band and for the more advanced bands (7th and 8th grades). In the opinion of the responding directors, rhythm was the most important, followed by pitch. Note values were again emphasized over time signatures. Scales, intervals, and transposition, which require facility with pitch identification were emphasized over pitch

identification (“note names”) Harmony was absent from the respondents’ reported goals for sixth grade band students, and aural skills received only one nomination. Table 3 shows respondents’ goals for their beginning band students

**Table 3. Frequency of Reported Music Theory Goals by Grade Level:
6th Grade/Beginning Band**

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Rhythm		14
“note values”	7	
Time signatures	3	
“rhythm”	4	
Pitch		11
Scales		
- Major scales	3	
- Scale degrees	1	
- Scale Structure	1	
Note names	4	
Transposition	1	
Intervals	1	
Aural Skills	1	1
Other		1
Improvisation	1	
Too vague, Unusable, No answer		13

Respondents’ goals for their older students emphasized pitch over rhythmic concepts. Among the pitch concerns, single-line complex pitch concerns were slightly more important than harmony Pitch identification was given lower priority than were concepts requiring students to manipulate pitches Table 4 shows respondents’ goals for their older middle school students.

**Table 4. Frequency of Reported Music Theory Goals by Grade Level:
7th and 8th Grade Band**

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Scales		14
“additional scales”	6	
Minor scales	3	
Jazz scales	1	
Pentatonic scales	1	
“more scales”	1	
Arpeggios	1	
Scale construction	1	
Chords and Harmony		13
“harmony”	6	
Chord quality	4	
Chord function/progressions	2	
“chords”	1	
Rhythm		10
“advanced rhythms”	4	
Sixteenth notes	2	
Syncopation	1	
Triplets	1	
Time signatures	1	
“complex rhythm”	1	
Pitch		7
Intervals	4	
Key signatures	1	
Transposition	1	
Enharmonics	1	

The fifth survey question asked middle school directors how much time they devote to music theory. About one third of the mailouts were incorrectly copied, and those directors were not asked about the frequency of music theory instruction. The discussion below is based upon the fourteen valid responses. Due to the copying error, the response rate for this question was lower than for the rest of the survey. Table 5

shows that the average number of theory minutes per class was 6.8, and the average number of theory minutes per week was 25.9. The average percentage of class time respondents spent on music theory was 13%.

Table 5. Mean Amount of Time Middle School Directors Devoted to Music Theory Instruction

Average theory minutes per class	Class Duration	Times per Week	Average Theory min./wk
7.5	45	5	37.5
7.5	50	4	30
5	50	2.5	12.5
10	45	2	20
10	60	5	50
10	45	3	30
5	40	4	20
7	60	5	35
5	45	3	15
5	60	5	25
6.5	45	5	32.5
5	47	3	15
5	90	3	15
Varies	-	-	(one response)
Mean: 6.8	Mean: 52	Mean: 3.8	Mean: 25.9

The sixth survey question asked what methods of instruction the directors usually use to teach music theory. Among the responding directors, written work was the most often used method. Solitary written activities, such as worksheets, were used more often than “public” ones such as boardwork, and one respondent stated that his / her students use Finale Notepad software for some responses. Written work was significantly more often used than lecture, which was the second most frequently used method of instruction. Several respondents indicated that identifying feature(s) in the music being rehearsed was a method they use. None of those respondents specified whether the

identification was lecture (the director telling the students) or discussion (students responding to the director's questions) Student performance was used by approximately 20% of the respondents ($n=5$) Student performance included instrumental performance as well as oral responses (counting, naming pitches, naming intervals) Table 6 shows the methods respondents reported using to teach music theory.

Table 6. Reported Frequency of Methods of Instruction Used to Teach Music Theory in Middle School Band

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Written		17
Pencil and paper (textbook, worksheet)	11	
Boardwork	5	
Finale Notepad software	1	
Lecture		6
Student Performance		5
Students play, demonstrate on instruments	4	
Students count, name pitches, ID intervals	1	
Other		9
Identify feature(s) in the music being played	4	
Games	3	
Question and Answer	2	

The seventh survey question asked what methods the band directors considered most effective. None of the nominated methods was considered vastly superior to the others, but combining methods was found to be the most effective way to teach music theory in middle school bands. Most combinations involved lecture. Student performance

and written work were considered equally effective. Respondents were more divided regarding the most effective teaching methods than they were regarding which methods they used most frequently. Written work was most frequently used, even though it was not the most effective method. Student performance, third on the frequency list, was considered more effective than written work. Table 7 shows the respondents' most effective teaching methods.

Table 7. Most Effective Music Theory Teaching Methods as Reported by Middle School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Combination		5
Lecture / Pencil and paper	1	
Lecture / Playing	1	
Lecture / Boardwork / Aural example	1	
Boardwork / Playing	1	
Unspecified combination	1	
Student Performance		4
Playing	3	
Counting	1	
Written		4
Pencil and paper	4	
Other		5
Question and Answer	1	
Identify feature(s) in music	2	
Games	1	
Teacher modeling	1	
Too vague, no answer. unusable		4

The eighth question asked which methods the band directors considered least effective. Lecture and written work were equally low in reported efficacy although they

were the two most often used methods. Student performance was absent from the list of ineffective methods. Table 8 shows the teaching methods deemed least effective by the responding directors

Table 8. Least Effective Music Theory Teaching Methods as Reported by Middle School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Lecture		6
Pencil and paper		6
Oral Response (identification)		2
Other		3
Flash cards	1	
Note taking	1	
Unstructured composition	1	
Too vague or no answer		8

The responding band directors unanimously reported that they do assess their students' music-theoretical learning. Tables 9a and 9b show the responses to the ninth survey question, which asked whether the respondents assessed their students' music-theoretical learning and what assessment methods they used.

Table 9a. Reported Frequency of Assessment of Music Theory Learning: Middle School

	N	%
Yes	24	96%
No	0	0%
No answer	1	4%
Total	25	100%

According to the responding band directors the most frequently used methods of assessment involved student performance, especially instrumental performance. Assessments involving written responses were the second most frequently used. Assessment methods involving only one type of response were less commonly used than those that combined types of responses. Table 9b shows how respondents assess their students' music-theoretical learning.

Table 9b. Reported Frequency of Assessment Methods as Reported by Middle School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Combination		12
Written / Performance	4	
Written / Oral	3	
Performance / Oral	2	
Written / Performance / Composition	1	
Written / Performance / Oral	1	
Written / Game	1	
Performance only		7
Written only		4
Oral only		1

Question 10 asked whether the respondents used a textbook to teach music theory. Sixty-four percent of respondents ($n=16$) did not use a textbook, and two respondents

listed specific band method books or music theory texts in their answers to other survey questions. Their responses were included in the “yes” category. Table 10 shows textbook usage among responding middle school band directors.

Table 10. Reported Frequency and Percentage of Textbook Usage Among Middle School Band Directors

	N	%
Yes	9	36%
No	16	64%
Total	25	100%

Question 11 asked which textbook(s) the respondents use, and Question 12 asked why they use those books. Mark Wessels’ *Five Minute Theory* (Wessels 1998) was most often used, followed by the band method book *Essential Elements 2000* (Lautzenheiser, et al 1999). Responses to Question 11 included two types of teaching materials: workbooks and band method books. Table 11 shows the materials used by respondents to teach music theory. Both of these books are explored in detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The most common reason for using these textbooks was that they were easy for students at this level to understand. One respondent stated that he or she used “the band textbook,” but did not identify the book.

Table 11. Published Materials Used by Responding Middle School Band Directors to Teach Music Theory

Title	<i>n</i>
<i>Five Minute Theory</i>	5
<i>Essential Elements 2000</i>	2
<i>Theory Time</i>	1
<i>Master Theory, books 1 & 2</i>	1
Unspecified “band textbook”	1

The thirteenth question asked whether respondents taught music theory while rehearsing music (“in context”), or separate from rehearsal. Seventy-six percent ($n=19$) indicated that they teach in context only, while 12% ($n=3$) responded that they do both. Two of these indicated that they teach sixth graders separately and older band students in context. None of the respondents indicated that they only teach music theory separately from rehearsal. Table 12 shows that the respondents generally teach music theory in context.

**Table 12. Reported Contextual Locus of Music Theory Instruction
Among Middle School Band Directors**

	N	%
In context	18	72%
Separate	0	0%
Both	4	16%
No answer	3	12%
Total	25	100%

Most of the reported reasons for teaching music theory in context highlighted the need to connect music theory to music performance. Only two respondents indicated that they teach in context for other reasons (“students stay more focused,” and “not enough time for separate lessons”). Respondents who indicated that they taught both in context and separately varied their teaching scenario depending on the subject being studied and on the students being taught.

The final survey question asked whether the middle school band directors felt prepared to teach music theory in band. Eighty-eight percent ($n=22$) felt prepared, while one admitted he or she felt unprepared for this task.

3.2. Results of High School Survey

A version of the survey was sent to three hundred sixty-six high school band directors who teach in various parts of Texas. Nine mailouts were returned undeliverable, and four replies were unusable (schools with no band program). The mailouts therefore were sent to three hundred fifty-three potential respondents. Of those, nineteen usable replies were received, which constitutes a 5.3% rate of return.

The first question on the high school survey asked band directors to name the music-theoretical concepts they thought were most important for students in a high school performance ensemble. Directors were also asked to circle the concepts they taught explicitly in class, but many (nine of the thirteen useful responses to this question) listed concepts without circling any of them. Four respondents left this question unanswered.

The high school directors reported that rhythm was most important, followed by key signatures. Pitch-related concepts were reported as more important than time-related concepts. Although the results indicated that rhythm was the most important concept, time signatures were given much lower priority. Only one respondent specified that he or she taught both major and minor scales. The other six who listed “scales” did not specify whether this included both major and minor scales. Although “key signatures” were the second most important concept, no respondent mentioned whether both major and minor key signatures were taught. The band directors appear to assume that students understand written notation. Form and aural skills were not reported and may be neglected. Table 13

shows the music theory concepts that respondents consider most important for performing in a high school band.

Table 13. Most Important Music Theory Concepts Required in High School Band

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Pitch		31
Key signatures	11	
Scales	8	
Note reading (pitch)	6	
Intervals	6	
Rhythm		15
Rhythm (specific patterns, durations, “rhythm”)	12	
Time signatures	3	
Harmony		4
Chords	4	
Aural skills		2
Listening	2	

The second question asked whether the respondents’ band programs were part of a school district-wide or a feeder-system-wide curriculum involving music theory. Nearly 58% of responding high school directors ($n=11$) indicated that their bands were not part of a district-wide or feeder system-wide curriculum involving music theory Table 14 shows the general absence of a continuous curriculum involving music theory.

Table 14. Presence of a Continuous District-Wide or Feeder System-Wide Music Theory Curriculum as Reported by High School Band Directors

	N	%
Yes	7	37%
No	11	58%
No response	1	5%
Total	19	100%

The third survey question asked the high school directors to describe a sample music theory lesson. Fewer than half the respondents answered this question, and most listed music theory topics, rather than describing their teaching methods. Therefore, Question 3 is omitted from this discussion. Appendix D shows high school survey responses for all questions as they were given by respondents.

The fourth survey question asked how much time respondents devoted to teaching music theory. The amount of time devoted to music theory instruction varied substantially. Two replies were unusable due to illegibility or to lack of information (one respondent indicated that s/he used 25-30% of an unspecified class length). Another respondent teaches a separate music theory class, rather than including music theory in the band rehearsal (see the line marked with an asterisk in Table 15). High school band directors reported spending more time on music theory than the middle school band directors did. The middle school directors' mean time devoted to music theory instruction was 6.8 minutes per class period and 25.9 minutes per week, while the high school directors' mean was 9.4 minutes per class and 29 minutes per week. Responding high school directors' reported spending a mean of 15% of their class time on music theory instruction.

Table 15. Mean Amount of Time High School Directors Devoted to Music Theory Instruction

Minutes of Theory	Minutes of Class	Times per Week	Minutes of Theory per Week
7 5	50	3 5	26 25
(50)	(50)	(5)	(250*)
5	55	5	25
10	90	5	50
11 5	50	2 5	28 75
4	45	3	12
10	90	3	30
15	110	2	30
3 5	50	3	10 5
10	45	5	50
30	60	1	30
10	48	3 5	35
5	45	2 5	12 5
10	50	5	50
0	50	0	0
7 5	49	5	37 5
12 5	90	3	37 5
Mean: 9.4	Mean 61	Mean 3 25	Mean: 29

In response to the fifth survey question, high school band directors listed a wide variety of methods that they use to teach music theory. As is shown in Table 16, the most frequently mentioned method was lecture. Worksheets and teacher-generated visual models were second most frequently used. Written exercises in band method books, such as *Essential Elements 2000* (Lautzenheiser, et al. 1999), are included in the “worksheets” category.

Table 16. Reported Frequency of Methods of Instruction Used to Teach Music Theory in High School Band

Category and Method	N of Nominations	Examples as Given by Respondents
Student written response	8	Worksheet, band method book, music theory book, puzzle
Student performance response	7	Individual and group counting, singing, or playing examples
Lecture	5	
Teacher-generated visual model	4	Blackboard or overhead projector, teacher model
Student-generated visual model	2	Students write on board
Discussion	2	

Responses to this open ended question ranged from the usefully specific (“discussion, calling on students to do board work, lecture”) to the very ambiguous (“practical application as it occurs in the music”).

The sixth question asked which methods the high school directors found most effective in teaching music theory. They reported that individual written work was slightly more effective ($n=5$) than methods involving student performance ($n=4$). The five respondents who found written work most effective listed *Belwin Note Speller* (Weber 1951), *Advanced Fun With Fundamentals* (Laas and Weber 1966), *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson 1993), *Essential Elements 2000* (Lautzenheiser, et al. 1999), and an unspecified “band method” in response to this question. Lessons featuring lecture, written examples provided by the teacher on a projector or chalk board, oral responses, and teacher demonstrations were considered less effective than both written work and performance. Table 17 below shows the respondents views concerning effective teaching methods for music theory.

Table 17. Most Effective Music Theory Teaching Methods as Reported by High School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Written		5
Exercises in a band method book	3	
Exercises in a theory workbook	2	
Student Performance		4
Playing	3	
Playing or singing	1	
Other		3
Oral response	1	
Teacher modeling	1	
Combination (Written / Oral / Performance)	1	

The seventh survey question asked high school band directors to list the teaching methods they found least effective in teaching music theory. Written work was the most frequent response ($n=7$), followed by reading a textbook, lecture, and peer teaching. Written work was not completely dismissed, but the responding directors indicated instruction that used only written work, or that called for lengthy written assignments, was ineffective. Responses to this question are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Least Effective Music Theory Teaching Methods as Reported by High School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Written		7
Computer-based	1	
Pencil and paper only	1	
Worksheets that are too advanced	1	
Lengthy written assignments	1	
“Making them do it for the sake of a worksheet”	1	
Worksheet	1	
Worksheet without discussion	1	
Other		7
Book	3	
Lecture	3	
Peer teaching	1	

Survey question 8 asked whether the high school directors assessed their students’ learning in music theory. Eighty-four percent ($n=16$) did, but three did not. Table 19a below shows responses to Question 8.

Table 19a. Reported Frequency and Percentage of Assessment of Music Theory Learning: High School

	N	%
Yes	16	84%
No	3	16%
Total	19	100%

Written assessment was most common among the responding high school directors. The second most frequent response was the use of a combination of methods for assessment. These are listed in Table 19b. Assessments relying exclusively on performance or oral responses were less prevalent.

Table 19b. Reported Frequency of Assessment Methods as Reported by High School Band Directors

Category and Method	<i>n</i> of Nominations	N of Nominations
Written		7
Combination		4
Written / Performance	2	
Written / Oral response	1	
Oral response / Performance	1	
Performance		3
Oral Response		1

The ninth survey question asked whether the high school directors used a textbook to teach music theory. The majority ($n=13$) of respondents did not use a textbook, and one band director stated that he or she used a textbook some of the time. Table 20 shows textbook usage among responding band directors.

Table 20. Reported Frequency and Percentage of Textbook Usage Among High School Band Directors

	N	%
Yes	6	32%
No	13	68%
Total	19	100%

The tenth survey question asked which textbooks were used. As in Question 11 of the middle school survey (Table 11), respondents listed more than one type of published material in response to this question. *Tonal Harmony* (Kostka and Payne 2009), *Master Theory Workbooks* (Yoder and Peters 1963), and a textbook referred to as “Theory I – Musicianship” were the books that the responding directors used. Reasons for using these

materials were given in response to survey Question 11. The user of *Tonal Harmony* selected that book because it is “thorough but stepwise,” the user of the *Master Theory Workbooks* used them because of their “step by step instruction” and the fact that examples and exercises were on facing pages. The book referred to as “Theory I – Musicianship” was selected because it has “good content” and is “well put-together,” but the author of this thesis was unable to locate a textbook or workbook with this title. *Tonal Harmony* is a common text in college music theory classes, while the *Master Theory* series is introductory in nature and is written in simpler language. It does not include the breadth and depth that is found in *Tonal Harmony*.

Survey Question 12 asked whether the high school directors taught music theory in context or separate from rehearsal. Question 13 which asked the reasons for teaching in context or separate from rehearsal. Only one respondent indicated that he or she taught theory exclusively separate from rehearsal. That person elaborated, stating that this was due to a curricular requirement that music theory be a separate course. Three respondents indicated that they taught both ways, depending upon the content and the music being rehearsed. Seventy-nine percent of respondents ($n=15$) stated that they taught theory in context. The primary reason for this was that it made the theory more meaningful to students when they were able to experience it (see, hear, feel) and apply it. Table 21 shows the directors’ responses to Question 12.

**Table 21. Reported Contextual Locus of Music Theory Instruction
Among High School Band Directors**

	N	%
In context	15	79%
Separate	1	5%
Both	3	16%
Total	19	100%

The fourteenth question asked about the availability of AP Theory on their campuses. The high school directors were asked to indicate which of three options applied to their program:

- 1) AP Theory is offered and required of a particular group (space was left for them to specify the group).
- 2) AP Theory is offered and not required, or
- 3) AP Theory is not offered

None of the respondents required any of their students to take AP Theory, and only three directors indicated that the course was even offered at their school. One band director whose campus did not offer AP Theory stated that s/he taught a theory course, but the course was not affiliated with the AP program. The availability of AP Theory among the responding directors' schools is shown in Table 22.

Table 22. Reported Frequency and Percentage of Availability of Advanced Placement Music Theory

	N	%
Not offered	16	84%
Offered / Not required	3	16%
Offered / Required of specific group	0	0%
Total	19	100%

The final survey question asked whether the high school directors felt prepared to teach music theory in band. Eighty-nine percent ($n=17$) reported that they felt prepared, while only two felt unprepared

3.3. Results of College Level Inquiries

College music theory, music education, and band faculty from four-year colleges and universities that offer Bachelor's programs in Music Education were surveyed regarding their expectations of and experiences with freshmen entering as music majors. The institutions included five public universities (University of Houston, University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Texas at Austin, University of North Texas, Texas State University) and one private university (Baylor University). Four music theory professors, three music education professors, and four college band conductors participated in this project. Each of the four music theory faculty who replied indicated that their institution administers a test of incoming freshmen's music theory knowledge. Music theory topics tested by these institutions included pitch notation, rhythm notation, scales, key signatures, interval writing, and triads. Texas State's exam tests seventh chords, figured bass reading, and harmonic analysis in addition to these concepts.

The four college band conductors who participated hoped that freshmen entering their ensembles had a good command of chord structures, major and minor tonality, scales, key signatures, clefs, intervals, rhythm reading, and sight singing skills. Two of the conductors included transposition in their lists of desired background knowledge

Neither transposition nor aural skills (including sight singing) were included in the high school band directors' survey responses.

CHAPTER 4.

DISCUSSION

4.1. Discussion of Survey Results

Both middle school and high school band directors agreed on the same set of music-theoretical concepts that were most important for band students and placed them in the same order of importance. Pitch concepts were considered most important, followed by rhythm. Within both categories and at both academic levels, directors emphasized complex concepts over simple ones. Harmony and aural skills were third and fourth most important, respectively. The low importance placed on harmony by teachers at these levels contrasts with the music theory information college theory faculty considered important for ensemble performance (tonal harmony: harmonic, melodic, rhythmic information that defines cadences, phrases, harmonic progressions, form). College band conductors who participated in this study hoped that their students understood harmonic concepts (chord structure, major, minor, and occasional modal tonality), in addition to music reading.

The high school survey responses indicated a pronounced lack of availability of AP Music Theory. This means that band is many students' main (or only) source of information about the way music works. Most middle school and high school band

directors indicated that they do not use a textbook and that their programs were not part of a continuous music theory curriculum. Fifty-six percent of the responding middle school band directors and 57% of responding high school directors indicated that their bands were not part of such a curriculum. This is despite the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills*, which provides a framework for creating a continuous curriculum. Such a curriculum could help ensure that graduating seniors arrive on college campuses with similar theory backgrounds.

When asked about music theory goals they had for their beginning students, the responding middle school band directors placed most emphasis on rhythm, even though they considered pitch concepts most important for performance in band. Pitch concepts were the second highest category among the respondents' goals for beginning band, but were considered most important for performance. The order of importance was different for advanced middle school bands (7th and 8th grades), with pitch concepts coming first and understanding harmony being the second goal. Responding high school band directors considered pitch concepts to be most important for performance in band. Rhythm was second-most important, and harmony was third most important. Harmony was a more important goal for the middle school and college faculty than for the high school band directors.

Contrary to Tipton's 1998 finding that music theory instruction time decreases as the educational level of the students increases, responding high school directors in this survey reported spending more time on music theory than middle school directors did. The high school directors devoted an average of 15% of the period on music theory, while the middle school directors reported spending an average of 13% of the period on

music theory. The single high school director who taught a separate music theory course reported that his or her course was based upon the UIL⁶ State Music Theory Contest. This was the only mention of the UIL event for music theory.

Both middle school and high school directors reported using written work most often. Middle school directors used lecture second most and student performance third most frequently. High school directors reported using student performance second and lecture and public written work (such as writing on a chalkboard) third most frequently. Although the middle school band directors used written work most often, they reported that combinations of instructional strategies were most effective, especially combinations involving an active response such as playing, clapping, or singing. High school directors used written work most often and found it most effective. Student performance was considered second most effective at both levels, and high school directors indicated that combining methods was least effective.

Middle and high school directors disagreed regarding the least effective methods for teaching music theory. The middle school directors indicated that lecture and individual written work were equally ineffective, although they were the most frequently used at this level. High school directors reported that written work, their most used and most effective method, was also the least effective.¹ Examination of high school directors' responses shows that they found written work ineffective when it is used alone, when assignments are too long, or when assignments involve too many concepts. This suggests that high school directors probably use combined techniques more often than they

⁶ The University Interscholastic League is a non-profit organization founded by the University of Texas. It organizes and governs extracurricular competitions in music, sports, and other disciplines. Further information is available from <http://www.uil.utexas.edu/>

reported in their answers to Question 6. High school band directors considered lecture to be more effective than the middle school directors did. This could be related to the longer attention spans that high school students possess.

All responding middle school band directors and most responding high school directors reported that they assess their students' music theory learning. Middle school directors used combinations involving written assessment most ($n=10$). Combinations involving performance were the next most frequent category ($n=8$), followed by performance-only assessments ($n=7$). Overall, middle school directors expressed a slight preference for assessments involving performance ($n=15$) over those involving written responses ($n=14$). Methods using only written or oral responses and combinations utilizing oral responses were unpopular among the responding middle school directors. The responding high school directors expressed a significant preference for assessment methods involving written responses ($n=10$), followed by those involving performance ($n=6$). Assessments involving written responses only were most frequently used at the high school level. Oral responses were least frequently used, among the respondents in both school levels surveyed.

Use of published materials for teaching music theory was infrequent among both groups, with 36% of responding middle school directors and 31% of responding high school directors using some kind of textbook. Music theory workbooks were most often used (eight middle school respondents and three high school respondents). Band method books were commonly used in both middle school and high school for teaching music theory. The music theory instructional materials that some respondents reported using

were very basic (*Five Minute Theory*, *Theory Time*, *Note Speller*, etc), while one was suitable for use in college music theory courses (*Tonal Harmony*)

In-context teaching was most common among both middle and high school band directors. The college conductors who participated in this study indicated that they also discuss music theory concepts during rehearsal. The most frequently cited reason for teaching in context was to highlight the connection of music theory to music performance.

4.2 Limitations of This Study

The small sample size and poor return rates resulted in results that could not be generalized to larger populations. The internal validity of this study was compromised because the measurement tool was not administered consistently. Despite the pilot survey, one survey question appears to have been poorly written (Question 3 on both versions of the survey). Finally, the manner in which the survey was administered, postal mail, required more effort on the part of the respondent than surveys conducted via e-mail or through the use of an online form. The amount of effort required of the respondents probably contributed to the low response rates. Respondents who completed the survey may hold stronger views about teaching music theory in band than potential respondents who chose not to complete the survey.

CHAPTER 5.

THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

5.1. College Teaching

In my three semesters as a graduate assistant at Texas State University-San Marcos, I have taught two sections of the remedial music theory course (Essential Musicianship) and one section of Aural Skills I. I have also tutored undergraduates in all levels of music theory and aural skills at Texas State

The typical student enrolled in the remedial course is a freshman with recent ensemble performance experience in his or her high school chorus, band, or orchestra. Students who audition for the School of Music take an aural skills placement exam and a music theory placement exam on their audition day. Transfer students and those who have taken AP Music Theory may take placement exams in order to be placed into a suitable higher level of Music Theory and Aural Skills. Students who fail the entry level placement exam are encouraged to take Essential Musicianship before attempting Music Theory I.

The students in my sections of Essential Musicianship had a variety of gaps in their music theory knowledge. Stages of proficiency ranged from near musical illiteracy to students who had a good grasp of music reading, but lacked knowledge of how music

functions. The latter group could read a passage, but might not be aware of how particular notes and chords function within a key. Many students in the Essential Musicianship course knew major key signatures, but did not know how to find the key signature of a minor key. Most students had not learned to spell chords and had not learned about functional harmony. Because of the varied musical backgrounds of the Essential Musicianship students, instruction had to begin with the most basic elements of music. Teaching this course was complicated by two non-musical factors. The first was that several students in each section resented being placed in that course, rather than in Theory I. They had been in band, orchestra, or choir for years and had been successful, so they believed they “knew music” already. The second non-musical complicating factor was the varying knowledge levels that class members possessed.

5.2. Successful and Unsuccessful Approaches

Strategies that worked were generally those that required the students to be active participants in their learning. While the written workload was heavy, students often worked in groups and compared strategies when working with new theory items. Commonly missed items on written homework assignments became the subject of class discussions, and students were encouraged to write the corrections or take notes on the worksheet itself so that they could refer to them while studying. Students in both sections of Essential Musicianship completed “scavenger hunt” assignments that required them to find recorded examples of major tonality, minor tonality, simple meters, and compound meters. Repertoire from students’ lessons and ensembles — as well as popular music —

was used for analysis projects. Due in part to my own annoyance at answering the same questions repeatedly, I emphasized class discussion. After the initial lesson, rather than my giving students “the answer,” class members explained concepts and procedures to one another. Singing, musical memory, and movement activities were included on about one third of class days to prepare students for the demands of Aural Skills I and to provide them with a visceral and aural experience of the concepts being studied.

Currently, teaching Aural Skills I, I routinely ask students to check their dictation answers against what they have learned in music theory. I direct them to check for “logical” chord progressions, agreement between their notated basslines and the inversions of their analyses, and agreement between the notated melodies and their harmonic dictation (as shown by writing Roman Numeral analysis below the melody). Dictation assignments have included portions of Black Sabbath’s *Iron Man* (1970), Gustav Holst’s *Suite No. 1 in E-flat Op. 28, No. 1* (1909), his *Suite No. 2 in F Op. 28, No. 2* (1911), and Johan Halvorsen’s *Entry March of the Boyars* (1895). Other activities I have used successfully in this class include aural identification (of cadences, major and minor tonality, triad types, rhythmic patterns, meters) using recordings of band, orchestra, choral, and popular music, and having students write and perform their own melodies for class dictation. Active class days that approach one element from several different perspectives have been the most effective.

In agreement with the high school band directors’ comments, I have found that lessons that include too many skills and concepts or rely solely on written work are the least effective. In my experience, lessons that require students to use theoretical

information to accomplish a musical task tend to be most effective. This is also in accordance with the high school band directors' survey responses.

5.3. Middle School and High School Teaching

During student teaching in Fall 2006 (Paredes Middle School, Austin, Texas) and Spring 2007 (Deerpark Middle School, Round Rock, Texas) as well as employment at Johnston High School (Austin, Texas, Fall 2007), I was privileged to work with band students at the middle school and high school levels. At both schools, each class period included band method book work as well as sectional rehearsal of the literature being prepared for upcoming concerts. 7th and 8th grade classes spent nearly the entire class period rehearsing music; Deerpark Middle School students' warm-up routine often used a scale or sight-reading book. During my placements at both schools, I observed very little explicit theory instruction in the 7th and 8th graders' classes. While rehearsing "Mars" from Gustav Holst's *The Planets* Op. 32 (1914-16) with Deerpark Middle School's Honor Band, I taught the students several complex rhythmic patterns and a new meter (5/4). They were receptive to the question-and-answer format of the lesson, and were able to identify and correct rhythmic problems during rehearsal after the lesson.

I also had the opportunity to conduct the Symphonic Band as they rehearsed an Armed Forces medley. The band was familiar with the piece, and the cut-time sections (Marines, Army, Navy songs) were played without incident. When we got to the Air Force song, which is in 6/8 meter, the piece fell apart. Although these 7th and 8th graders had "learned" 6/8 in beginning band and had played pieces entirely in that meter, they

had not encountered it recently, and there had been no review before this attempt at rehearsing it. I neglected to review the meter because of the limited amount of time allocated to rehearsing that piece. This, I suspect, is one of the reasons that many band directors neglect explicit instruction or review of music theory elements, and it resulted in spending *more* time on the piece than might have been necessary if I had included a brief review. The head band director reviewed meter with the brass and woodwinds, and I was asked to re-teach the percussion section separately. The percussionists in this band claimed not to have worked with compound meters since the previous year. They were able to perform the Air Force section of the medley alone, but were not able to reliably switch between cut-time and 6/8 during subsequent rehearsals. The percussionists were more attached to the idea that two eighth notes always equal one beat than the wind players were. They were also the only group of instrumentalists whose like-instrument class in 6th grade, and sectional rehearsals in later grades, were not taught by the band directors. The percussionists were taught by an instructor whose primary duties were to the high school band.

During my semester of teaching lessons and assisting the band at Johnston High School in Austin, Texas, I had frequent occasions to teach music fundamentals to individuals and small groups of students. During this semester, the band performed a marching show during football half-times, and it performed in parades in their community. The marching show repertoire was based on jazz and Motown music. The students that I worked with mostly ignored their personal copies of the sheet music and attempted to imitate the band director's sung versions of their parts. A typical problem

for the students in this program is one I encountered with several students that I taught in private lessons: they were unaware that “B” and “B-flat” were two distinct musical entities.

Full-band rehearsals at Johnston began with scale-based warmups. The band director attempted to teach students the mixolydian mode, relating it to the major scale. He had the band play the B-flat major scale, verbally corrected the many students who clearly did not know this scale, and then instructed them to play the “B-flat scale starting on F.” Only the few students who had played the B-flat major scale correctly – most of those whose private lessons consisted of refining their performance, rather than teaching basic music reading – were able to complete this task. Johnston High School’s band was not a typical Austin Independent School District band, but its students’ lack of progress show how detrimental it is when band directors neglect to teach basic music theory. Several of the students indicated that they had never learned basic information such as how sixteenth notes relate to quarter notes, how a dot influences rhythmic values, or how to interpret a time signature. Due to consistently low performance on standardized tests, Johnston was closed in 2008. The campus is now home to Eastside Memorial High School. It was my experience that the students who learned fundamentals in their private lessons were able to apply those lessons to new music (several students were preparing for the UIL Solo and Ensemble contest) and to their marching band music.

In all three levels of band at both middle schools, as well as at the high school level, I witnessed varied levels of musical understanding among the students. Many were adept at deciphering music notation and using printed music to learn their parts. There

were also many students who were not proficient in these skills. and they implemented a variety of strategies to cope in class. Strategies that I personally encountered were:

- Memorization of what they believed was on the page
- Made up a part
- No evidence of practice
- Faked playing or did not perform in class
- Mimicked their sectionmates' fingerings and slide positions and played along with them
- Memorized the correct part after being taught by rote

Students with limited skills in dealing with printed music needed to be taught that set of skills (pitch identification, rhythm notation, meter, key signatures) before they could be taught to use that information in class or at home. They rarely participated in class discussions or answered my questions to compare that day's "problem" (as in the Armed Forces Medley situation described above) to their prior experience. Integration of music theory instruction in the full-band rehearsal required more planning than theory lessons that were taught in sectional rehearsals or private lessons, but they did not consume large quantities of class time and they saved time that could have been wasted on re-“teaching” melodies and rhythms by rote. The bands' repertoires and students' solo music provided a readily available source of examples and musical tasks. Teaching music theory elements that students used immediately in performance made the abstract theory explicitly relevant and useful to these middle and high school students. Using band, orchestra, or

choral literature and highlighting the application of college aural skills and music fundamentals has also been helpful in teaching those courses

CONCLUSIONS

Students who participate in the surveyed ($n=44$) bands in Texas schools receive varied music theory instruction. Many of them have probably not been offered the opportunity to take Advanced Placement Music Theory, and their middle school and high school band experiences may or may not have been connected via a logically sequenced music curriculum. Comparing the results of the surveys used in this thesis with Tipton's 1998 findings suggests that more class time is devoted to music theory instruction in today's band classes. College faculty reported that music theory is important in ensemble performance (surveys and Opfer 1996) and that band members perform more independently when music theory and aural skills are integrated.

The middle and high school surveys revealed a great variety in methods and materials used to teach and assess music theory at these levels. On the surface, music theory instruction appeared to be fairly continuous, since instruction was occurring at both levels. However when the goals and topics taught at the middle school level are compared with the topics considered important for performance in high school band and when the expectations of college faculty are compared with the emphases reported by high school band directors, misalignments can be observed.

Teachers at the middle and high school levels emphasize complex understanding of pitch, meter, and rhythm. However, they appear to devote less class time to the simple

pitch, meter, and rhythm concepts that are necessary in order to make the advanced concepts understandable. A student cannot be expected to identify or construct scales or chords without having a firm grasp of pitch identification. Specific rhythmic patterns mean very little without the framework of meter. The lack of a cohesive curriculum for music theory persists despite the existence of the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* and of the commercially available resources (curriculum guides and methodology books) discussed in the Review of Literature.

The authors of each of the items discussed in the Review of Literature state that band directors are music teachers, and that music teachers' responsibility is to teach students *about* music *through* performance. The literature review also revealed a consensus that teaching conceptually does not harm performance skills, and that students find instruction more meaningful when it is connected to their lives. For band students, this means that music theory can be made more meaningful by providing information that is useful to them in rehearsal. Edwin Gordon's music learning theory advises that students should be introduced to new musical concepts before they are expected to use them. The band method books that survey respondents used do not use this approach. Instead, new theoretical elements are introduced at the time that they are to be used in performance. Furthermore, most band programs and directors in Texas may not have been exposed to any of Edwin Gordon's theories.

Both Weerts (1976) and Labuta (2001) mention that band students' main problem is often in rhythm reading. In my own teaching and tutoring, I have found that band students typically outperform choral students in the areas of rhythmic dictation and

rhythm performance. Band, orchestra, and choral students seem to have similar abilities for pitch reading, but I have found band students' aural skills to be generally weaker than those of choral students. This makes perfect sense, considering the low emphasis that responding middle and high school band directors placed on aural skills.

It is important to prepare high school students who wish to major in music for the realities of the college music curriculum. Music theory faculty reported that some institutions offer a leveling course for students whose music theory knowledge is lacking but others do not. Advanced Placement Music Theory is not offered to all band students in Texas, so it cannot be relied upon to prepare students. Band directors must provide their students with a music education that includes music theory as well as performance training.

Listed below are suggested strategies for integrating music theory in band classes.

1. Include music theory instruction in the regular ensemble rehearsal. These lessons should be short enough that they do not break the pace of the regular rehearsal. Spend a few minutes teaching theory in each rehearsal, rather than devoting a full class period to it occasionally.
2. Base the theory lessons on music being studied in class. Dissonant harmonies, complex rhythms, unusual scales, and other elements in modern band literature can provide material for teacher-created warmups or lessons. Isolate the concept (5/4 time in Holst's *Mars* or a pentatonic scale as in "Sakura, Sakura" *Essential Elements 2000*) and teach students about it a priori and then transfer it to the piece.

3. Use methods with high levels of student involvement. Games, discussions, and “hands on” methods will keep students’ attention and show them how music theory relates to their lives in band.
4. Utilize student compositions: This is required by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and it allows the teacher an opportunity to check students’ ability to apply theory concepts, as opposed to merely identifying them

APPENDIX A.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SURVEY

Music Theory Instruction in Middle School Bands

Purpose: This survey asks for information about your band program's music theory component

1. What do you think are the most important music theory skills or concepts required in a performing ensemble class, and why?
2. Is your school part of a district or feeder system curriculum involving music theory?
Y / N
3. Briefly describe a sample lesson from your program's music theory component:
4. What instructional goals do you have for each grade level regarding music theory?

6th grade.

7th + 8th grade.
5. How much time per day do you devote to music theory instruction?
(example: 7 minutes of 50 minute class period)

_____ minutes of _____ minute class period _____ times per week
6. List the methods of instruction that you usually use to teach music theory?
7. Of these methods, which do you find MOST effective?
8. Which methods are LEAST effective? (You may include methods you have tried and abandoned.)

APPENDIX A (continued)

9 Do you, and how do you, assess students' understanding and retention of music theory concepts?

Assessment yes / no

How

10 Do you use a textbook for music theory? Yes / No

11. If you use a textbook, which one?

12. Why do you use this particular text? (List the top two or three reasons)

13. Do you teach music theory in context, or separate from "real music"? In context / separate

14. Why?

15 Do you feel prepared to teach music theory in band? Yes / No /
Sometimes

APPENDIX B

HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY

Music Theory Instruction in High School Bands

Purpose· This survey asks for information about your band program's music theory component.

1. What do you think are the most important music theory skills or concepts required in a high school performing ensemble class, and why? Please circle the ones you explicitly teach in class

2. Is your school part of a district or feeder system curriculum involving music theory?

Y / N

3. Briefly describe a sample lesson from your program's music theory component.

4. How much time per day do you devote to music theory instruction?

(example: 7 minutes of 50 minute class period)

_____ minutes of _____ minute class period _____ times per week

5. What methods of instruction do you usually use to teach music theory?

6. Of these methods, which do you find MOST effective?

APPENDIX B (continued)

7 Which methods are LEAST effective? (You may include methods you have tried and abandoned)

8. Do you, and how do you, assess students' understanding and retention of music theory concepts?

Assessment yes / No

How:

9 Do you use a textbook for music theory? Yes / No

10. If you use a textbook, which one?

11. Why do you use this particular text? (List the top two or three reasons)

12. Do you teach music theory in context, or separate from "real music?" In context / separate

13. Why?

14. Does your school offer AP Music Theory, and do you require any of your band members to take it?

AP Theory is offered & is required of _____ / Is offered & is not required / Not offered

15. Do you feel prepared to teach music theory in band? Yes / No

APPENDIX C

RESPONSES AS GIVEN BY MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS

1. What do you think are the most important music theory skills or concepts required in a performing ensemble class, and why?

- Aural skills
- rhythmic understanding, key signature relationships, and use of accidentals
- An understanding of key (tonality), chord structure, note values / rhythm
- note identification (half, quarter, eighth, dotted quarter, dotted half, whole), rhythmic concepts, basics of music that transfer from any medium of music instruction
- At the middle school level, counting (i.e. note values) and note names. These are necessary basic skills
- Note values, sense of time
- Key sig and accidentals
- Besides the most basic skills such as rhythm, key signatures and dynamics, I think that students need to understand chords and their progressions. In order to play well in tune, one must understand the chord structure
- Scales / intervals – They are the most useful on a practical basis
- Basic skills: rhythm, note recognition, scale types, etc. These seem most important because these are the skills students use every day in band and also the ones we have to review the most
- I teach junior high so intervals and basic chord theory is what, I feel, is most beneficial.
- Notation, key signatures, rhythm, note values
- Counting (rhythm). Key signature. Both directly related to performance and success in sightreading
- Ability to read music notation and transfer that knowledge into a performing skill.

- Naming notes, reading a key signature, counting rhythms in various time signatures
Knowing music terms such as dynamic levels, articulations, and tempo
- Any and all skills that promote music literacy I do not stress one over another My students sight-read with musicality
- Basics of music required to perform on the instruments beginning with note names and rhythms and progressing as students progress
- At this level, basic reading skills and a strong understanding of musical jargon This allows us more time to work on the music rather than just the notes
- Rhythm before melodic intervals. the notes are easier to add after rhythmic understanding / competence Expression terms and notations
- Yamaha Harmony Director (harmonic) (chordal). Terminology Rhythmic understanding, basic melodic and harmonic concepts
- All basic concepts are important because the understanding of each concept leads to better performance.
- 1) Counting rhythms, 2) Key, 3) Time signature
- No response
- All applicable notation and symbols, especially enharmonics. chords and tuning skills They support the playing ability of the ensemble
- Know lines / space letter names, key signatures, accidentals (for basic note reading), intervals (whole / half step). Major / minor triads (for tuning purposes). Time signatures – counting rhythm (whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes and corresponding rests) to play rhythms correctly, Major / chromatic scales (learn fingerings)

2. Is your school part of a district or feeder system curriculum involving music theory?

Yes: 12

No 13

3. Briefly describe a sample lesson from your program's music theory component:

- Middle school lesson – basics of scales, triads. concepts of melody / harmony / acc / aural discrimination skills. interval recognition
- Music theory is a formal class offering at the high school only

- Order of sharps and flats / names of key signatures
- Kodaly based – elementary instruction
- Note names and values done on the board and then in handout form
- Discuss notes, note values, time
- No response
- Students use prior knowledge to compose a simple 4 to 8 measure work
- No response
- Teaching rudimentary chord recognition through sight and sound Used in concert and jazz ensembles
- We use chord tuning drills, whereas a root will be played followed by a fifth, then a third They have a basic understanding of this theory
- Note value tree
- Count rhythm sheets, Spelling scales in tetrachords, Playing scales
- We use *5 Minute Theory* – Mark Wessels We use *Essential Elements 2000* band text that includes theory concepts
- I lecture and write examples of the theory on the board The students get homework on lesson. See attached homeworks (attached. worksheets from unidentified sources)
- For beginners the “math” of note values is practical (also tied to TEKS). Students place one hand above knee. They move the other hand up & down down being number of the beat and up “and” of the beat Students say rhythm
- Lessons are incorporated in performance-based classes *Essential Elements* has theory based on progress in performance book
- Elementary music, 5th grade basic theory H.S. – College music prep class – theory, history, ear training.
- Application. informal and formal application (performance) of generalizations, concepts, facts, and theorems
- For the 6th grade – *5 Minute Theory* with supplementary materials and Rhythm Bee
- N/A I teach band only.
- Utilize self made supplemental material in the 7th-8th grade / 6th grade *5 Minute Theory* by Wessels
- Only in band textbook

- Sponge activities, written supplemental classwork. Written exams and applicable skills / vocabulary on playing tests. Some HS students take the State theory test
- None

4. What instructional goals do you have for each grade level regarding music theory?

6th grade

- Basic notation (1 staff), transposition; aural discrimination in major keys, perfect, major, minor intervals
- Independence of note reading
- Note values (subdivision of 4), key signature, time signature
- Identify notes on staff relating to their instrument; whole, half, quarter, dotted quarter, eighth note in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, *p*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *ff*, allegro, andante, moderato terms
- Note names, values, dynamics
- To understand whole, half, quarter, eighth and dotted rhythms and all their variations
- No response
- Basic reading fundamentals
- Note naming, B^b scale, basic intervals, basic improv.
- Learn major scales, basic rhythms, scale degree names
- Key signatures, rhythms, scales, and scale structure
- All the basics – note values, note names, reading
- See #3 (#3: Count rhythm sheets, Spelling scales in tetrachords, Playing scales.)
- Rhythms in 4/4, 3/4, 2/4 6/8, whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighth, dotted quarter, sixteenth note patterns (no syncopation).
- Note values, counting / playing rhythms, naming notes, music theory terminology
Slurs, ties.
- Basic reading skills
- Notes, rhythms, musical terms
- 5th grade – read music, understand musical terms and basic tonal structure.

- Confident music literacy with the ability to perform
- Basic musical understanding Their theory knowledge should be more advanced than what they are asked to do in their music
- I teach theory concepts that relate to band performance
- Awareness of basic concepts introduced in Mark Wessels *5 Minute* book
- No response
- Basic notes whole – eighth and dotted quarter and rests Counting and symbols
- No response

7th and 8th grades

- Continue to develop basics, add ability to identify elements of melody, harmony, counterpoint in musical works, expand musical vocabulary to minor, jazz, pentatonic scales
- Transposition, music term vocabulary
- Chord quality – note function within a specific tonality
- Continue note reading, understand and use musical terms for tempo and style, dynamics, 6/8 time signatures, develop sight reading skills
- Note names, values, dynamics, articulation enharmonics, minor scales
- All the above plus sixteenth note and unison and chord tuning
- No response
- Understanding, identifying and applying said fundamentals in performance and composition
- Note naming, B^b scale, basic intervals, basic improv, plus more advanced and more scales
- Intervals, learn minor scales, novice rhythms, triads, chord progression
- Intervals, chords, 6th grade continued
- New key signatures, musical terminology
- See # 3
- The above plus sixteenth note patterns with syncopation, triplets, and more as literature necessitates, all 12 major scales

- Syncopation, continue from 6th grade
- Put skills into practice
- Continuation of the above plus scale and chord instruction
- No response (only listed 5th grade)
- Confident music literacy with the ability to perform
- No response (only listed 6th grade)
- I teach theory concepts that relate to band performance
- Awareness of basic concepts introduced in Mark Wessels *5 Minute* book
- No response
- Arpeggios, intervals, sixteenth notes, scale writing, chords, composition
- No response

5. How much time per day do you devote to music theory instruction?

_____ minutes of _____ minute class period _____ times per week

- 5-10 / 50 / 4
- varies according to the lesson
- 10 / 45 / 2
- 10 / 60 / 5
- 10 / 45 / 3
- 7 / 60 / 5
- 5 / 47 / 3
- 5 / 60 / 5
- 3-10 / 45 / 5
- 5 / 45 / 3
- 5 / 90 / 3
- 5-10 / 45 / 5
- 5 / 40 / 4

- 5 / 50 / 2-3
- 15 / 50 / 5
- Beginning 20 / 45 / 5 Advanced 10 / 60 / 5
- 5-10 / 48 / 5 depending on whether material is new or reinforced
- 25 / 50
- 10 / 43
- 3-5 / 45
- 5 / 45
- 5-7 / 55
- No response
- 4 / 45
- 5-10 / 50

6. List the methods of instruction that you usually use to teach music theory?

- We usually work from the music we are performing, written theory worksheets, quizzes
- Teacher explanation along with student demonstration
- Traditional: lecture and board demonstration followed by an auditory example
- *Theory Time*, 5 minutes per day of theory
- Examples on the board, pointing out info in music, textbook
- Modeling, written
- White board
- Music performance based with some hands on I want students to see the theory through performance
- Warm-ups, method book
- Scales, rhythm, note recognition, music memory
- I use our warm-up and chorale book which allows kids to apply some of their basic theory skills “Students, what type of chord was that we just played?” “Is this a major or minor key?”

- Lecture, counting rhythms, question and answer
- Worksheets, blank staff paper, rhythm games, marker board
- See above (listed *5 Minute Theory* and *Essential Elements 2000*)
- *Essential Elements 2000* book 1, worksheets
- Traditional counting (1&2&3&4&), self-developed ear training exercises
- *Essential Elements*, *Master Theory*, *Alfred's Basic Theory Concepts*, *Fundamentals of Music Theory for the Windband Student*
- Theory games (musical baseball), instrumental demonstrations, lecture
- Traditional counting, pitch names, intervals
- Mainly for very basic theory understand (*5 Minute Theory* and rhythm bee) Other ideas are taught as needed
- Visual and aural, students learn by performing concepts on their instruments.
- *5 Minute Theory* by Wessels, *Rhythm Master* by Heines, self-made
- No response
- Description, analysis, board work, worksheets Sometimes Finale Notepad for piano keyboard
- In beginning band I use both oral and written instruction and assessment We have a weekly theory test the first few weeks of class. Later most instruction is oral.

7. Of these methods, which do you find MOST effective?

- Working from the context of the music
- Combination of the two
- Same
- Mark Wessels
- Pointing out the info in the book
- Modeling

- No response
- Performance is great The students play what they have learned
- Warm-ups
- Scales
- Allowing students to play and apply to their instruments
- Question and answer
- Games
- See above
- *Essential Elements 2000* book 1
- Whatever works with this year's "little nippers"
- *Essential Elements* and *Alfred's*
- Requires a combination of methods
- Counting
- Anything quick that includes technology components Students love technology
- When students understand through performance on instruments.
- *5 Minute Theory* by Wessels
- No response
- It depends on the skill Basic knowledge – board. advanced – instrument
- Both are useful

8. Which methods are LEAST effective? (You may include methods you have tried and abandoned.)

- No response
- Lecture
- No response

- *Alfred's*
- Textbook
- Vocal
- No response
- Lecture doesn't seem to work well at all
- "Lecture" based
- Hearing and recognizing intervals (through song)
- Lecture, textbook, etc.
- Lecture
- Worksheets
- No response
- Just teaching by lecture and not demonstrating by example on instrument or drawing on the board.
- Whatever does not work this year. I am pragmatic.
- *Master Theory* – because the sequence is different from the music they are learning
- flash cards, note taking
- Tone drills
- Anything lengthy and overly complicated. Worksheets do not tend to be very effective. Any chance to in context and allow students to play is generally more effective.
- Taught theory and AP Theory at my last job. Lecture is the least effective – kids must perform to understand
- No response
- No response
- Free composition without structure or basic knowledge of music keys, notation and systems. It just yields nonsense.
- No response

9. Do you, and how do you, assess students' understanding and retention of music theory concepts?

Yes: 24

No: 0

No response: 1

How:

- Written quiz and through performance
- Performance and verbal questioning
- Test and questioning
- Written tests twice per year
- Recorded exercises
- Ask questions
- Through playing
- Written tests, compositions, performance
- Tests – formal assessment
- Pass off assignments
- Playing and written tests
- Performance
- Turn in work, Performance based, check for understanding informally
- verbal questioning, counting aloud, performance playing grade to show understanding and application of concept
- By demonstration with or without instrument
- Sight-reading
- Written tests and oral tests
- Written test and informal game responses

- Paper and pencil
- Written and playing tests
- Through transfer to performance
- Written exam for all band students in December
- Written tests and playing (demonstration)
- Verbally and written

10. Do you use a textbook for music theory?

Yes 9

No: 16

No response: 0

11. If you use a textbook, which one?

- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- *Master Theory* books 1 and 2
- No response
- *Essential Elements 2000*
- No response
- No response

- No response
- *Five Minute Theory, Essential Elements 2000*
- *Essential Elements 2000*
- No response
- *Essential Elements, Master Theory, Alfred's Basic Theory Concepts, Fundamentals of Music Theory for the Windband Student*
- No response
- No response
- *Five Minute Theory*
- No response
- *Five Minute Theory* by Wessels
- band textbook
- *Alfred's music theory* I make my own
- No response

12. Why do you use this particular text? (List the top two or three reasons)

- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- It's easy to use and for students to read
- No response

- Includes lessons designed for theory, scales
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- State / District adopted text, decided on by a district meeting
- No response
- Fits with note learning in method book
- No response
- No response
- Basic theory understanding for beginners Short quick lessons Some fun review activities.
- No response
- 1) do not need teacher, 2) cheap, 3) instrument specific
- No response
- Ease of use, “read the top and do the bottom,” self teaching, sequential order
- No response

13. Do you teach music theory in context, or separate from “real music?”

In context: 18

Separate: 0

Both: 4

No response: 3

14. Why?

- It's more meaningful and retention is better
- Middle school students need to see the reason they are learning something
- I try to teach concepts when they appear in music that we are working on so that they can connect concepts to actual practice
- So the concepts directly relate to what we are currently working on
- Students at middle school level will stay more formed when it's done that way.
- No response
- Not enough time
- My students want to play So I let them play what they have learned
- No response
- It helps retention and gives connection from music to theory and vice versa.
- Learning is a cognitive process Jr high kids need it to be interactive
- 6th grade beginners don't understand theory in context yet
- Some things work better separately – some not.
- No response
- It is easier to connect materials learned in class
- Makes it “real” to the students
- Makes it more real for students. Theory reinforces instrument and instrument playing reinforces theory.
- The application of theory is of primary importance. my students retain more when they can apply the information to performance and practice
- Immediate feedback.
- Students automatically see it as more applicable this way
- Theory without performance doesn't transfer to real life experiences
- Effective use of time

- No response
- Depth of knowledge is only as needed and lack of time
- Students see more value or practical use when it's applied to the music

15. Do you feel prepared to teach music theory in band?

Yes 22

No: 1

Sometimes 2

APPENDIX D

RESPONSES AS GIVEN BY HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS

1. What do you think are the most important music theory skills or concepts required in a high school performing ensemble class, and why? Please circle the ones you explicitly teach in class. (circled items are underlined in this list)

- Scales, keys, intervals, tuning, ear training
- Counting, sight reading
- Scale construction, rhythms, naming all accidentals, key signatures
- Key signatures, scales, tuning intervals
- No response
- Interval training, scales, rhythm, key signatures, chord structure. They are of equal importance
- Rhythm counting, key signature knowledge, basic chordal motion. These things help the kids sightread / understand the music they play
- Ability to count, time signatures, understanding of notations and key signatures, understanding of chord structure, and importance of each note, understanding your instrument's voicing importance in balance of sound.
- Scales, intervals, major / minor, key signature, rhythm counting
- No response
- No response
- Scales – major, minor, vocab, listening skills
- Note reading, counting / rhythm reading, key signature recognition, dynamics, articulation
- No response

- Basic understanding key signatures, time signatures, accidentals, phrasing Advanced tuning principles associated with certain intervals and the role of a given note within the tonality
- Lines and space of the grand staff, key signatures, note value, time signatures, counting rhythms, scales
- Key signature
- Pitch and rhythm, it is the basis for Band
- Scales (interval study), rhythm reading (note and rest pyramid), chord structure, chromatic understanding

2. Is your school part of a district or feeder system curriculum involving music theory?

Yes: 7

No: 11

No response: 1

3. Briefly describe a sample lesson from your program's music theory component:

- No response
- Systematic counting, basic 1st year theory
- I use additional sources for worksheets, projects, etc. that focus on a particular concept
- Music theory class is based on the State UIL Theory test.
- No response
- Incorporating interval training in their daily drill exercises.
- Lesson on key signature ID, work on board, demonstrate, individuals then help, individual worksheets to assess
- In sightreading, we discuss key signatures, time signatures, note durations and written text for clues to performing the music correctly We'll discuss the applications of each concept and its correlation to the music 10-12 minutes of instruction, including actual music playing.
- No response

- No response
- No response
- No response
- Part writing for chords in second inversion
- Basic music components from staff to four part harmony
- Practical application as it occurs in the music on which we are working
- Warm up scales: explain key signature: have scales played in whole, half, quarter, eighth, triplet, sixteenth notes. Have student count music and sing as we are learning parts I will work different section on intervals and counting
- *Master Theory* workbook by Peters and Yoder Books 1-6 one each six weeks
- No response
- No response

4. How much time per day do you devote to music theory instruction?

_____ minutes of _____ minute class period _____ times per week

- 5-10 / 49 / 5
- 10-15 / 90 / 3
- 5-10 / 50 / 3-4
- 50 / 50 / 5
- 5 / 55 / 5
- 10 / 90 / 5
- 10-13 / 50 / 2-3
- 3-5 / 45 / 3
- 10 / 90 / 3
- 15 / 110 / 2
- 3-4 / 50 / 3
- 5-15 / 45 / 5

- 30 / 60 / 1
- 10 / 48 / 3-4
- 5 / 45 / 2-3
- 10 / 50 / 5
- 10 / 50 / illegible
- 0 / 50 / 0
- 25-30% per class daily

5. What methods of instruction do you usually use to teach music theory?

- Rote teaching, books (*Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*)
- No response
- Practical application – constant repetition
- Several sources
- Examples from class method book A good band method book includes written theory assignments.
- Singing or playing on voices or instruments; written
- Lecture, class participation, worksheet
- On the “fly” instruction when the music calls for it Also written notes in texts.
- Etude books, pieces
- Scales, etc. Chords, passing tones, note functions, use chalk board, etc.
- *Belwin Note Speller. Advanced Fun With Fundamentals*
- I teach through the band’s warm-up process – no method book
- On the board, discussion (Q & A), calling on students to do work on board, lecture, teacher demonstration
- Oral, board work, theory sheets
- Practical application as it occurs in the music on which we are working
- I use *Standard of Excellence* and *Essential Elements 2000*

- Explain. use blackboard or overhead
- Reading band music
- Smartmusic software, scale patterns / finger puzzles, counting individually and group, chorales

6. Of these methods, which do you find MOST effective?

- Rote
- No response
- When the students use the concepts on a daily basis, retention is improved
- No response
- Described above
- Singing or playing
- Class participation
- Teacher instruction “as it happens”
- Applying theory to what we are working on is the best approach
- Me talking, chalkboard use
- Both
- The one I use
- Student-led, teacher demonstration
- Oral response
- Practical application as it occurs in the music on which we are working
- Both are effective in their own way I add extra things to it so all the basics are covered.
- Overhead projector
- Reading band music
- We use all of these as a combined effort

7. Which methods are LEAST effective? (You may include methods you have tried and abandoned.)

- Computer based / software for the class
- No response
- Pencil / paper component only
- No response
- Lengthy written assignments
- No response
- Worksheets that are too high level / involving too many concepts
- Having students “look it up” in music dictionary
- Making them do it just for the sake of a worksheet
- No response
- No response
- Texts, worksheets My kids learn more effectively by doing
- Lecture
- No discussion methods, simply theory sheet assignments
- Using my “book” knowledge to explain without practical application
- No response
- Students teaching each other
- Book instruction
- Lecture

8. Do you, and how do you, assess students’ understanding and retention of music theory concepts?

Yes: 16

No: 3

How:

- Written test
- Test and musical performance
- Practical use
- Worksheets, tests
- Periodic worksheets (short)
- Playing their music or playing test
- Worksheets / tests
- Directed questions
- On final exam, daily routine questions
- No response
- Written test
- Scale tests, verbal answers
- Playing and written tests
- Short quiz, oral lessons / response
- No response
- No response
- Test, daily work and group work
- No response
- No response

9. Do you use a textbook for music theory?

Yes: 6

No: 13

10. If you use a textbook, which one?

- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- Class method book
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- *Belwin Note Speller, Advanced Fun With Fundamentals*
- No response
- Kostka / Payne *Tonal Harmony*
- Theory I – Musicianship
- No response
- *Standard of Excellence, Essential Elements 2000*
- *Master Theory* workbooks
- No response
- No response

11. Why do you use this particular text? (List the top two or three reasons.)

- No response
- No response
- No response

- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- No response
- Thorough but stepwise
- Good content, well put together
- No response
- No response
- Step by step instruction, shows example on one page and work on next page
- No response
- No response

12. Do you teach music theory in context, or separate from “real music?”

In context: 15

Separate: 1

Both: 3

13. Why?

- To relate to the music
- It gives students a useful knowledge and application

- Better retention
- Curriculum demands that theory be a separate class
- In the context of a piece of music theory concepts are tangible
- It is what we see in “real music ”
- Need “out of context” to help explain the “in context” examples
- Faster, immediate comprehension, application
- Applied to what they work on
- More meaningful this way
- Not a separate class
- It works It puts elements in context; makes them real
- It is important to relate it to music reading or the knowledge has no purpose
- Association to music being studied
- Linking the new knowledge to application allows students to experience a concept
- Time
- Both depending on the concept being used
- Part of the music
- To encourage and relate theory to use in ensemble playing

14. Does your school offer AP Music Theory, and do you require any of your band member to take it?

Offered and required: 0

Offered and not required: 3

Not offered: 16

15. Do you feel prepared to teach music theory in band?

Yes 17

No. 2

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