

The Impact of Assessment in Private Instrumental Instruction

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Abstract

This empirical study investigates the impact of student assessment in private instrumental instruction. A grading rubric was implemented within a private music teaching studio and student performance, involvement, preparation, and accountability were documented. The grading rubric was used for performance pieces, helping students remain accountable according to a specific set of standards. Student surveys were used to document changes in performance standards, involvement, preparation, accountability, and the impact of a rubric as a form of assessment. The student survey questions were designed to answer the impact that assessment has on private instrumental instruction. The implementation of a rubric equated to an increase in accountability and confidence, as students were able to see definitively for themselves and receive feedback as to how they were performing and what they could do to improve their performance. Student involvement within private weekly lessons, and engaging preparation between lessons grew through the implementation and regular use of a rubric throughout unit two in preparation for the summative assessment. When students become partners in the assessment process, it becomes a more rewarding and enriching experience for both the teacher and student.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this empirical study is to investigate the impact of student assessment in private instrumental instruction. The premise is to implement a grading rubric within the private music teaching studio and to document its effect on student performance, involvement, preparation, and accountability. This investigation will be conducted through the implementation of a grading rubric for performance pieces, helping students remain accountable according to a specific set of standards.

Rationale

Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability are qualities which instrumental teachers strive to instill and grow in their students. Using a grading rubric gives students the opportunity to be accountable for their progress according to clearly expressed standards of measurement. As an instrumental educator in the public education system, I hold my students to a set of standards and expectations in the form of a grading rubric. This method of accountability is one not often encountered in private instrumental instruction.

While many studies have been conducted on student assessment, this study seeks to uncover the impact of grading rubrics within the setting of the private instrumental instruction. Specifically, examining the benefits utilizing grading rubrics in reference to performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability. The student survey will document growth in performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability, and the impact of a grading rubric as a form of assessment in private instrumental instruction.

An empirical study will be put into action consisting of students from Reese Music Studio from October 2018 to June 2019. The study will consist of two parts, with students being involved throughout the entire process. The researcher will utilize lesson observation, formal evaluation of recitals with and without the presence of a rubric, student surveys, and teacher observation journal to gather data. Student participants will be asked to give feedback in the form of a survey at the culmination of the study.

Expected Findings

Students place value on involvement and collaboration in the learning and training process, but in the private instrumental lesson setting are often given minimal training as to how to go about the process of self-assessment. This project, through the consistent use of a rubric, anticipates students will understand what is expected in collaborative, prepared lessons and assessments. In addition to a depth of understanding of this process, students should be able to positively replicate the practice and assessment strategies taught to them throughout the project. As Hope and Wait (2013) stated in their publishing, *Assessment on Our Own Terms*:

At the individual level, a tremendous amount of educational time and energy is spent developing and honing skills of self-evaluation to the highest degree. This is absolutely critical in the musical performance, where evaluation occurs continuously, even in the final performance itself. In fact, virtuosity in constant adjustment is a significant goal of music study. (p. 6)

This project seeks to find how the implementation of a rubric within private instrumental lessons will promote higher levels of performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and student accountability. Through the training, understanding, and consistent use of a rubric, it is the intention of this study that students will experience a more enriching lesson and home

preparation time with the collaborative use of the rubric in the private instrumental lesson. This project hopes that students will understand the benefits of working with a rubric and will welcome the use of it in lessons and for recitals. According to research found on the appropriate development and use of a rubric, Brookhart (2013) stated the following:

Rubrics give structure to observation... Instead of judging the performance, the rubric describes the performance. The resulting judgement of quality based on a rubric therefore also contains within it a description of performance that can be used for feedback and teaching. (p. 5)

Upon completion, this study seeks to find students to be reflective, involved, accountable, prepared, who hold themselves to a high standard, and not afraid of self-assessment, but rather embrace self-assessment and the techniques involved in developing self-awareness and independence in this skill as an opportunity for growth and development. Students will understand that the assessment of musical elements has many dimensions, and as such, so do the elements of assessment and preparation.

Chapter 2: Assessment in Instrumental Instruction

Assessment

Instrumental learning, development, and performance are multifaceted; they incorporate and engage many elements of the body and mind in the way one is engaged throughout the learning and performance process. It is the intention that through the engagement of evaluation and assessment, both teacher and student become more informed, leading to enhanced motivation, student performance, involvement, preparation, and accountability in the learning process. In instrumental music education, assessment and the process of cooperative engagement of the teacher and student leading to engagement is critical to a successful outcome for all involved.

Banta and Palomba (1999), defined assessment as, “the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving learning and development” (p. 4).

Because assessment can, and the data gathered therein, be applied in a variety of settings and purposes, the use and qualities of valuable, effective assessments are essential to the efficacy of the assessment for the desired outcome of all involved. Colwell (2003), regarding the uses and purposes of assessment ascertained the following:

Assessment... is an indicator to inform whether goals are being reached and to provide information on which elements of the curriculum are attained and which are not. It can be used as a gauge to heighten standards, to assess new curricula, to provide technical information, to keep us honest about what we can accomplish for all or most students, to improve our research efforts and, most important, to shed light on objectives

for which the arts are ill-suited...assessment is process, product, and use. (Greene, 2002, as cited in McNeil, 2002, pp. 243-248)

Colwell (2003) went on in his research to further cite Green (2002), when asserting the qualities, purposes, and meaningfulness of well-structured assessments and assessment opportunities stating:

Any assessment must be credible and illuminating, inform decisions, and motivate learning. Music assessments must include outcomes far beyond those pertaining to music - outcomes related to socialization, cultural values, character traits, and moral education that include respect, hard work, punctuality, and honesty. These are the responsibilities of every teacher in the school, and music has always been touted for its success in developing these traits. (as cited in McNeil, 2002, pp. 243-248).

The motives behind effective assessments are intentional and well informed, and the data gathered from such benefit both student and teacher in the ability to have adjustments and adaptations made to enhance the future teaching practices and understanding for the future musical training and development of musical students. Banta and Palomba (2015), said the following regarding the importance of motives behind and uses of assessment:

Assessment is more than the collection of data. To make assessment work, educators must be purposeful about what they collect. As a basis for data gathering, they must clarify their goals and objectives for student learning and be aware of where these goals and objectives are addressed in the curriculum. After data are gathered, educators must examine and use assessment results to improve educational programs. (p 9)

In order to accurately evaluate the correct criteria, or categories that are in alignment with the intended evaluation or purposes, evaluators should be mindful of the motivations behind the assessments, and have a thorough understanding of the content knowledge.

Factors Determining Assessment

Two major factors that determine the evaluation of achievements in performing an instrument are those that relate to the performer and those that relate to the performance. It should be noted that assessment criteria is another major variable, given the available data regarding the performance. Some evaluators ascertain that, rather than everyone being evaluated from the same repertoire, in order to maintain a reasonable comparison, repertoire should be selected that reflects the technical ability of the instrument. When assessing a musical performance, Mazur and Laguna (2017), referencing the work of Kaleńska state, “it is essential that one is aware of such factors as the type of instrument, the type and characteristics of the music to be played and the performance context, it is possible to define performance evaluation criteria in order to improve reliability and relevance of the assessment.” (as cited in *Koncepcja kryteriów oceny*, 2006, pp. 77–93). An additional fundamental aspect of a well-rounded and established assessment is the inclusion of clearly defined criteria detailing the intended assessments of the level and quality of the performance. When determining assessment criteria for level and quality of performance, Mazur and Laguna recommend referencing one's own skill level to group to that of others in the reference group, as different performance levels and different criteria for classifying levels are assumed (Mazur, Laguna, 2017, pp. 121-123).

Modes and Roles of Assessment

The premise that evaluation or assessment is the motivator towards upward mobility or musical success has long been maintained. According to Colwell, “The evaluation of musical

performances, (whether during concerts, examinations, competitions or research) serves as feedback on how to improve one's performance, thus directing further development, as well as determining success and motivation for learning (as cited in *Koncepcja kryteriów oceny*, 2006, pp. 77–93). Furthermore, while evaluation and assessment has been the main indicator of success and means of level achievement movement, Banta and Palomba (2015) state the following:

Assessment is more than the collection of data. To make assessment work, educators must be purposeful about what they collect. As a basis for data gathering, they must clarify their goals and objectives for student learning and be aware of where these goals and objectives are addressed in the curriculum. After data are gathered, educators must examine and use assessment results to improve educational programs (p. 9).

Students being held to high levels of accountability will demonstrate favorable outcomes of being held to high standards as this leads to enhanced levels of student motivation. Colwell (2003) ascertains that, “teachers who do not challenge students musically and who administer few consequences for failure contribute to the confusion about the role of motivation” (p. 15). Regular assessment, used with proper student understanding and teacher collaboration, can be used as a teaching tool to assist in the reinforcement of student motivation and engagement. As the research and findings of Stirling, (2014), state:

... a greater internalization of extrinsic motivations should lead to benefits in terms of active engagement and persistence by learners, and this has been shown to be the case. If this is accurate, then creating learning environments that foster the internalization of extrinsic factors may be one way to support positive academic outcomes. (p. 9)

In the role of assessment, in order to accurately evaluate the correct criteria, evaluators should be mindful of the motivations behind assessments, and have a thorough understanding of current content knowledge in addition to standard practices and procedures. In writing about assessment, the research of Brookhart (2013) found:

Assessment indicates what the experiences of students add up to and what these experiences imply about educational programs. It enables educators to examine whether the curriculum makes sense in its entirety and whether students, as a result of all their experiences, have the knowledge, skills, and values that graduates should possess. (p. 10)

And, when speaking to the some of the advantages of quality assessment, used in an appropriate setting, Colwell (2003) stated,

Assessment is a valuable indicator to inform and measure whether goals are being reached, and to provide information on which elements of the curriculum are being attained and which are not. It can be used as a gauge to heighten standards, to assess new curricula, to provide technical information, to keep us honest about what we can accomplish for all or most of our students, to improve our research efforts and, most important, to shed light on objectives for which the arts are ill-suited. (p. 14)

This advantage to assessment leads to the enhanced understanding, role, and use of motivation for all involved in the assessment process and therefore leads to a more meaningful engagement and a deeper and more thorough understanding of content material.

How Growth is Measured

For many years, the standard measurement of growth or success has been evaluation via assessment, with these assessments being performed by professional music educators and adjudicators. Assessments, such as Likert scales, rubrics, and criteria-specific assessments, are

more commonly used in the education setting. Mazur and Laguna (2017) stated the following, “It is assumed the main indicator of achievement in school and professional music activity is the evaluation of musical performances by musical experts” (as cited in *Koncepcja kryteriów oceny*, 2006, pp. 77–93). If given the opportunity to be trained, through the use of a rubric, it is possible, for peer assessment or self-assessment with the use of a rubric, with the full and intended use clearly expressed and understood, to be an insightful musical assessment tool and activity, carried out by students, peers, teachers, and adjudicators alike.

Measurements in Assessment

One of the challenges music educators have faced is the development and use of clear, well- defined, and accurate assessment tools and criteria that can move students, in a collaborative effort, through the stages of formative, into summative assessment. It is important that the criteria be understood by all involved, as Bookhart (2013) emphasized from her research and findings, “the main point of criteria should be about learning outcomes, not aspects of the task itself ...the main point about descriptions of levels of performance is that they should be descriptions, not evaluate students” (p. 24). The Likert scale, criteria-specific scales, and the rubric are among the more formal scales and tools teachers and evaluators commonly use for the assessment and evaluation of student growth and achievement, often via the platform of instrumental performance. It is through these modes of assessment that teachers are able to garner feedback and data that will provide valuable insight that can positively influence future teaching practices to best serve the needs of students, personal teaching practices, and the musical community at large.

A Likert scale is an assessment tool that utilizes questions and a rating scale. When using a Likert scale, an evaluator is able to be in agreement with others in regard to the categories of

the performance. Although considered highly reliable, there is debate in the field as to the relevance of use in performance evaluations. One of the negative aspects of the Likert scale is, as Mazur and Laguna (2017) state, “these scales do not provide specific descriptions of evaluation criteria. Also, the performance standard to which the assessment refers is not precisely defined” (p. 124).

In addition to the Likert scale of assessment, there is another form of assessment used among educators, that being criteria-specific assessment. Criteria-specific assessment bases the foundation of evaluating the musical performance on what is actually heard by the evaluator, not by what is agreed on in interpretation. Evaluators are held to a specific set of standards and criteria at each level of performance, and must indicate, via the set criteria, as to the given performance level. One of the potential benefits of this form of assessment is that the evaluator is expected to evaluate based only on what is heard, and align that with the specific, detailed criteria, thus eliminating some of the unintended potential bias or interpretation.

The Rubric is another form of criteria descriptive, performance-based assessment. Brookhart (2013), defines rubrics as, “a coherent set of criteria for students’ work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria” (p. 4). Brookhart goes on to further define two specific elements or criteria of effective rubrics, “It should be clear from the definition that rubrics have two major aspects: coherent sets of criteria and description of each level of performance for those criteria” (p.4) Rubrics with clearly outlined criteria are able to give structure to observational environments and give evaluators clearly defined observational information from which to describe a performance. In their design, rubrics are descriptive, outlining the intended expectations of levels and standards contained within each descriptor of the rubric. The intention being that the evaluator matches the observation to the description,

what is heard, not what could be influenced by outside variables. While the intention or use may be to describe a performance for the use of assessment, the rubric is also providing structure to the observation. Additionally, within the observed and reported data, there is also contained information for both the teacher and student regarding future growth, training, and development. Brookhart (2013), outlines the following as ways the use of rubrics promote self-monitoring, promoting accountability, and enhancing motivation:

- *Strategic goal setting - quick check, journaling, think-pair-do not share - students engaging in reflective thinking through guided questions

- *Charting progress – a way for student to keep track of progress for short and long-term assignments

- *Self- reflection - allow time for more experienced students to engage in reflective activities

- *Guided self- reflection using the rubric - students engaging in teacher guided reflective activities

- *Provide feedback on student self-reflections - teacher feedback on student self-reflection and reflective question

Rubrics allow for both the development of tailored, descriptions of expectations of criteria, suitable for the student and the setting, while maintaining standards of expectations for each level of assessment and expectation for each set of criteria. Because students learn, develop, and grow at different rates and speeds, so too should their assessments be tailored to suit each developmentally appropriate educational level, as a rubric can. By being divided into distinctive descriptors - the criteria and their criterion - rubrics allow the evaluator to carefully observe, listen, and match to a distinct set of predetermined standards. This set of standards,

shared between all evaluators, can help diminish evaluator bias or predisposition in evaluators - particularly with the aid of 'blind' assessment.

Challenges

One the challenges to the development of clear and accurate assessment criteria, as Brookhart (2013) ascertains, is that the evaluator must endeavor to:

Select as criteria the most appropriate and important aspects of the work given what the task is supposed to assess. These should not, generally, be characteristics of the task itself...but rather characteristics of the learning outcome the task is supposed to indicate... Such criteria support learning because they describe qualities that you and the students should look for as evidence of students' learning. (p. 24)

In addition to clear and accurate assessment criteria, Brookhart states that well defined criteria will have clearly distinguishable and observable characteristics, "They should also be different from one another, so that they can be appraised separately, and yet as a group define a set of characteristics that, taken together, describe performance in a complete enough manner to match the description of learning in the standard or instructional goal." (p. 24)

Another challenge the field of instrumental music education faces with assessment is evaluators implementing assessment criteria at their discretion, being influenced by personal interpretation or discernment. According to Mazur and Laguna (2017), regardless of the circumstances under which this evaluation is made... it is an imperfect indicator of achievement because it is based on subjective, culturally and personally determined aesthetic judgements (Mazur and Laguna, 2017, pp. 125-126). Furthermore, Mazur and Laguna, citing research by Jordan-Szymańska (2006), found "...cultural conventions and preferences that are historically conditioned, on the other hand, they are related to the preferences of the evaluator, conditioned

by the characteristics of his/her personality and the sum of past experiences” (as cited in Psychologiczne, 2006, pp. 45-75). Additionally, Mazur and Laguna, went on to state, “the process of evaluating musical performance is, after all, a derivative of the perception process, and therefore, the characteristics of the evaluator and the situation in which the evaluation is made will always modify the perception and influence the evaluation (as cited in Psychologiczne, 2006, pp. 45-75). As such, blind performance assessments, peer, or guest evaluators are several methods used where teacher bias or subjective influence are less likely to have an impact in the evaluation process, and are one such way to make an adaptation to the evaluation process in order to stay in alignment with the intended, designed purpose. One area in the public sector of music performance where bias and perception has been an issue is the professional orchestra. Once professional orchestras began implementing ‘blind’ assessments, or auditions as they are called, there has been much data gathered for the justification and use of blind performance auditions and assessments. After changes were made in the hiring process, and many professional orchestras moved to a hiring process based on blind auditions, the audition pool was opened up to a more diverse group. Research presented by Goldin and Rouse (2000), found that after instituting bias reducing changes, there was a twenty-five percent increase from 1970 to 1993 in the number of female musicians in orchestras throughout the United States. In addition, their research findings stated in an earlier publication stated:

Using the audition data that the screens increases - by 50% - the probability a woman will be advanced out of certain preliminary rounds and increases by several fold the likelihood a woman will be selected in the final round. Using the roster data, the switch to “blind” auditions can explain between 30% and 55% of the increase in the proportion female among new hires and

between 25% and 46% of the increase in the percentage female in the orchestras from 1970 to 1996 (Goldin and Rouse, 1997, p. 23).

Types of Rubrics

In writings regarding the construction and application of rubrics, Brookhart (2013) ascertained that one of the advantages of the rubric was, not only the ability to include detailed descriptions of each skill level, but the customization for specific use of task specific rubrics. These task-specific rubrics allow for even more content specific assessment, and, in turn, more opportunity for learning and growth for all involved. The four types of rubrics outlined are: analytic, holistic, general, and task-specific; with each of these rubrics being best suited for a specific setting or task. Because one can tailor the rubric to any specific situation or need, it is an excellent assessment, growth indicator, and learning tool for both student and teacher.

Types of Rubrics:

- Analytic rubrics are those that describe each separate criterion. This type of rubric would be best suited to the classroom due to the ability to focus clearly on one criteria and receive feedback for intended growth.
- Holistic rubrics are those that describe assessment criteria, and with the application of all criteria simultaneously to an assessment, are able to provide a general assessment.
- General rubrics are those that can be used for different tasks or in different settings because the criteria and descriptors are not explicitly specific. Can be shared with students ahead of time.
- Task-specific rubrics focus on the task of scoring a student in one specific content criteria specific area (Brookhart, 2013, pp. 6-11).

Chapter 3: Project Design and Findings

Participants

The study of assessment in private instrumental instruction was constructed of beginner private instrumental students. Students received private instruction, once per week, for the duration of the two-unit study. Participating students came from Reese Music Studio in Havertown, Pennsylvania and ranged in age from 5 to 14 during the 2018-2019 school year. Participants studied the piano, violin, viola, or cello and received 30-45-minute private lessons once per week. Prior to private instrumental lessons, some students were involved within a school music program, while others were not. Students are concurrently involved in a music program of some degree in their school system.

Study Design

Prior to the study, a student survey was sent out via Google Forms. The intent of this survey was to gain an understanding of student assessment, involvement, performance standards, involvement, preparation, accountability, and impacts of a rubric as a form of assessment that could be used as a metric of growth. Throughout the first unit, the teacher observed developmental growth of each student in the areas of performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability in the private lesson. Student preparation culminated in a summative assessment at the Winter Recital. The second unit incorporated the rubric into the weekly lessons. In addition, each student used the rubric as a reference tool for home use during the week. The intent of this rubric was to foster student involvement, preparation, and accountability, both with the lesson and at home. Unit two observed growth in the relationship between the development of student growth in performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability in the private lesson, and the implementation of a

grading rubric as a form of assessment in private instrumental instruction. Upon completion of the study, a post student survey was sent out via Google Forms.

Student surveys documented the changes in student performance standards, involvement, preparation, accountability, and the impact of a rubric as a form of assessment. The student survey questions were designed to answer the impact that assessment has on private instrumental instruction.

Survey Questions and Results

Question 1. Did the use of a rubric impact the way you prepare for a lesson or recital? Prior to this study, 41.7% of students reported the use of a rubric may impact the way they prepare for a lesson or recital. As a result of taking part in this study, 50% of students reported the use of a rubric through Unit 2 as having an impact on their preparation for lessons and the recital. This resulted in an increase of 8.3% (from unit 1 to unit 2). Upon further investigation, the pre-student survey showed that, including all positively indicated responses, 75% of students reported that the use of a rubric would impact the way they prepared for a lesson or recital, while 83.3% of students who took part in the study reported in the post-survey that the use of a rubric did impact lesson and recital preparation. The addition of all positive data did not alter the difference between pre and post student survey responses between unit 1 and unit 2 of the study.

Question 2. Did understanding why a rubric is being used impact your implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital? Students reported the importance of prior knowledge and understanding surrounding the area of rubric implementation, with 66.7% reporting on the pre-survey that prior knowledge and understanding of why a rubric was being used would have an impact on implementation of the rubric in preparation for lesson

or recital. As a result of the study, there was no difference between Unit 1 and Unit 2 as interestingly 66.7% of all students reported the same on the post-student survey. Upon further investigation into the data to include all positive responses for both student surveys, 83.4% of all students reported that understanding why a rubric is being used impacts implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital. Additionally, while there was growth in the overall percentage of students who reported positively on the surveys (66.7%-83.4%), the percentage growth between Unit 1 and Unit 2 was stagnant.

Question 3. How necessary was awareness and understanding of the grading rubric when taking part in this evaluation? With this survey question, respondents were able to select from a Likert scale, with 1 being not necessary and 5 being extremely necessary. Prior to the study, 91% of students reported on the pre-student survey (with a 3 and above) it would be important to be aware of the parameters of the rubric. After taking part in the study, participants reported 91% (3 and above). This shows no difference from Unit 1 to Unit 2.

Question 4. Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons? In reference to student motivation, 58.3% of students reported on the pre-student survey that evaluated lessons would not be motivating. However, after being involved in this study, 66.7% of respondents stated on the post survey they found evaluated lessons motivating. This shows an increase of 8.4%. Further data analysis to include all positive data revealed, prior to Unit 1, 83.3% of students would find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons. As a result of the study, 91.7% of students would find it motivating. This indicates a difference of 8.4%.

Question 5. Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for a recital? The pre-student survey revealed that only 50% of the students felt motivated by the thought of knowing their performance would be assessed and critiqued. Could the demand of testing in so many various

areas of their scholastic life contribute to the lack of inspiration to improve? After experiencing using the rubric throughout Unit 2, 75% of the students reported that it would cause them to be motivated. This shows a growth of 25%. Including all positive data, the pre-student survey revealed 83.3% of students may find it motivating to be evaluated, while the post student survey showed 91.7%. This reflects a difference of 8.4%.

Question 6. If you found it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you find it motivating? Feedback from the students indicated four reasons why they were motivated throughout this study. The top two identified motivating reasons in the pre-survey were: having a focused practice between lessons and a clear understanding of goals. The results were the same in the post-survey following working with the rubric throughout Unit 2, with only several fewer respondents selecting clear understanding of learning goals as one of the top motivators.

Question 7. If you did not find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you not find it motivating? There were several areas in which students cited evaluation would not be motivating. In the pre-student survey, students cited additional stress and confusion as the two main areas students felt they may not find it motivating to be evaluated for a lesson or recital. Following the study, students reported fear of failure, additional stress, and confusion in practice as the areas in which students cited evaluation would not be a motivating factor for a lesson or recital. It was interesting to note the addition of fear of failure to the areas in which students were not motivated toward evaluation. In the pre-student survey, fear of failure was identified as the lowest of the least most motivating factors for evaluation. Conversely, on the post-student survey, students reported fear of failure as the highest reason.

Question 8. Did the use of a rubric increase your involvement and active participation in lessons? Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability?

It was encouraging to see that the rubric caused a desire to be more actively engaged within the lessons. This was evident when comparing the responses before and after each unit.

Prior to the use of a rubric in Unit 2, 66.7% of students anticipated the use of a rubric would increase their level of engagement and participation. The study found that ongoing exposure to the rubric throughout Unit 2 led to high levels of involvement and preparation, with 83.3% of respondents reporting the continued use of a rubric throughout Unit 2 leading to increased levels of participation and involvement. This shows an increase of 16.7%

Question 9. Did the use of a rubric increase your accountability, both between lessons and within lessons? For both units, the responses to whether or not the rubric had the potential to, or in fact did increase accountability, reported a high yield. However, there was an 8% decrease between the pre-student survey and post-student survey. Prior to being involved in the study, 83% of students reported anticipating the use of a rubric to impact accountability, both in and between lessons. It was surprising to see that after working with the rubric throughout Unit 2, 75% of students reported the use of a rubric impacted accountability. Analyzing the data further to include all positive responses, 83.3% of students reported the rubric as having an impact on increasing accountability levels, between and within lessons. This analysis shows an increase of .3%. I found it interesting, and in alignment with my predictions, that in all data findings for this question, students reported the rubric making a high impact on the way they would engage within and between lessons.

Question 10. Did the use of a rubric assist with clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation? When asked in the pre-student survey, 75% of participants responded on a Likert scale with a 3 and above stating that utilizing the rubric would help clarify performance standards and expectations of preparation. After taking part in the collaborative process of teaching with the rubric in Unit 2, 91% of participants responded that use of the rubric assisted in clarifying both standards and expectations. Including all positive data in the analysis, 100% of students responded that the use of a rubric aided in the clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation.

Findings

Study findings showed that students involved in the rubric assessment implementation became more confident in themselves and self-aware. Additionally, areas of growth included a higher level of student involvement as well as performance standards both within the lesson and in the way the students prepared at home. Overall, the implementation of a rubric equated to an increase in accountability and confidence, as students were able to see definitively for themselves and receive feedback as to how they were performing and what they could do to improve their performance.

Through teacher observation, a rubric is now being seen as a learning tool for the student, not just the teacher; a way of engaging the student more actively in the learning process. Students have come to see a rubric as more of a tool, something to glean practice areas of awareness. Because students had access to the rubric throughout unit two, and were working weekly in a collaborative process, there was a role of responsibility placed on that of the student. Students were actively engaging in a collaborative process of formative teacher and student lead assessments using the rubric. Thus, student involvement within private weekly lessons, and

engaging preparation between lessons grew through the implementation and regular use of a rubric throughout unit two in preparation for the summative assessment. When students become partners in the assessment process, it becomes a more rewarding and enriching experience for both the teacher and student.

Prior to this study, 75% of students surveyed positively indicated that while already engaged in assessment with their private instrumental teacher, the use of a rubric would impact the way they prepared for a lesson or recital. As a result of being part of this study, the post-student survey reported 83% of students as involved as a result of this project. This shows a growth of 8%. In addition, as a result of participating in this project, students reported both an increase from 83.3% to 91.7% in motivation for evaluation at recitals and lessons, showing a growth of 8.4%. Students reported both focused practice between lessons and clear understanding of learning goals as the main areas for motivation behind being evaluated. The greatest gains, outside of motivating factors, were seen in the area of student involvement and active participation in the lesson. Prior to being involved in the study, 66.7% of students reported the use of rubric would increase their active participation in a lesson. Subsequent to being involved in the study, 83.3% of students reported increased levels of participation and involvement in a lesson, this shows gains of 16.6%.

The results of assessment impact not only the teacher, in the way that one will adjust and present material, but also the student, in the assimilation and digestion of said material. When assessment results are shared with the intention of growth and development, not just a score, and the student is involved in the process, the student becomes more accountable in the learning process. Students were observed to have responded well to accountability throughout the rubric implementation phase, enjoying the reward of a sticker when appropriate. Through teacher

observation, it was clear to see students were open and receptive to the idea of being evaluated, both in the micro (lessons) and macro (recitals), and were able to see it for the opportunity of advancement and development. This shows the correlation between micro and macro accountability and opportunity for advancement in student accountability, involvement, and targeted growth in performance standards through the implementation of a rubric.

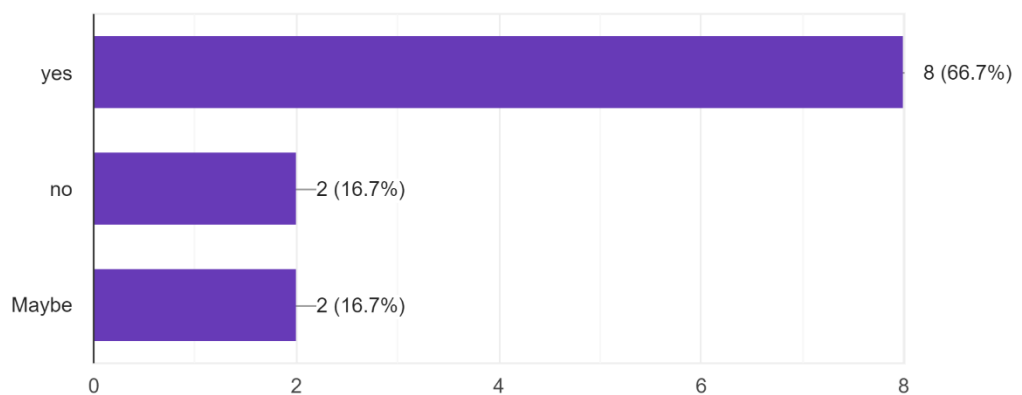
Chapter 4: Conclusions

Learnings

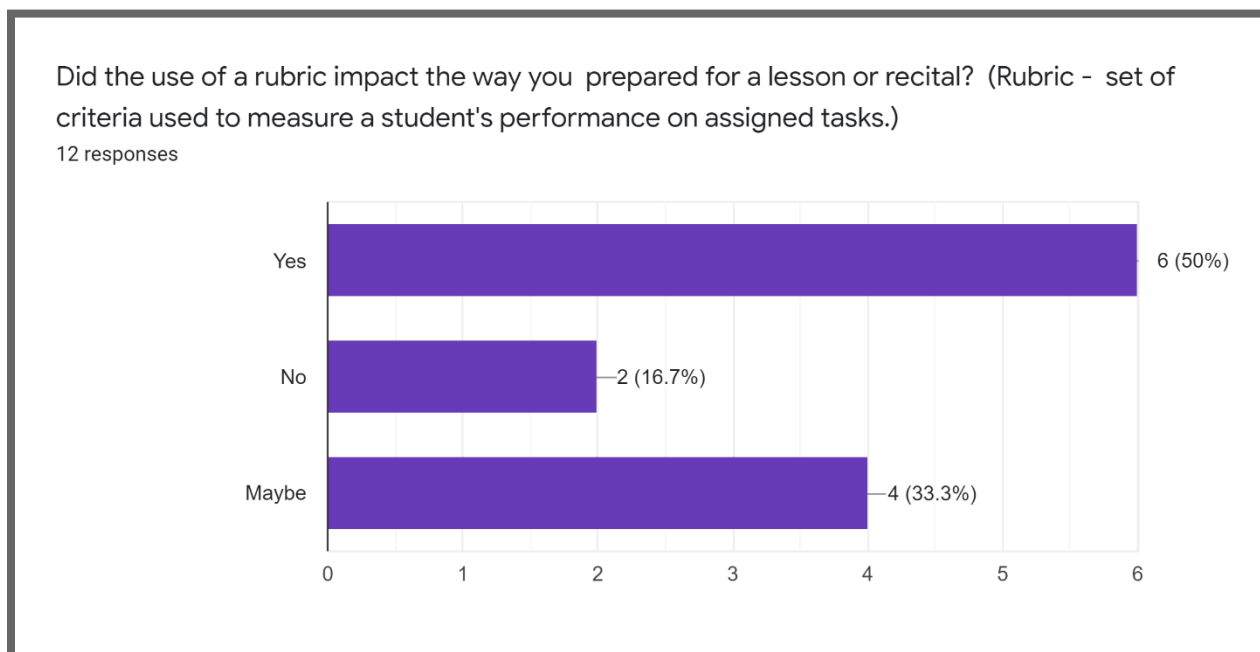
Increased teacher to student collaboration, with the shared directive of a clearly defined rubric and the detailed, directed use thereof, working toward the final evaluation with said rubric, has shown, through the findings of this study, to be an effective way of engaging students and increasing accountability and preparation within the private instrumental lesson. In addition, self-assessment and the applications thereof increased, as did student confidence, when engaging in these activities through the consistent use of a rubric. It was through the informed consistent use of said rubric, students were able to demonstrate increased levels of accountability, initiative, and musicianship. This development and education was initiated in the private lesson, but fostered by students through the keeping of a rubric for reference at home for use between lessons, in the manner clearly outlined and discussed throughout each lesson. These results show encouraging outcomes in the field of private instrumental instruction and applications of collaborative assessments therein.

Did understanding why the rubric was being used impact your implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital?

12 responses



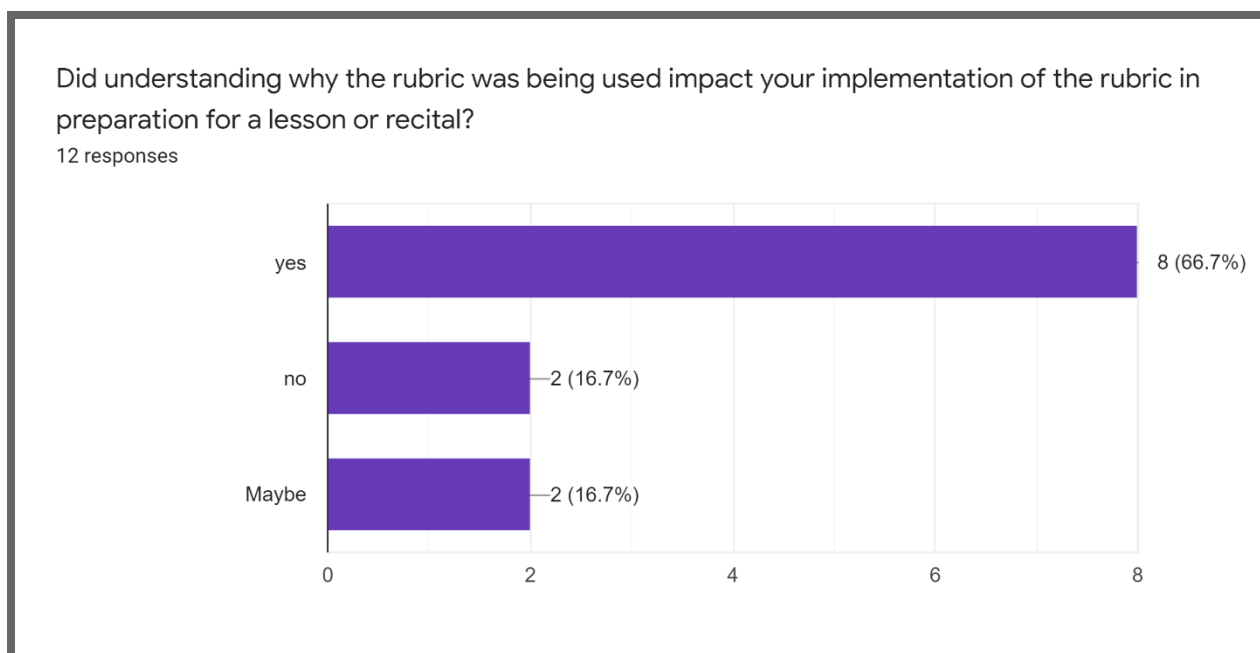
I believe the data garnered from this research will inform future teaching practices in the way that teachers are more mindful about how students are being encouraged to be engaged in the assessment process, in its many facets, from start to finish. In addition, it opens the door for increased opportunities for collaboration with students and other music educators in terms of engagement and strategies to make assessment in lessons, practice, and adjudication more meaningful, encouraging, and engaging for both the student and teacher.



One rewarding result of this study of assessment in private instrumental instruction, has been to see the way that confidence has been fostered through the use of a rubric and to observe the growth in confidence among students over the duration leading up to the culminating assessment at the spring recital. Another expression from which the rewards and outcomes of this study may benefit and inform future pedagogical practices is the way that teachers may foster the purposeful idea of developing technically and developmentally applicable assessments, and teaching the coinciding skill set to students in order that the student may apply it themselves. By teachers giving students the opportunity to learn and develop a new skill set, students are able

to see rewarding benefits, such as increased confidence, critical thinking. Within this study, developing a technically and developmentally applicable assessment, and teaching the coinciding skill set in order that students apply it, increased self-assessment and reflection for students not only within the lesson, but some students were able to report on self-assessments and reflections conducted throughout the week, showing the desired application and intended use of the skill set developed throughout the guided use of a practice rubric. As a result of the findings of this study, one of the most considerable ways the use of informed assessment can impact private instrumental instruction is, after seeing how much of an impact on self-confidence the skill set of self-assessment and being involved in the assessment process has had on students, teachers, especially instrumental educators, will not only be more mindful of the way they integrate collaborative assessment practices into private instrumental lessons, but the motives and intentions behind each opportunity.

Another way in which this study may inform future pedagogies is the way that teachers can foster goal setting within the realm of assessment and differentiated instructional strategies within the private instrumental lesson setting. Students involved in this study found understanding the reasoning behind assessment was important, and when attained, were able to set clearly defined goals in accordance with the clearly expected form of adjudication. In going through this strategic process, students found learning, goal setting, and assessment all became more intrinsically meaningful. Therefore, findings from this study can inform the instructional strategies of teachers in the way that one would involve students in the educational process, providing opportunities for informed preparation and collaborative differentiated instruction, giving a new depth of meaning to individualized lessons, in addition to purpose and meaning of assessments.



I believe these are all ways this study can inform private instrumental teaching practices and increase not only the level of student involvement, but musical depth and meaning, in addition to technique and skill development.

Study Limitations

One of the limitations found throughout the process of phase two was the level of difficulty in having students consistently implement the use of a rubric chart for student reference and self-assessment from lesson to lesson. I found that despite how much emphasis was placed on the importance of consistency of use, there were some students for whom the task was rather difficult. Additionally, although progress was being made throughout phase two in each lesson, with students becoming more involved and engaged, some students had a challenging time identifying their own growth or shortcomings through the use of the rubric, either over assessing their performance, or under assessing. This contributed to an impact on student confidence. Overall, however, after training and reflection, students were able to

positively self-assess or perform a post assessment using a rubric after an in-lesson performance, or after each recital. This knowledge may inform future practices in the way that material is made available to students prior to formal or informal assessments, and how students are trained in self-assessment in private instrumental instruction.

Impact on Teacher

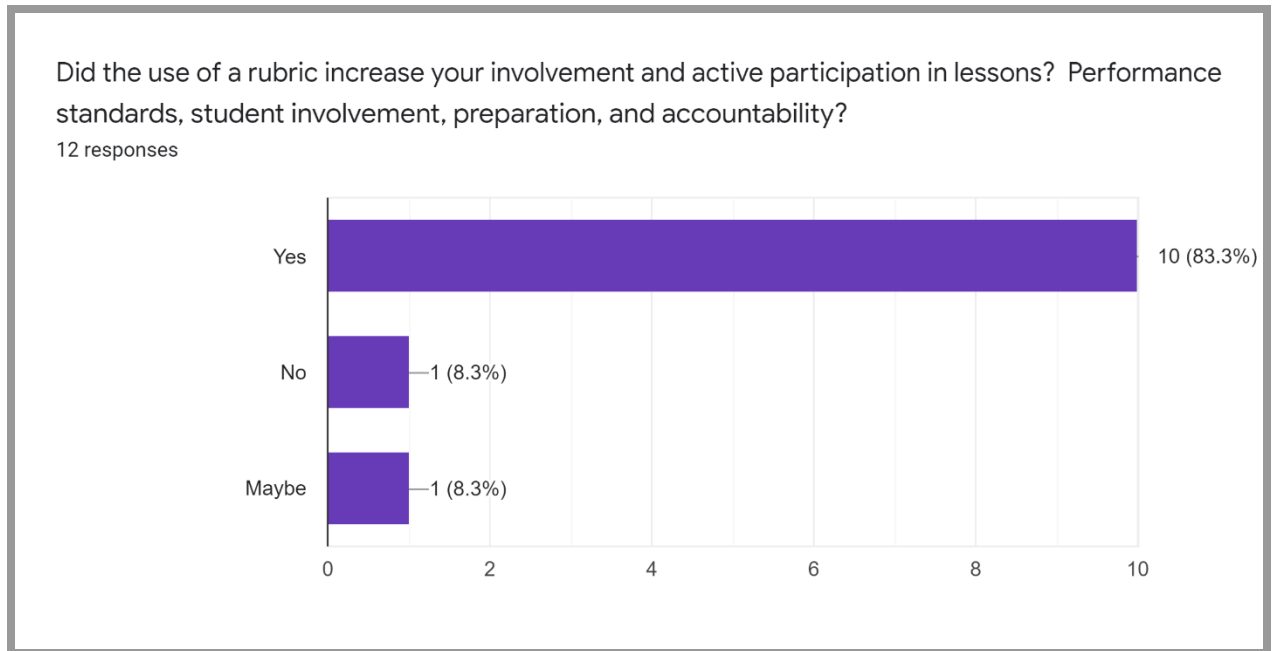
This study has been a rewarding experience for both myself and those private instrumental students involved. One significant impact the findings from the use of a rubric as an assessment tool has had for my future teaching practices is how I will be more mindful of how I teach and am able to engage students in future assessment practices. The findings of this study showed, when teachers are deliberate and meaningful about how and why they want to draw students into not only a collaborative learning process, but the assessment process too, they are inviting students into actively engaging in a learning process with more personal depth of meaning.

An additional significant contribution this study and the use of a rubric has had on my private instrumental teaching is the way in which it has held me accountable to my own teaching standards and future teaching strategies. By questioning the authenticity behind my instruction and the motives and intentions within each lesson, I felt my teaching became more streamlined and focused. The assessment of quality, consistently, and regularly of my teaching of the fundamentals of a students' instrument and musicianship, led me to assess if I was regularly teaching and allowing ample opportunities for students to be autonomous thinkers, listeners, and learners in their own right. The higher order levels of self-assessment, which can be fostered to begin at any age and stage of life and learning, for this study, were being fostered through the guided use of a rubric and showed positive and encouraging outcomes. In future teaching

practices, regular personal accountability, via self-assessment and reflection will remain consistent, as I have also seen and received positive and encouraging outcomes in my teaching via student feedback.

One of the benefits of teachers engaging in and being in the routine of regular self-assessment and reflection, for the purpose of gathering data, such as this study, is to learn and grow in order to best serve our musical community and students therein. Through the process of regular self-reflection, I feel more encouraged and empowered with the knowledge and understanding that the information garnered will suit the best interests and needs of my instrumental music students, while also advancing their musical development, musicianship, and technique. This can all be attained using appropriate, collaborative assessment and training within private instrumental instruction.

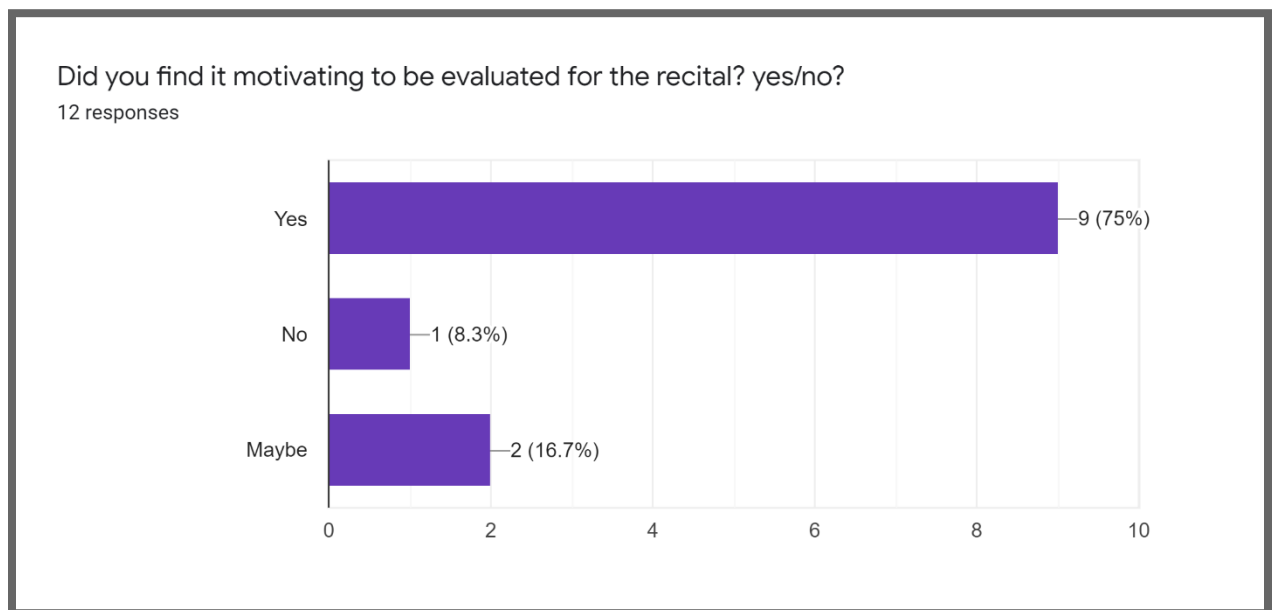
Another notable way this study has informed my future instructional strategies is the idea that through a collaborative process an instrumental lesson, more of a role of responsibility may be placed upon the student. Throughout this process, the teacher may encourage preparedness with understanding, through the knowledge and understanding that through the use of a clearly defined outline and use of a self-assessment tool, students are able to be held accountable for learning objectives and the collaborative setting of practice goals, set in the lesson.



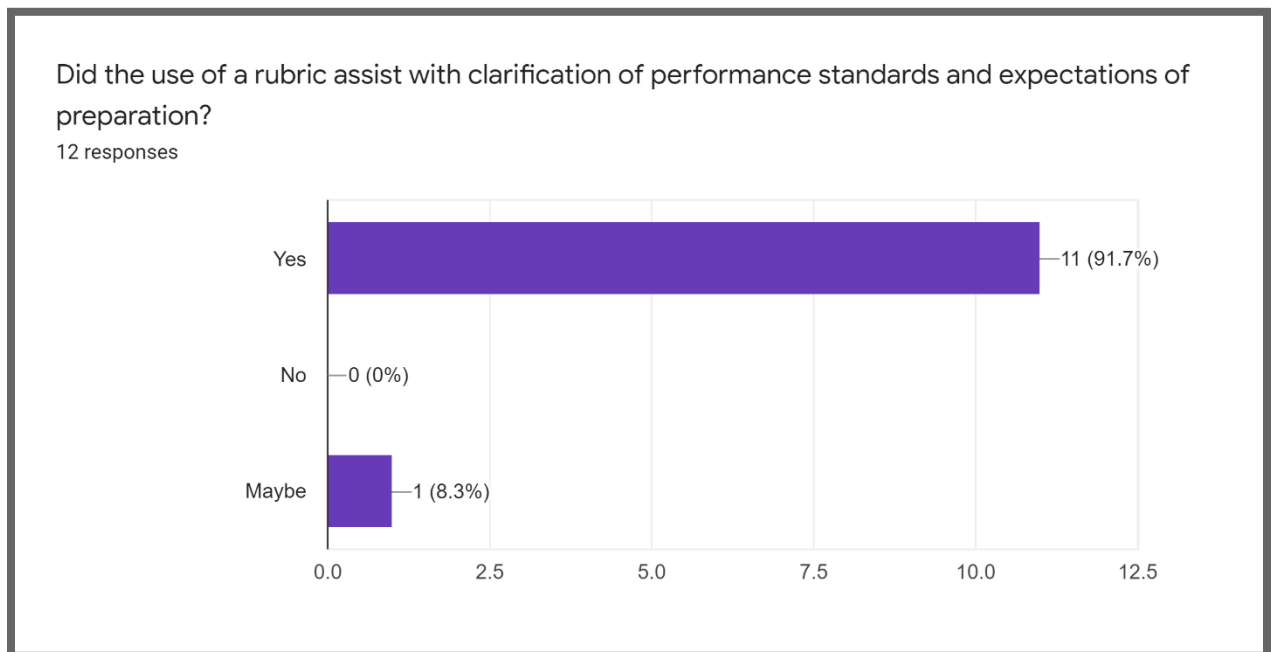
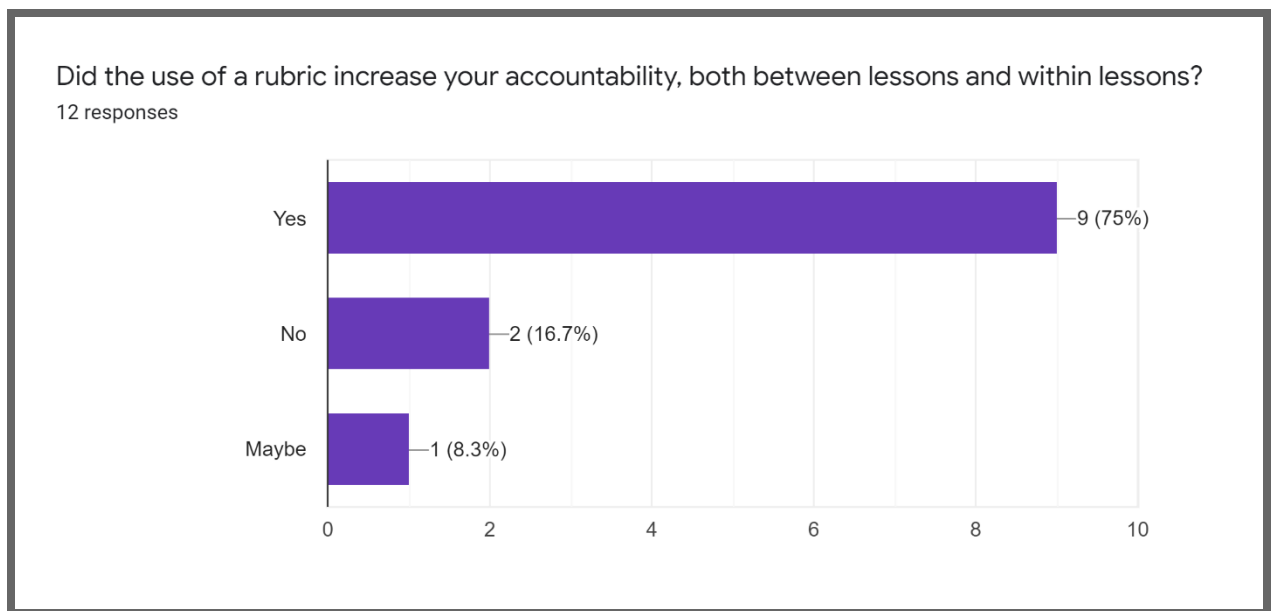
Impact on Student

For students, one of the most considerable ways that assessment, via the use of a rubric, impacted private instrumental student learning was the way in which it encouraged and fostered the skills students needed to become more confident in themselves. A highlight example of this would be the culminating recital. As reported from the data shown in chapter three, and the graph below, 75% of students were found at the culminating Winter Recital to be more motivated using an assessment tool, and the benefits were confident producing. It was encouraging to hear feedback and reports from students of a mindset change over the course of the study, where recitals became less daunting, but rather, because of increased confidence in preparation, with a clear understanding of goals and expectations, more of an exciting opportunity to share their journey of musical learning with loved ones, friends, and family at the culminating event. In addition to the positive increase in student self-confidence, there was, as a result of increased understanding of learning objectives and goals, in addition to being able to refer back to those standards via the rubric on a consistent basis from lesson to lesson, a

coinciding increase in student musical technique and development, as students were not afraid to try new activities, push themselves, and go beyond what they thought were their limits.



In addition, another benefit to the outcome of this study was how it fostered the personal accountability of the students involved. Students have been found to be more reflective, involved within the lesson, accountable through preparation, prepared, hold themselves to a high standard, and are involved in the pre and post assessment process with thorough understanding of what is expected of them. Being held accountable to a clearly outlined set of standards on a weekly basis, not only fostered more autonomous thinkers, listeners, and learners, but through the development of these skills, it has been rewarding to see the personal accountability levels of students increase over the course of the study. Additionally, the open dialogue of expectations, practice, goal setting, assignment, within the clearly outlined structure of assessment expectations contributed to the students increase in accountability.



Concluding statement

As a private instrumental music educator, this study on assessment in private instrumental instruction made an impact on my teaching pedagogy in the way that it helped me to see more opportunities for collaboration with students and challenge myself to be purposeful in planning specific experiences into lessons, thereby fostering a role of responsibility onto

students - seeing encouraging responses. This process, study of assessment in instrumental instruction, brought both teacher and student through a journey and was able to be an effective guide for a music educator that can inspire the next generation of music makers and music appreciators through reflective, thoughtful, involved, collaborative, music making. Notably, it proved the benefits of assessment in private instrumental instruction to be vast, especially when students are provided with engaging in a collaborative process throughout the way.

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Appendix A: Pre-Student Survey (Blank, No Responses)

Student Survey - 1

Form description

In your private lessons, have you been evaluated by your teacher? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other

If the answer to question one is yes, please check the methods below that apply *

☐ Verbal discussion

☐ Teacher feedback

☐ Evaluation form

☐ Grading rubric

☐ Other...

Would the use of a rubric impact the way you prepare for a lesson or recital? (Rubric - set of criteria used to measure a student's performance on assigned tasks.) *

Short answer text

Would understanding why a rubric is being used impact your implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If taking part in an evaluation, how necessary is awareness and understanding of the grading rubric? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Not very important						Very important

Would you find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons? yes/no? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Would you find it motivating to be evaluated for a recital? yes/no? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If you thought it would be motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or a recital, in what areas would you find it motivating? Please check all that apply

- ☐ Practice more often between lessons
- ☐ Focused practice between lessons
- ☐ Extrinsic reward
- ☐ Intrinsic reward
- ☐ Accountability to assignments and musical details
- ☐ Clear understanding of learning goals/lesson assignments
- ☐ Immediate feedback regarding present state
- ☐ Other...

If you did not think it would be motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or a recital, in what areas what you not find it motivating? Please check all that apply

- ☐ Additional stress
- ☐ Family pressure to perform
- ☐ Not fun to practice
- ☐ Fear of failure
- ☐ Decreased intrinsic reward
- ☐ Overwhelming levels of pressure
- ☐ Confusion in practice
- ☐ Other...

Would the use of a rubric increase your involvement and active participation in lessons?
Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability? *

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

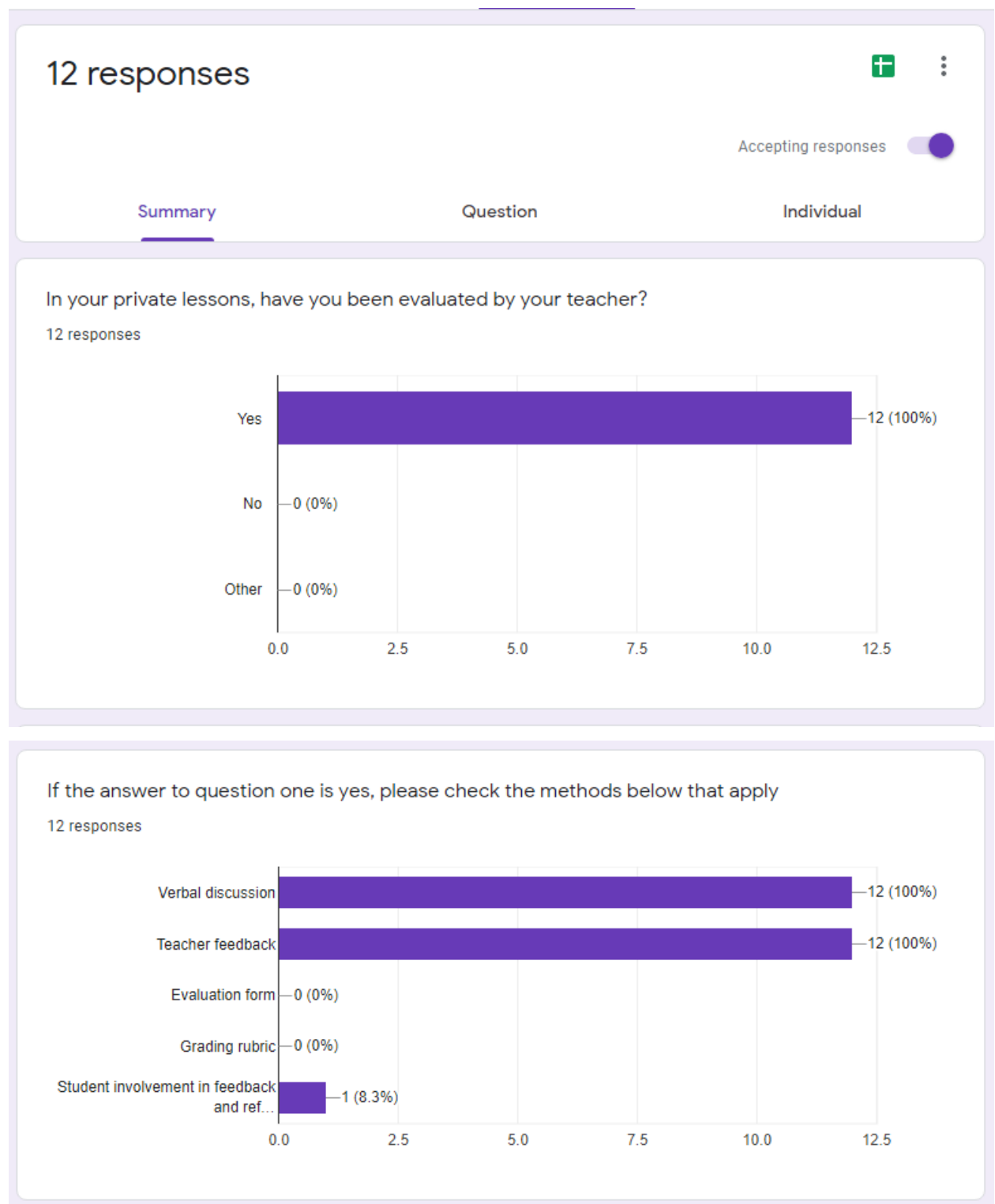
Would the use of a rubric assist with clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Disagree						Agree

Would the use of a rubric impact the way you prepare for a lesson or recital? (Rubric - set of criteria used to measure a student's performance on assigned tasks.) *

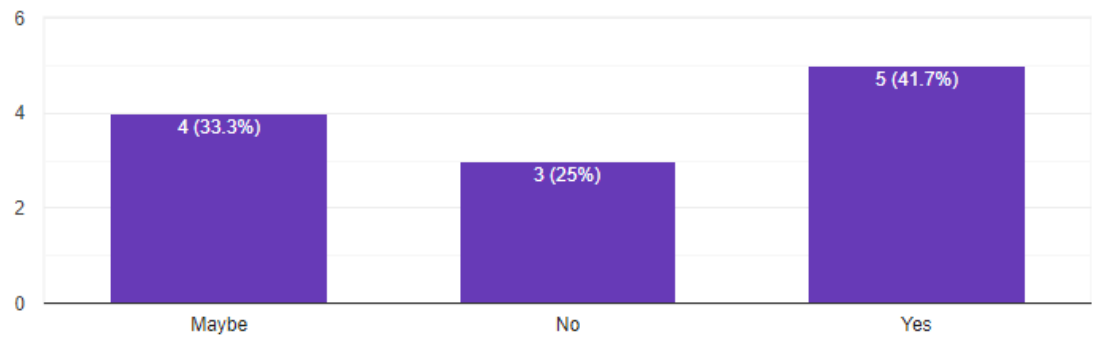
Short answer text

.....

Appendix B: Pre-Student Survey (Responses)

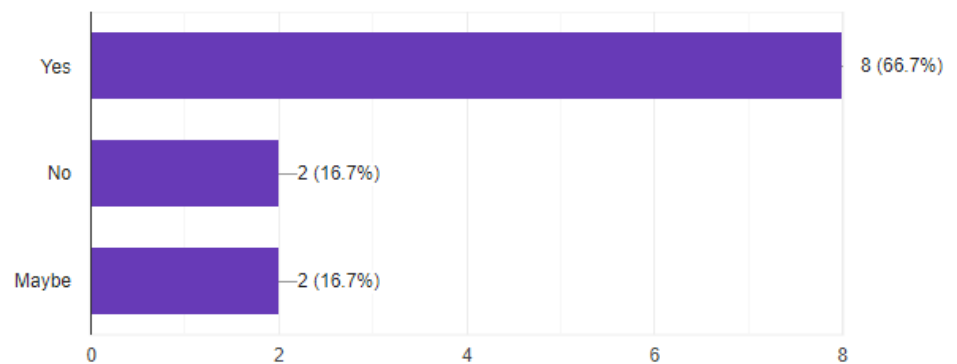
Would the use of a rubric impact the way you prepare for a lesson or recital? (Rubric - set of criteria used to measure a student's performance on assigned tasks.)

12 responses



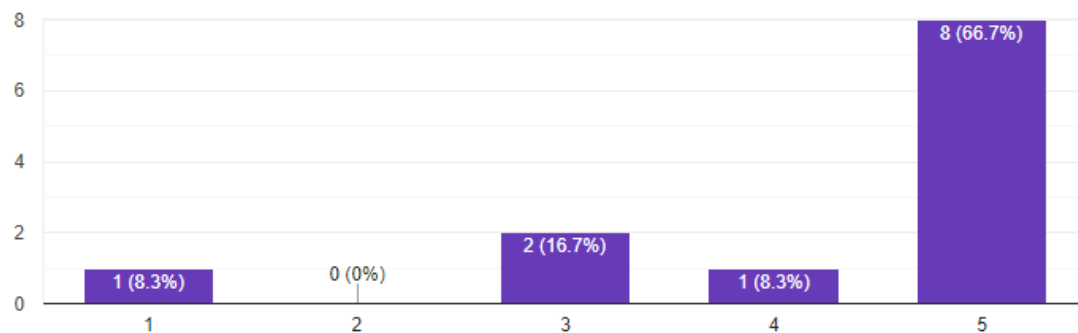
Would understanding why a rubric is being used impact your implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital?

12 responses



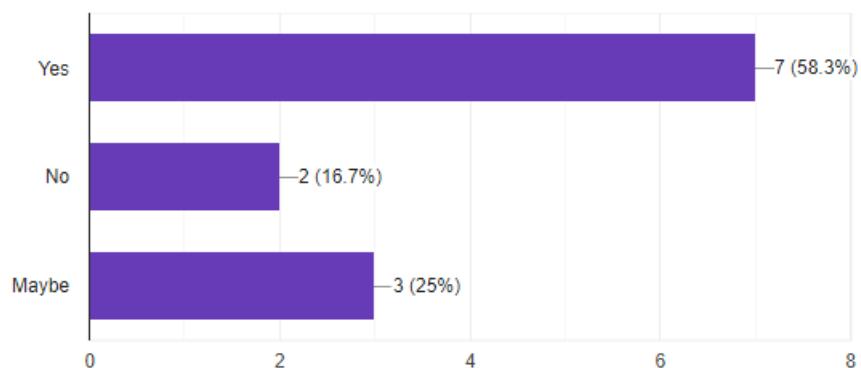
If taking part in an evaluation, how necessary is awareness and understanding of the grading rubric?

12 responses



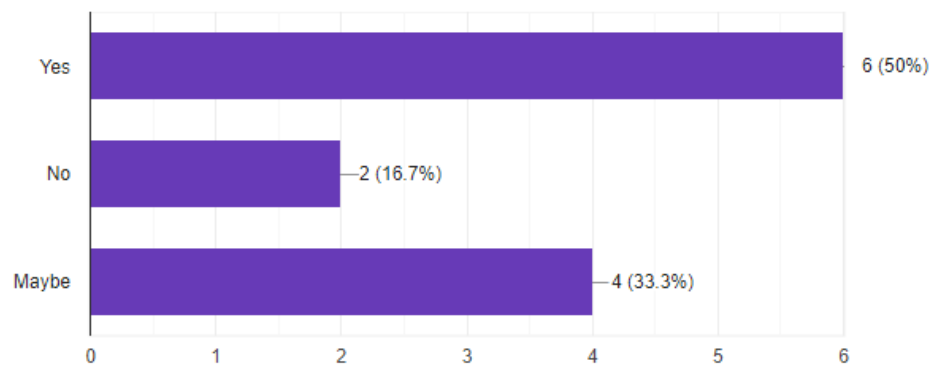
Would you find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons? yes/no?

12 responses



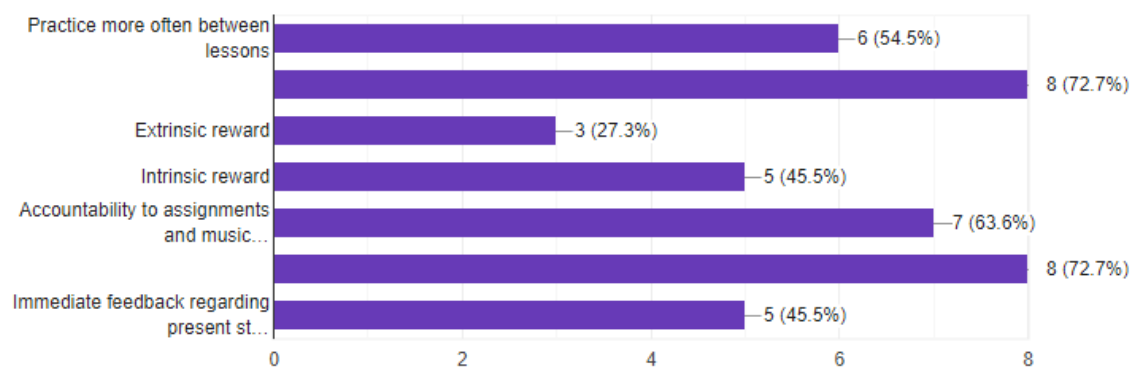
Would you find it motivating to be evaluated for a recital? yes/no?

12 responses



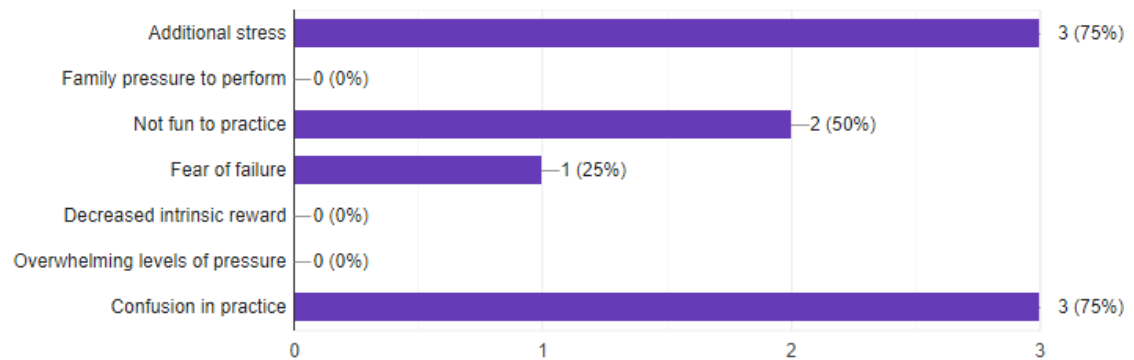
If you thought it would be motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or a recital, in what areas would you find it motivating? Please check all that apply

11 responses



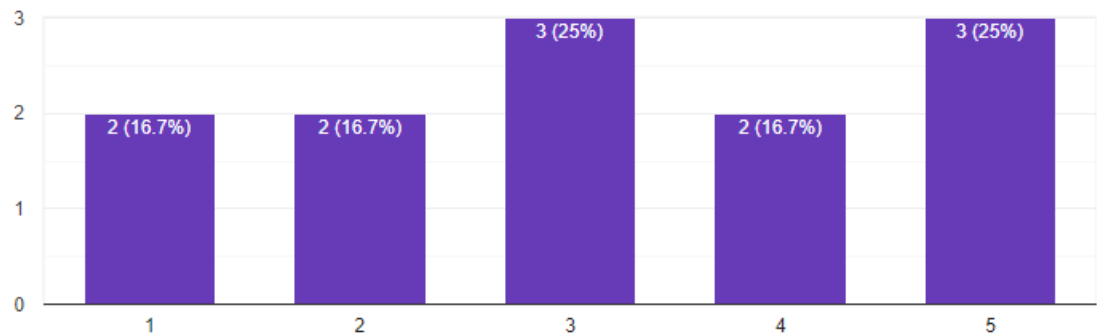
If you did not think it would be motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or a recital, in what areas what you not find it motivating? Please check all that apply

4 responses



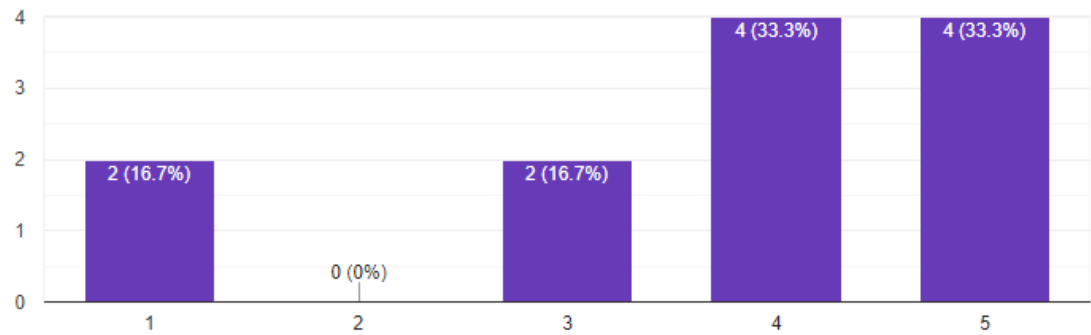
Would the use of a rubric increase your involvement and active participation in lessons?
Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability?

12 responses



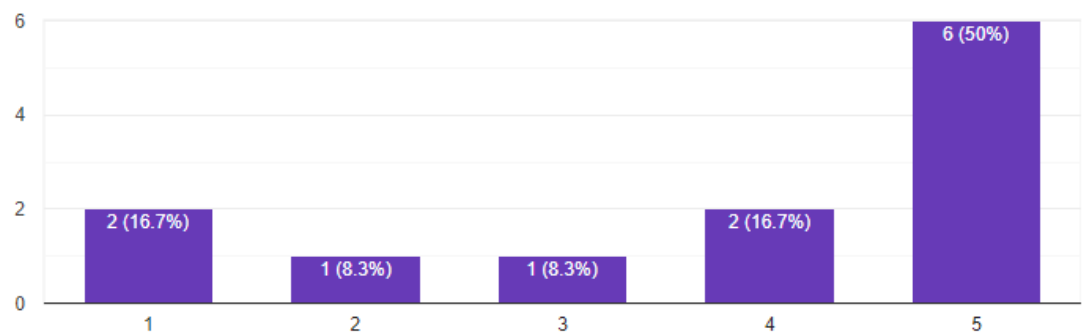
Would the use of a rubric increase your accountability, both between lessons and within lessons?

12 responses



Would the use of a rubric assist with clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation?

12 responses



Appendix C: Post-Student Survey (Blank, No Responses)

Post-Student Survey

Form description

Did the use of a rubric impact the way you prepared for a lesson or recital? (Rubric - set of criteria used to measure a student's performance on assigned tasks.) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

Did understanding why the rubric was being used impact your implementation of the rubric in preparation for a lesson or recital?

☐ yes

☐ no

☐ Maybe

How necessary was awareness and understanding of the grading rubric when taking part in this evaluation? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Not very important						Very important

Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons? yes/no? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for the recital? yes/no? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If you found it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you find it motivating? Please check all that apply *

- ☐ Practice more often between lessons
- ☐ Focused practice between lessons
- ☐ Extrinsic reward
- ☐ Intrinsic reward
- ☐ Accountability to assignments and musical details
- ☐ Clear understanding of learning goals/lesson assignments
- ☐ Immediate feedback regarding present state
- ☐ Other

If you did not find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you not find it motivating? Please check all that apply

- ☐ Additional stress
- ☐ Family pressure to perform
- ☐ Not fun to practice
- ☐ Fear of failure
- ☐ Decreased intrinsic reward
- ☐ Overwhelming levels of pressure
- ☐ Confusion in practice
- ☐ Other

Did the use of a rubric increase your involvement and active participation in lessons? Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Did the use of a rubric increase your accountability, both between lessons and within lessons? *

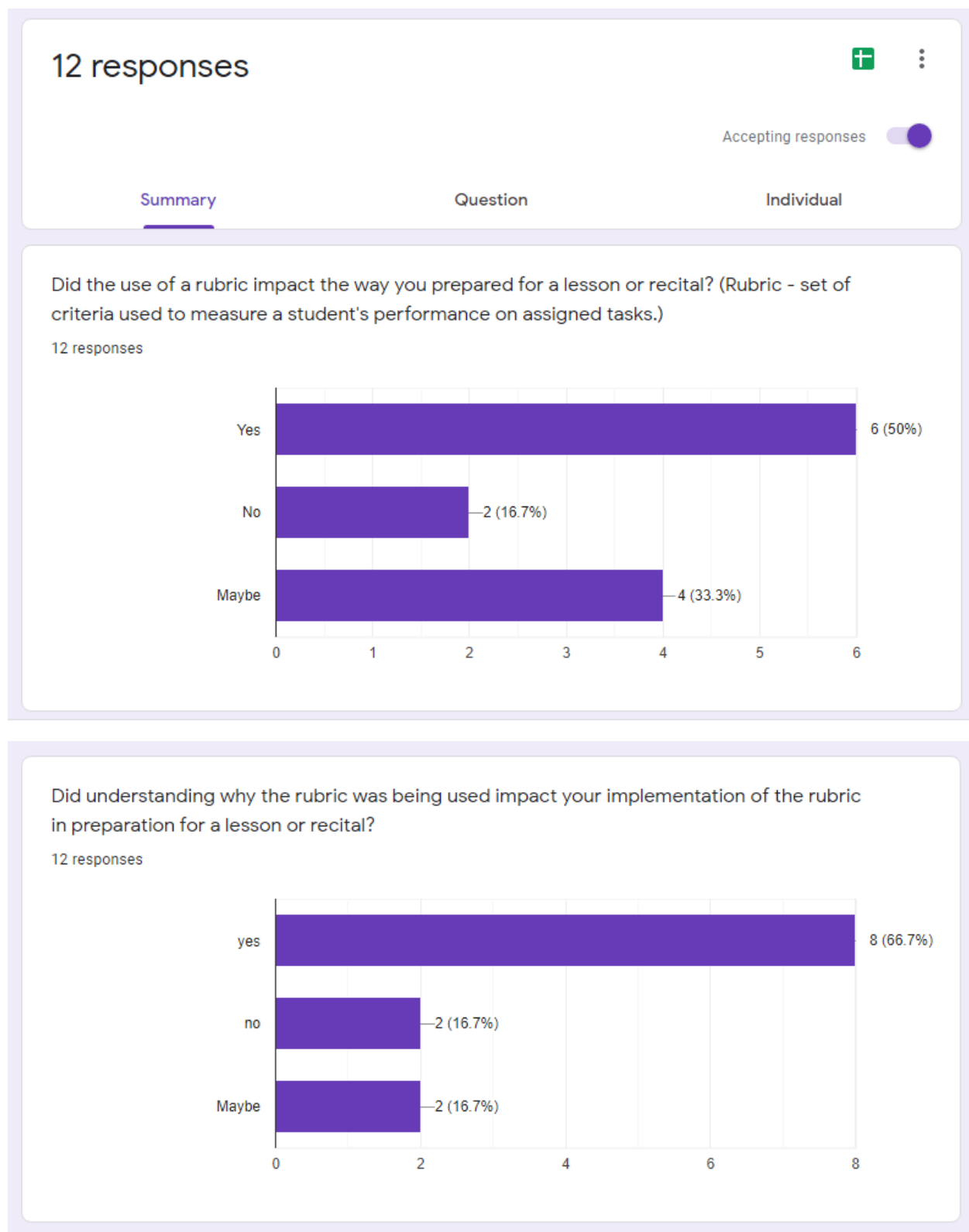
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Did the use of a rubric assist with clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation? *

☐ Yes

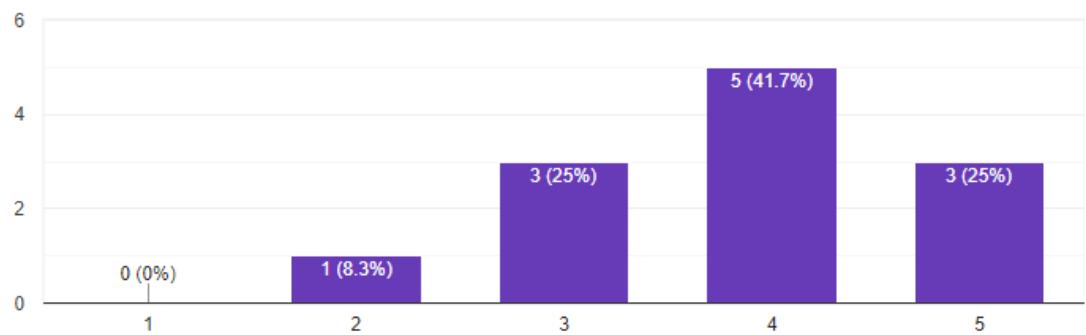
☐ No

☐ Maybe

Appendix D: Post-Student Survey (Responses)

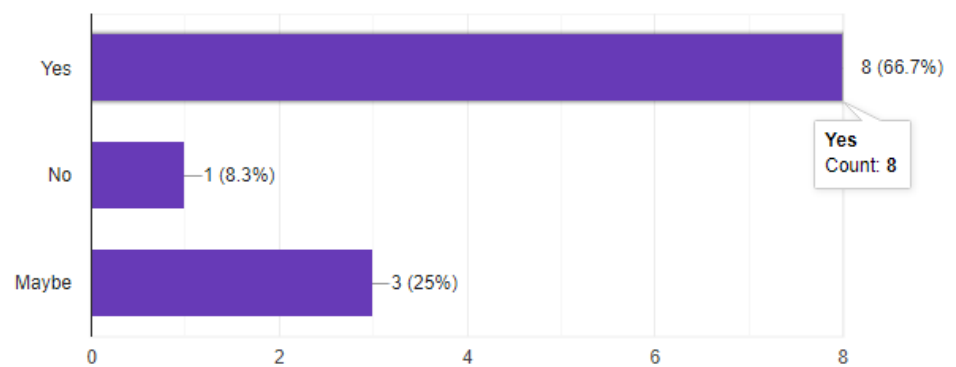
How necessary was awareness and understanding of the grading rubric when taking part in this evaluation?

12 responses



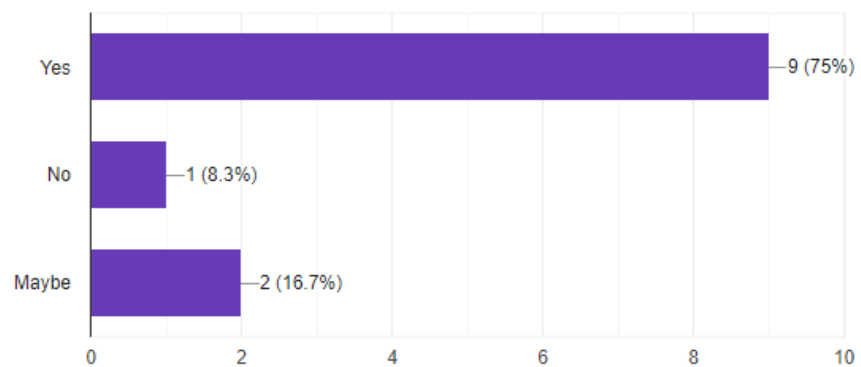
Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons? yes/no?

12 responses



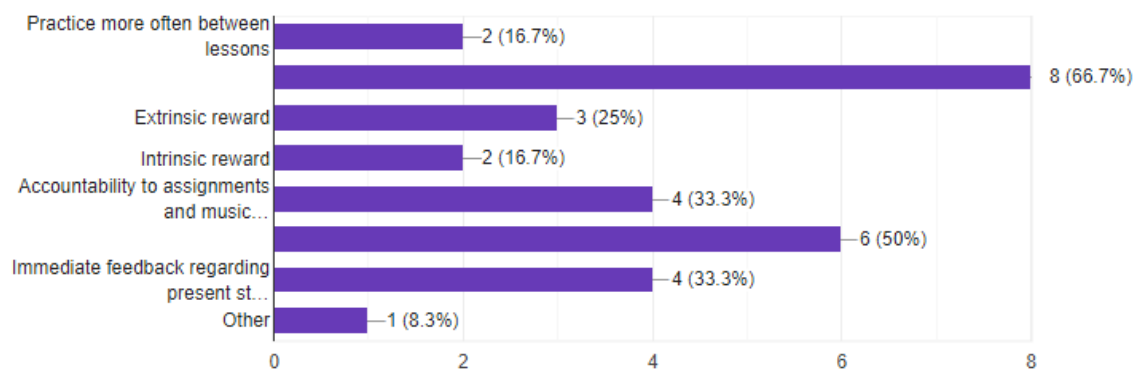
Did you find it motivating to be evaluated for the recital? yes/no?

12 responses



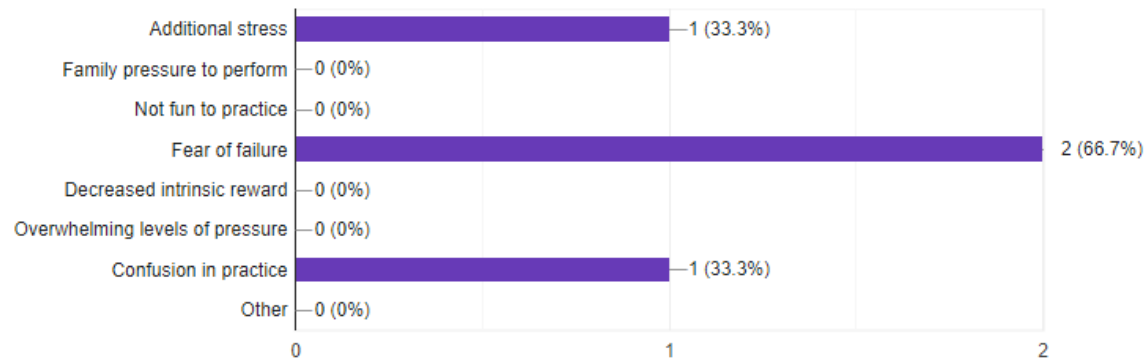
If you found it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you find it motivating? Please check all that apply

12 responses



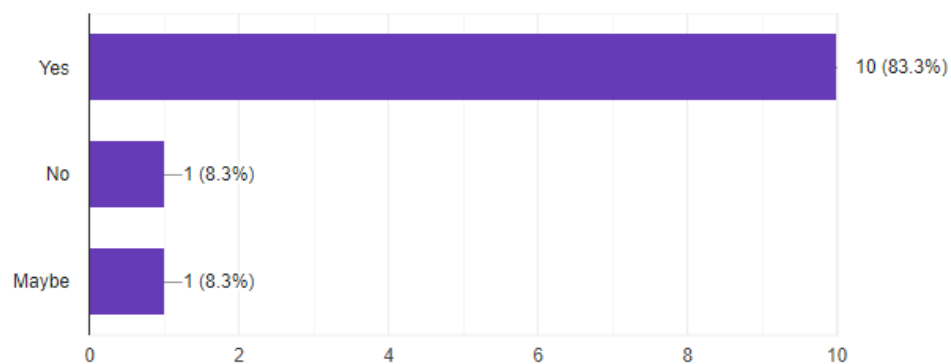
If you did not find it motivating to be evaluated for lessons and/or the recital, in what areas did you not find it motivating? Please check all that apply

3 responses



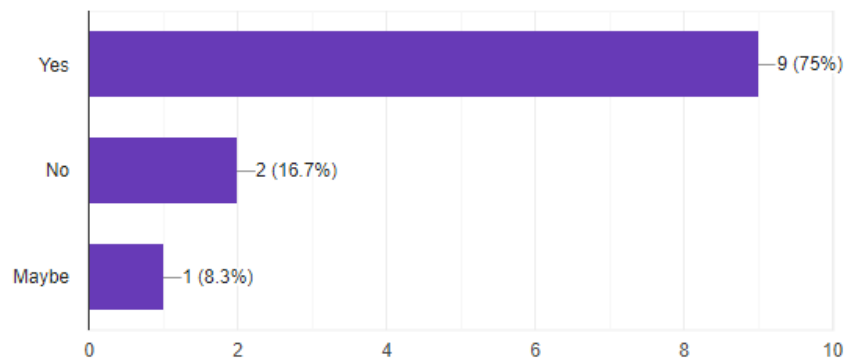
Did the use of a rubric increase your involvement and active participation in lessons?
Performance standards, student involvement, preparation, and accountability?

12 responses



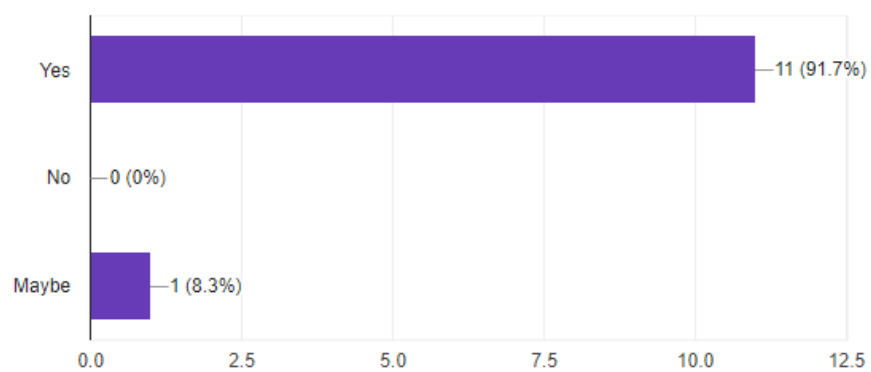
Did the use of a rubric increase your accountability, both between lessons and within lessons?

12 responses



Did the use of a rubric assist with clarification of performance standards and expectations of preparation?

12 responses



Appendix D: Teacher/Student Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

Weekly Rubric for Private Instrumental Lessons

	Excellent (20)	Proficient (15)	Basic (10)	Developing (5)	Unsatisfactory (0)	Score
Participation	Student demonstrates high level of focus and attention.	Student demonstrates focus and attention with minor distractions.	Student is somewhat focused and attentive, needs to be redirected from distractions.	Student has difficulty focusing and paying attention, some redirections from distractions.	Student has difficulty focusing or paying attention, many redirections from distractions.	___/20
Preparation	Student performance demonstrates an excellent amount of practice and is more than prepared.	Student performance demonstrates an adequate amount of practice and is adequately prepared.	Student performance demonstrates a moderate amount of practice and is somewhat prepared.	Student performance demonstrates little practice and is somewhat prepared.	Student performance demonstrates very little practice and is unprepared.	___/20
Posture and Positioning	Student performs with correct posture, left and right-hand position, and bow hold.	Student performs with minimal inconsistencies in posture, left and right-hand position. Student is	Student performs with inconsistent posture, left and right-hand position. Student is able to maintain adjustments throughout	Student does not perform with correct posture, left and right-hand position. Student is not able to maintain adjustments throughout the	Student performs with disregard for correct posture, left and right-hand position. Student is not able to maintain adjustments	___/20

		able to maintain adjustments throughout performance .	performance.	performance.	throughout the performance.	
Note Accuracy	Notes are consistently accurate	An occasional note is not accurate, does not impact the overall performance .	Few notes are inaccurate, somewhat detracting from the performance.	More than a few notes are inaccurate, detracting from the overall performance.	Many notes are not accurate and detract from the performance	___/20
Rhythmic Accuracy	Students performs all rhythms accurately, according to style.	Students performs most rhythms accurately, according to style.	Students performs some rhythms accurately according to style. Is able to correct recurring rhythms	Students performs some rhythms accurately according to style. Is not able to correct recurring rhythms.	Students performs few rhythms accurately according to style.	
Tempo	Student performs at marked tempo with consistent steady beat.	Student performs at approximate marked tempo with consistent steady beat.	Student performs at approximate marked tempo with somewhat consistent beat.	Student performs at several tempi without consistent steady beat. Presence of pauses throughout performance	Student performs at several tempi without consistent steady beat. Presence of many pauses throughout performance	___/20
Tone	Clean, rich, full tone which utilizes full potential of the instrument.	Solid, mature, full sound for the instrument.	Demonstrates developing mastery of tone production on the instrument	Demonstrates emerging development of tone production on the instrument	Demonstrates lack of awareness of skills necessary in the tone production on the instrument	___/20

Intonation	Intonation is correct	Intonation is correct, with few mistakes.	Intonation is mostly stable throughout, with few mistakes.	Intonation stable, but with intonation issues throughout.	Intonation is unstable throughout.	___/20
Expressive Markings	Student performance demonstrates clear understanding and consideration of dynamics and articulation as marked in the music	Student performance demonstrates understanding and consideration of dynamics and articulation as marked in the music	Student performance demonstrates developing understanding and consideration of dynamics and articulation as marked in the music	Student performance demonstrates adequate understanding and consideration of dynamics and articulation as marked in the music	Student performance does not demonstrate understanding or consideration of dynamics and articulation as marked in the music	___/20