

PERFORMANCES AND INFORMANCES IN KINDERGARTEN MUSIC

Participation in Performances and Informances in Kindergarten General Music Classes

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Abstract

While performing is certainly a component of music education, there are many ways to highlight student learning beyond a formal concert, particularly in Kindergarten. The purpose of this study was to examine current trends in performance and informance participation in Kindergarten general music classes. Throughout this study, performances were defined as rehearsed final products such as concerts, musicals, and revues. Informances were defined as presentations of the learning process by showcasing what students experience in a typical music class. Teachers of Kindergarten general music were surveyed to examine whether their students had participated in performances and/or informances, the factors that contributed to these decisions, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of these experiences. The results were analyzed to determine trends among Kindergarten general music classes and to evaluate the types of performing experiences which were perceived to be the most musically and developmentally appropriate for Kindergarten students.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine current trends in performance and informance participation in Kindergarten general music classes. Teachers of Kindergarten general music were surveyed to examine whether their students have participated in performances and/or informances, the factors that contributed to these decisions, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of these experiences. The results were analyzed to determine trends among Kindergarten general music classes and to evaluate the types of performing experiences which were perceived to be the most musically and developmentally appropriate for Kindergarten students.

Rationale

According to Common Anchor #6 in the National Music Standards, students should “perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context” (National Association for Music Education, 2014). This standard is open-ended regarding how these performance experiences may be structured. At the school where I currently teach, the music department traditionally schedules a concert specifically for Kindergarten students at the end of every school year which entails students performing rehearsed songs on stage for their parents and family members who are seated in the audience. Although these performances are well-received among staff members and families, I wanted to research additional performing options for my students. As a result, I have reviewed current research in order to determine whether a formal Kindergarten performance is a beneficial practice while also investigating other options such as a less formal

“informance.” Additionally, I surveyed thirty-three Kindergarten music teachers to examine the types of performances and/or informances in which their students have participated, the factors that have contributed to these decisions, and the perceived advantages and disadvantages of these different formats. I intend to use this data to inform my own decisions regarding future Kindergarten performing expectations and to assist in designing experiences that are musically and developmentally appropriate.

Expected Findings

While surveying other Kindergarten music teachers, I expected to examine the types of performances and/or informances in which their students had participated as well as analyze the factors that contributed to these decisions. I anticipated that the majority of music teachers would design more traditional concert performances due to expectations from school administrators and from students’ families. Additionally, I expected to find that teachers who presented informances would have specific reasons why they felt this approach was more developmentally appropriate than a traditional concert performance. Throughout this research, I hoped to examine the advantages and disadvantages of different performance and informance formats while also analyzing which approaches would be most appropriate for my own teaching situation and my own students.

Chapter 2: Exploring Performances and Informances

Defining Performances and Informances

While performing is certainly a component of music education, there are many different ways to highlight student learning beyond a formal concert. Pautz (2010) first created the term “informance” when she was asked to prepare a musical program for an elementary school PTA meeting. Instead of presenting a traditional concert, Pautz decided to represent what the students were learning throughout the school year by highlighting music class activities and demonstrating the learning process itself. Pautz describes how a traditional “performance” focuses on a rehearsed product, while an “informance” emphasizes the process of learning different concepts of the music curriculum. She further explains that while an informance might include some rehearsed repertoire, the students and teacher will include explanations to further inform the audience as part of the presentation. For example, instead of simply performing songs about trains, the students might share how these songs helped them to learn about specific musical concepts such as dynamics, tempo, or form. Additionally, an informance may also include unfinished repertoire which will give the audience members an opportunity to actively experience the process of learning a song.

Comparing Performances and Informances

According to Thibeault (2010), over-emphasizing a concert performance is similar to high-stakes standardized testing. In both situations, teachers focus on the end-product while putting pressure on their students to perform well. The final product becomes more important than what the students are actually learning. To avoid this situation, Thibeault suggests creating more student-centered performances which highlight the music curriculum and authentically reflect what the students are learning on a daily basis.

Just as classroom teachers often spend many class sessions preparing for standardized testing, general music teachers often spend many weeks rehearsing for a formal concert performance. As a result, class time will be spent on concert preparation which may result in forfeiting other aspects of the music curriculum (Zaffini, 2015). However, when presenting informances, class time does not need to be sacrificed because audience members do not need to see a polished performance. Instead, audience members will experience what the students learn in music class on a daily basis which will not require any additional rehearsals.

Typically, the songs and activities presented during an informance are already part of the curriculum. As a result, students can focus on learning songs that are more developmentally appropriate and pertain to the curriculum instead of songs that are part of prepackaged musicals which may be too long or too difficult for young voices (Nowmos, 2010). Once again, the emphasis is on the process of learning the songs and not necessarily on the performance itself. According to Feierabend (2006), “time spent on the process of becoming musical is more important at this age than spending large amounts of time on preparing a product for presentation” (p. 263). It is important for general music classes to develop a child’s musical skills instead of focusing on concert rehearsals. An informance honors this approach by highlighting repertoire that is already part of the music curriculum.

Watching a traditional school concert is often a passive activity for audience members. However, during an informance, audience members can more easily participate and experience the music-making process along with their children. According to Reese (2009), the parents of her students enjoyed interacting with their children during informances and felt that this made the experience even more meaningful. Reese explains that parental participation during an informance may even inspire parents to participate in additional music-making activities with

their children at home. The parent-child connection will extend music education beyond the classroom and will help to develop a life-long love of music that can be enjoyed by the students with their families.

Although many music teachers are expected to present formal concerts with their Kindergarten classes, many students at this age may experience performance anxiety (Burns, 2016). It is important for a child's first performance experience to be positive. Therefore, an informance may be a more appropriate way of introducing a young child to performing. If a child has a positive experience, he or she will be more likely to view performing as a joyful practice and will continue to seek out performing opportunities in the future (Nowmos, 2010).

In addition to being more relaxed for students, informances held in classrooms typically promote healthier singing habits. According to Nowmos (2010), students are at risk of straining their voices when singing in a large space such as a gym or all-purpose room. However, if students are presenting an informance in a smaller classroom setting, they will be able to utilize their natural voices and will develop healthier and more developmentally appropriate singing habits. If young students perform in a classroom, students are "less apt to shout or push their voices in an unhealthy manner and more likely to sing in tune, resulting in a higher quality performance" (Nowmos, 2010, p. 12).

Finally, one of the most important advantages of an informance is advocacy for music education itself. According to Burton (2004), "Those outside our profession may view music education as unimportant because they do not understand the educational process required to reach the final performance" (p. 17-18). When audience members watch a concert, they are only viewing the final product which they may view as entertainment. They are not experiencing the actual learning which takes place as students prepare for their concert. Additionally, elementary

concerts may only highlight one aspect of the curriculum (such as singing) instead of showcasing the broad range of components such as composing, improvising, responding to music, and cross-curricular connections. According to Pautz (2010), “when you demonstrate the joy of learning in action instead of only showing the finished product, parents become excited...they will become vocal supporters of your program and will defend it against budgetary cuts” (p. 21). Families will be more likely to understand and support music education if they realize what transpires on a daily basis besides simply preparing songs for a concert.

Types of Informances

Music teachers can utilize many different approaches when presenting an informance. According to Kenney (2010), a visitation day is an excellent way for family members to experience a typical music class and learn musical concepts along with their children. Instead of the teacher leading all of the activities, Kenney supports the use of musical centers set up throughout the classroom where children can independently teach the activities directly to their parents. This way, the class is even more student-centered and allows the families to experience both the content and process along with their children.

Meanwhile, Kerchner (2010) explains methods for incorporating aspects of an informance into a more traditional concert. For example, the students can create their own narration to introduce the musical selections which can teach the audience more about the repertoire. Family members will find out what their children learned about the music they are performing and how it connects to the curriculum. Additionally, Kerchner suggests compiling video clips of music class activities which can then be played before the concert begins. As a result, families can still experience the components of a typical music class even if they are unable to attend a visitation day.

Besides singing and playing instruments, an informance could also incorporate folk dances and circle games that the students have learned during the school year (Feierabend, 2006, p. 263). Feierabend explains that although family members could certainly attend this type of event, it is just as meaningful for the students to share their musical experiences with each other. While it is valuable to involve family members and other students, it is equally important to invite administrators and other teachers to an informance. Members of the school community might be supportive of music education without truly understanding what goes on during a typical music class (Abril & Gault, 2007). As a result, it is important to invite administrators and classroom teachers to informances to help them gain a deeper appreciation for the music learning process and to experience the benefits of music education.

Should Informances Replace Performances?

According to Pautz (2010), both performances and informances can be worthwhile experiences for students in general music. Informances do not necessarily need to replace performances. Both formats have value in music education and can be exciting and special experiences for students. Pautz explains that it is important to incorporate characteristics of an informance into a performance and vice versa. As a result, the students and their families are able to experience both the process and the product.

Meanwhile, Nowmos (2020) cautions against using prepackaged musicals or revues with Kindergarten students. Since many prepackaged shows often contain songs that are too long or too vocally difficult for young voices, it is important for teachers to use their discretion when the administration expects these types of performances. Teachers might need to alter the repertoire and format of these performances or might consider presenting informances instead.

Whether presenting performances or informances, it is essential for students to have ownership of the process by allowing them to make choices and to have a voice (Finch & Hoover, 2020). Students can help to plan the performances and/or informances and can assist in choosing the songs and activities that they want to share with the audience. As a result, the process becomes less teacher-centered and helps the students to feel more empowered in whichever format they are presenting.

Chapter 3: Study Details and Results

Research Method

The purpose of my study was to determine current trends in performance and informance participation in Kindergarten general music classes, to examine the factors which contributed to these decisions, and to analyze the perceived advantages and disadvantages of these different formats. For my study, I designed a Google Form survey consisting of eight multiple-choice questions and three open-ended questions (Appendix A). The survey was shared on my personal Facebook page and emailed to music teachers from various school districts on March 30, 2021. After collecting thirty-three responses (Appendix B), I closed the survey on April 14, 2021.

Survey Findings

The first question in my survey was “Have you taught Kindergarten general music classes in a public or private school BEFORE the 2019-2020 school year?” My goal was to research Kindergarten general music experiences which occurred before the COVID-19 pandemic. If participants answered “yes,” I would be able to use their responses in my data analysis. All of the thirty-three participants responded “yes” to this question.

Next, I asked “How many years total have you taught Kindergarten general music?” Participants could select “1-10 years,” “11-20 years,” or “more than 20 years.” Out of thirty-three participants, 48.5% selected “1-10 years,” 27.3% selected “11-20 years,” and 24.2% selected “more than 20 years.”

The subsequent survey question asked “Was your most recent Kindergarten general music teaching experience in a public or private school?” Out of thirty-three participants, thirty-two selected “public school” and one participant selected “private school.”

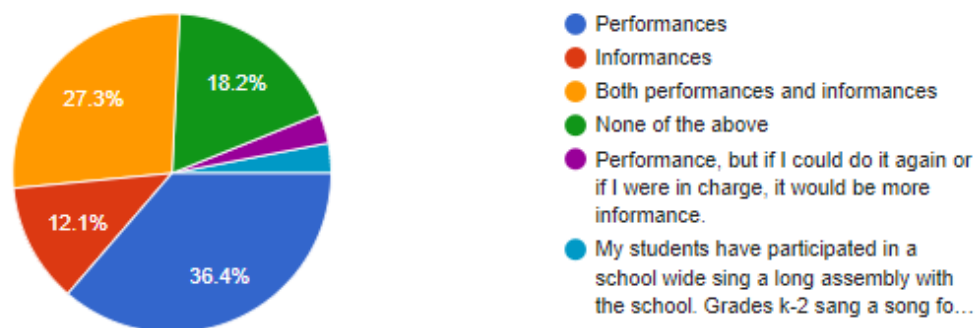
In the following section, I defined the terms “performance” and “informance” by explaining that a performance was a rehearsed presentation such as a concert or revue and that an informance was a less formal presentation such as a classroom visitation which often included explanations to inform the audience (Pautz, 2010). I then stated, “Please select the types of experiences in which your Kindergarten general music students have participated.” The choices were “performances,” “informances,” “both performances and informances,” “none of the above,” or “other.” Of the thirty-three responses, 36.4% selected “performances,” 27.3% selected “both performances and informances,” 18.2% selected “none of the above,” and 12.1% selected “informances.” Two of the participants selected “other.” One of these participants wrote, “Performance, but if I could do it again or if I were in charge, it would be more informance” while the other participant responded that their Kindergarten students participated in a sing-along assembly with teachers and other students in attendance.

Figure 1

Kindergarten Participation in Performances and/or Informances

Please select the types of experiences in which your Kindergarten general music students have participated. (Please answer the questions in this survey based on your teaching experiences BEFORE the COVID-19 pandemic)

33 responses



In the next section, I asked “Which of the following factors influence your decision to have Kindergarten students participate in PERFORMANCES?” The options included “parent/family expectations,” “administrative/district expectations,” “Kindergarten students enjoy performing,” “performances help to promote the music program,” “I enjoy organizing performances for my Kindergarten students and their families,” “I feel it is a beneficial experience for my Kindergarten students,” and “other.” Based on the provided selections, the factors which received the most responses were “administrative/district expectations” and “parent/family expectations.”

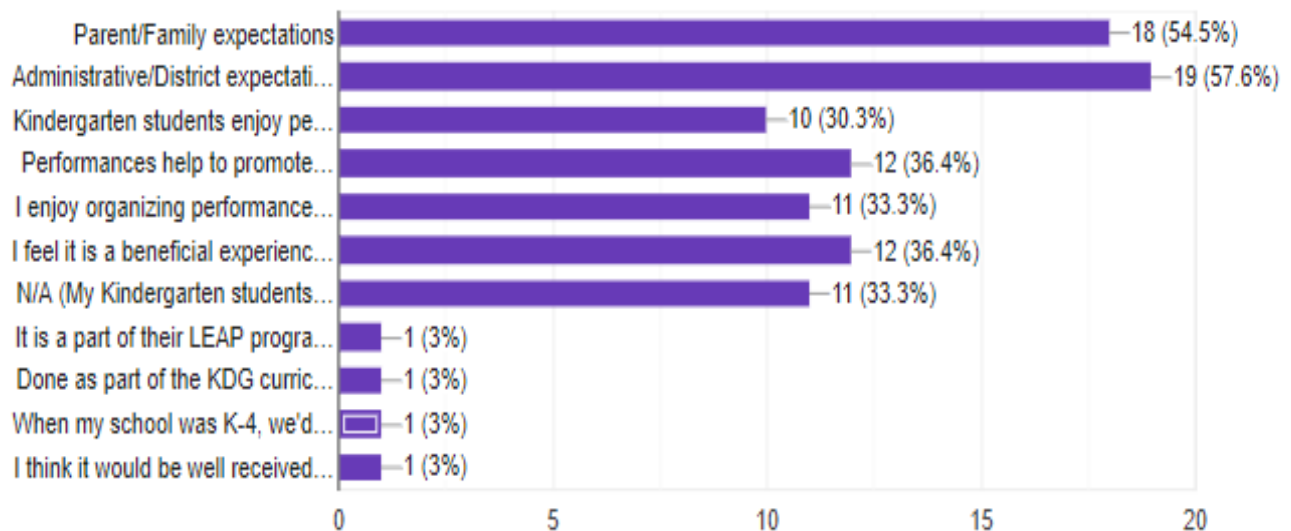
Figure 2

Performance Participation Factors

Which of the following factors influence your decision to have Kindergarten students participate in PERFORMANCES? Please check all that apply.



33 responses



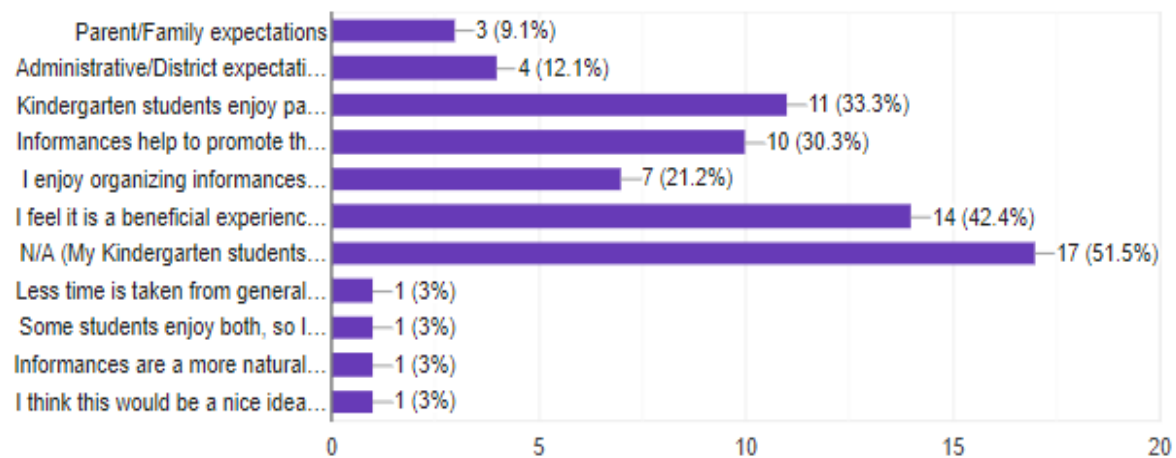
In the following section, I asked participants to select the factors that influenced their decision to have Kindergarten students participate in *informances*. Out of the thirty-three responses, 51.5% selected “N/A (My Kindergarten students have never participated in any informances).” Based on the other options, the factors which received the most responses were “I feel it is a beneficial experience for my Kindergarten students” and “My Kindergarten students enjoy participating in informances.”

Figure 3

Informance Participation Factors

Which of the following factors influence your decision to have your Kindergarten students participate in INFORMANCES? Please check all that apply.

33 responses



In the next section of the survey, I asked participants to select the approximate duration of their Kindergarten performances and informances. In the performance category, 60.6% of participants selected “30 minutes or less,” 6.1% selected “more than 30 minutes,” and 33.3% selected “n/a” if their Kindergarten students did not participate in performances. Meanwhile, in the informance category, 39.4% selected “30 minutes or less,” 6.1% selected “more than 30

minutes,” and 54.5% selected “n/a” if their Kindergarten students did not participate in informances.

The last section of the survey consisted of three open-ended questions. The first question asked “Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in a PERFORMANCE?” The participants described advantages such as “they build confidence,” “[students] love being part of a school tradition,” and “performances promote the music department.” One participant who works in a private school explained that concerts are an expectation and that donors will sometimes contribute to the school when attending a concert. Meanwhile, other participants felt that performances were not beneficial and cited reasons such as performances not truly representing the students’ music education, taking time away from other areas of the music curriculum, and creating a stressful situation for both the students and teacher. One participant wrote, “Personally I do not find any benefit to kindergarten performances. I believe they put unwanted stress and anxiety on young students who should be more focused on enjoying music and the learning process.”

Some participants wrote that performances *can* be beneficial as long as the material is relevant to the music curriculum. One participant wrote that a performance with “goals, expectations, and pedagogically appropriate music can be a very valuable experience for the students.” Additionally, some participants wrote that the excitement of a performance could be very motivating and could “spark a desire to continue participating in music.”

The second open-ended question asked “Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in an INFORMANCE?” Some of the participants wrote that although they have never held informances, they believed that the concept was beneficial because it was less stressful and would allow parents to learn more about what

happens during a typical music class. Other participants described additional advantages of informances such as demonstrating the learning process, being a natural extension of the curriculum, and increasing advocacy for music education. One participant wrote that it would be an “excellent opportunity for students to share real knowledge and explore without as much pressure” while another participant wrote that informances would be “a great way for parents and administrators to see the music making process.”

Meanwhile, some participants wrote about disadvantages such as parents being less interested and less likely to attend an informance. One participant wrote that an informance would “look less flashy or impressive to families and colleagues than a canned performance.” Additionally, some participants expressed concern that an informance would have more “down time” than a performance and could result in students losing focus during teacher explanations or becoming distracted by their parents sitting near them. One participant wrote, “It may be easy for them to get bored and start to have problems if not kept engaged the whole time. Everything would have to be very organized and well thought out ahead of time.”

The final open-ended question was “Do you prefer presenting performances, informances, both, or neither for Kindergarten students? Please explain your answer.” Out of the thirty-three survey participants, twelve of the responses favored performances, ten preferred informances, seven were in favor of having both, and four participants wrote that they would rather not do performances or informances.

The participants who preferred performances cited reasons such as school tradition, parents being more likely to attend, and the students being excited to present a rehearsed product. One participant wrote that “the students are more eager to perform for family and

friends when they are prepared” while other participants wrote that parents were less interested in seeing a typical music class and would be more likely to attend a concert.

Meanwhile, the participants who favored informances felt that this was a more positive experience for their students because the atmosphere would be more relaxed and there would be less stress. Some participants wrote that informances seem to be more enjoyable for the students, there is more opportunity to interact with the audience, and parents are able to participate along with their children. One participant described being in favor of informances because there was “less pressure on kids, smaller setting, and it’s beneficial to educate families about the music program.”

Several participants explained that they liked to present both performances and informances because they each serve a different purpose. One participant wrote “I get a different crowd of parents, community members and staff at each event, so I enjoy doing both!” Another participant wrote about presenting an informance with an optional performance component while another participant wrote about “a blended approach.” This participant described a themed concert which incorporated songs and games that the students had learned throughout the year in music class. This way, family members would attend a concert, but the repertoire would still reflect the music curriculum.

Meanwhile, the participants who were in favor of presenting neither performances nor informances cited reasons such as scheduling conflicts and putting too much pressure on young children. One participant wrote, “To be honest, just getting through a lesson can be enough of a challenge with Kindergarten. Adding the pressure of performing on any level is not something that I am interested in at this point in my career.”

Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusion

Reflection

The purpose of this study was to gain further insight into the practice of having Kindergarten students participate in performances and/or informances. After studying the responses from my survey, I have determined that music teachers have a variety of reasons why they believe performances, informances, both, or neither would be best for their students. Just as music programs and expectations vary by school, music teachers themselves have different teaching styles and personal beliefs. As a result, the survey responses are a reflection of each educator's personal teaching philosophy.

It is interesting to note that the majority of teachers who had their students participate in performances selected "administrative/district expectations" as one of the main factors which influenced their decision. Meanwhile, for teachers who had their students participate in informances, one of the leading factors was "I feel it is a beneficial experience for my students." Therefore, it appears that one of the main motivations behind Kindergarten performances is fulfilling a job requirement while an informance is an experience that some music teachers feel is more worthwhile. Nowmos (2010) writes that music teachers often have to educate their administrators about what is best for their students. After conducting this research project, I now have evidence which supports why informances are a beneficial option which could be used in conjunction with performances.

Of the teachers who favored performances, the respondents cited reasons such as parents being more likely to attend and the children being more excited and motivated to present a concert. Meanwhile, teachers who favored informances tended to cite reasons such as less pressure on the children and being able to show families what goes on in a regular music class.

These responses caused me to reflect on the benefits of both formats and made me consider what is most developmentally appropriate for my students and what would be most educational for both parent and child.

As a result of my research, I believe that presenting both performances and informances is an appropriate option for my Kindergarten students. I agree with the survey responses that both performances and informances can each serve an educational purpose and showcase different aspects of the curriculum. Performances can be a positive experience as long as the repertoire is developmentally appropriate and accurately reflects the music curriculum. Additionally, informances are beneficial in conjunction with a performance because they give family members an opportunity to experience the learning process before viewing a more rehearsed product. Some students and families may prefer informances while others may be more motivated by a performance. Presenting both formats is inclusive of both preferences and will allow family members to experience various facets of the music curriculum. Perhaps students could present a less formal classroom informance during the first half of the year and could then perform in a more structured concert towards the end of the school year. This way, students would have an opportunity to participate in both formats while parents would be able to experience an authentic music class before viewing a final product. Creating a low-stress, relaxed environment for both the informance and the performance would ensure a positive experience that would inspire both students and families to enjoy making music.

Further Research

Since my study focused primarily on *teacher* perceptions regarding performances and informances, it would be interesting to conduct further research regarding student and family perceptions. Although some teachers wrote that their students enjoyed informances more than

performances or vice versa, it would be compelling to collect data directly from the students themselves to analyze which format they preferred and why. It would be best to administer a survey both before and after students participate in a performance and an informance to see if their views change after having each experience.

Additionally, it would be informative to find out which format families preferred attending and their reasons why. Although this data should not necessarily be the deciding factor in a teacher's decision, it could be helpful to include family input and to find out the reasons why families prefer performances and/or informances. It is possible they enjoy attending both because each format offers a different glimpse into the school's music program. This further research could be beneficial when discussing plans with administrators and could be useful as supporting evidence when deciding which format would be best.

Final Thoughts

As a result of my research, I believe it is beneficial for the school community to experience both the process and the product by presenting both informances and performances. It is also important to educate administrators and families about both formats before they attend. As a result, they will know what to expect ahead of time and they will be more aware of the educational benefits of each experience. Additionally, they will be more informed about the music program in general and will be more supportive of experiencing both the learning process and the final product.

In conclusion, I believe that both performances and informances can be valuable experiences for Kindergarten students as long as the repertoire is developmentally appropriate and reflects the music curriculum. The presentations should not be overly long and should be in an environment where the students can practice healthy singing habits without having to push or

strain their voices. Additionally, whether presenting performances or informances, the environment should be relaxed and non-stressful. Students should feel comfortable and should be excited to perform and share what they have learned.

Both performances and informances are ways to educate the school community about the music program and to increase visibility and advocacy for music education in general. As a music educator, my goal is to develop a life-long love of music in my students. If my Kindergarten students have positive experiences presenting both performances and informances, they will be more likely to enjoy making music and to continue participating in musical activities throughout their lives.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Survey: Participation in Performances and Informances in Kindergarten General Music Classes

My name is Debbie Lingel and I am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Music Education from The University of the Arts. The purpose of this survey is to collect data for my thesis project to determine current trends in performance and informance participation in Kindergarten general music classes.

This survey is intended for music educators who have taught Kindergarten general music classes in a public or private school BEFORE the 2019-2020 school year. All of the following questions address Kindergarten music experiences that took place before the COVID-19 Pandemic. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Thank you very much for your time!

* Required

Have you taught Kindergarten general music classes in a public or private school BEFORE the 2019-2020 school year? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many years total have you taught Kindergarten general music? *

- ☐ 1-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

Was your most recent Kindergarten general music teaching experience in a public or private school? *

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Other: _____

Defining Performances and Informances

Please use the following definitions of "performance" and "informance" when answering the remaining questions in this survey:

According to Pautz (2010), a "performance" is a formal presentation of repertoire that has been rehearsed and fine-tuned ahead of time. The audience is viewing the final product. Concerts, musicals, and revues are examples of performances.

An "informance" is a less formal presentation of what students are learning in music class and will often include more detailed explanations of the activities. Repertoire has not necessarily been rehearsed ahead of time. The emphasis is on the learning process instead of the final product. Music class visitations and student presentations which focus on educating, informing, or involving the audience are examples of informances.

Source: Pautz, M. (2010). Both Performance and Informance: Not "Either—Or" in Elementary General Music. *General Music Today*, 23(3), 20–26.

Please select the types of experiences in which your Kindergarten general music students have participated. (Please answer the questions in this survey based on your teaching experiences BEFORE the COVID-19 pandemic) *

- ☐ Performances
- ☐ Informances
- ☐ Both performances and informances
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other: _____

Which of the following factors influence your decision to have Kindergarten students participate in PERFORMANCES? Please check all that apply. *

- ☐ Parent/Family expectations
- ☐ Administrative/District expectations
- ☐ Kindergarten students enjoy performing
- ☐ Performances help to promote the music program
- ☐ I enjoy organizing performances for my Kindergarten students and their families
- ☐ I feel it is a beneficial experience for my Kindergarten students
- ☐ N/A (My Kindergarten students have never participated in any performances)
- ☐ Other: _____

Which of the following factors influence your decision to have your Kindergarten students participate in INFORMANCES? Please check all that apply. *

- ☐ Parent/Family expectations
- ☐ Administrative/District expectations
- ☐ Kindergarten students enjoy participating in informances
- ☐ Informances help to promote the music program

In general, what is the duration of most of the INFORMANCES in which your Kindergarten students have participated? *

- ☐ 30 minutes or less
- ☐ More than 30 minutes
- ☐ N/A (My Kindergarten students have never participated in any informances)
- ☐ Other: _____

Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in a PERFORMANCE? Please explain your answer. *

Your answer _____

Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in an INFORMANCE? Please explain your answer. *

Your answer _____

Do you prefer presenting performances, informances, both, or neither for Kindergarten students? Please explain your answer. *

Your answer _____

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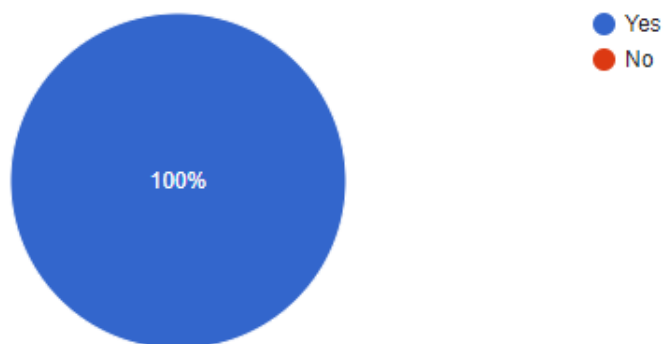
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Appendix B

Survey Responses

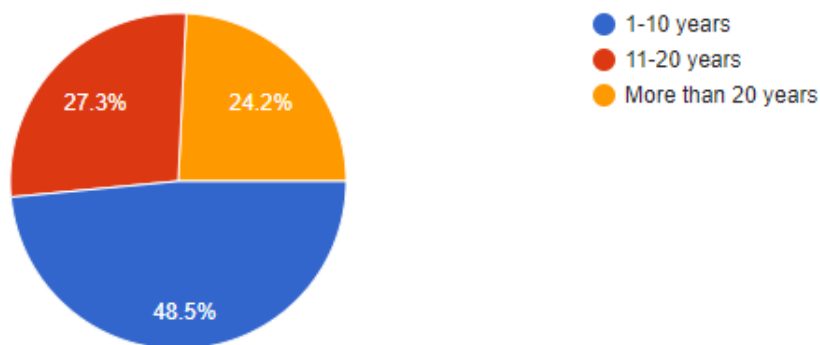
Have you taught Kindergarten general music classes in a public or private school BEFORE the 2019-2020 school year?

33 responses



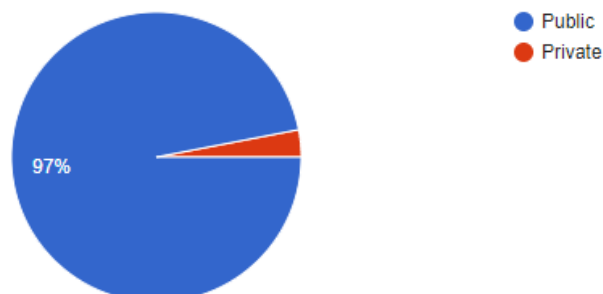
How many years total have you taught Kindergarten general music?

33 responses



Was your most recent Kindergarten general music teaching experience in a public or private school?

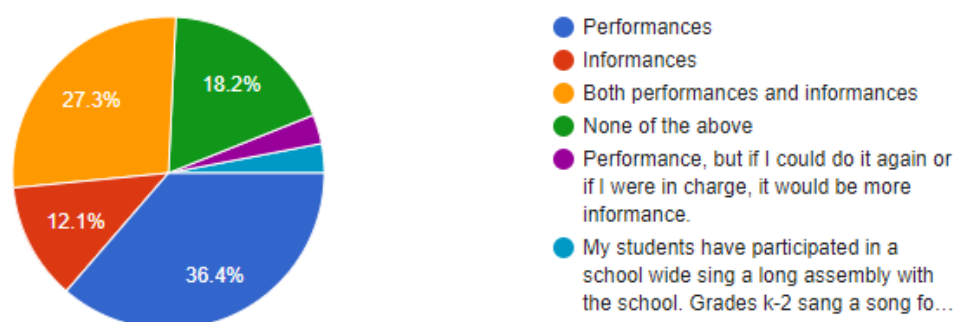
33 responses



Defining Performances and Informances

Please select the types of experiences in which your Kindergarten general music students have participated. (Please answer the questions in this survey based on your teaching experiences BEFORE the COVID-19 pandemic)

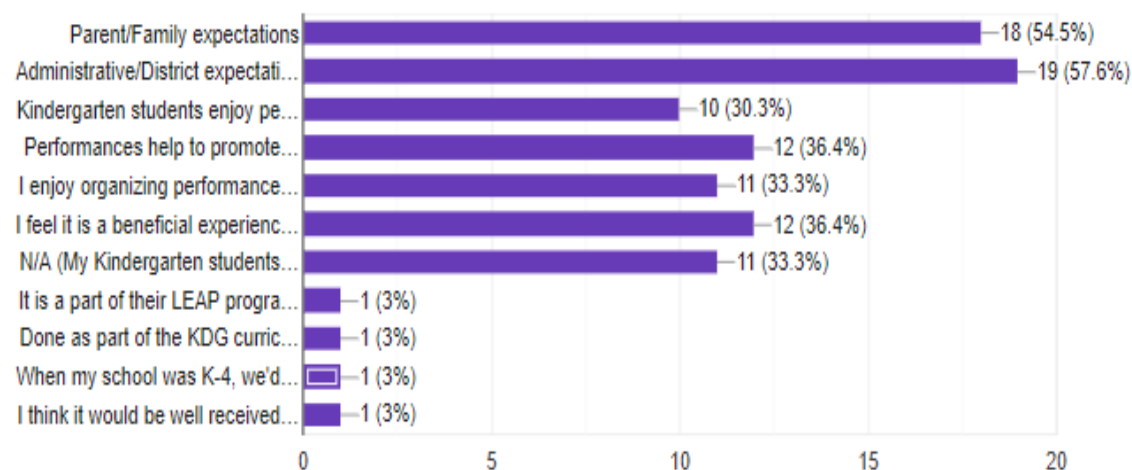
33 responses



Which of the following factors influence your decision to have Kindergarten students participate in PERFORMANCES? Please check all that apply.

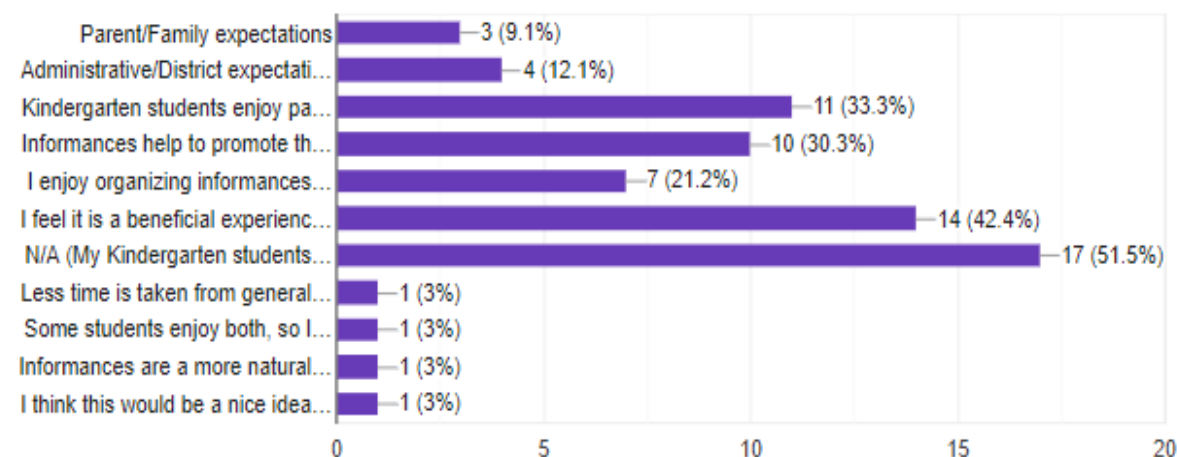


33 responses



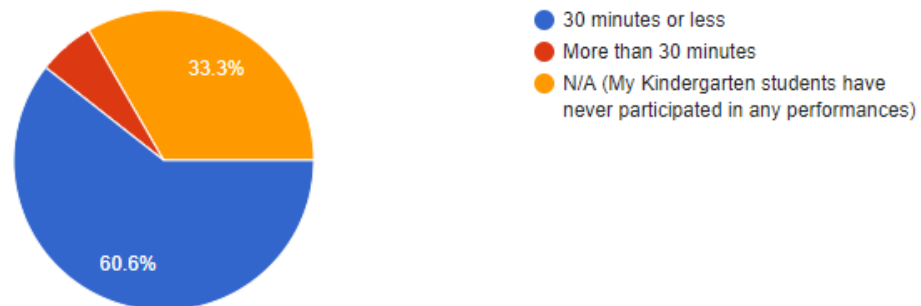
Which of the following factors influence your decision to have your Kindergarten students participate in INFORMANCES? Please check all that apply.

33 responses



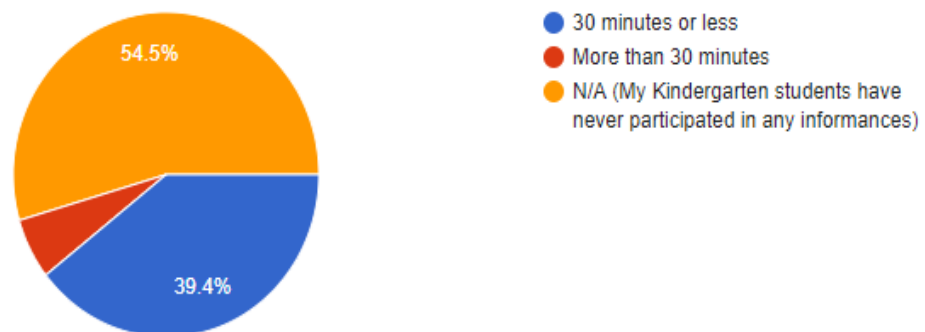
In general, what is the duration of most of the PERFORMANCES in which your Kindergarten students have participated?

33 responses



In general, what is the duration of most of the INFORMANCES in which your Kindergarten students have participated?

33 responses



Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in a PERFORMANCE? Please explain your answer.

33 responses

They build confidence. When process-focused, K students learn how to go through a rehearsal process and enjoy it.

They love being part of a school tradition, and parents love seeing them perform. It's difficult to take time away from the curriculum to practice speaking lines, riser etiquette, etc.

Yes. Advantage is performances are greatly valued by families & some students really enjoy them. Disadvantage is lack of time to fully prepare for the logistics and musical performance time when seeing K once a week.

I think it is advantageous because it gives the students an opportunity to be on stage at an early age before they begin to get self conscious. I also think the parent appreciate the performance as well and any opportunity to get the parents to appreciate the arts is ever bad!

There are both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include student experience, exposure to performing to an audience, and advocacy for programs. Disadvantages are scheduling, time, and kindergarten attention spans.

Advantage, community involvement

Absolutely! Working on one thing (especially one that generates such excitement at the performance) over an extended period is invaluable.

The students enjoy them, admin is reminded of the importance of the arts

Yes, absolutely. Having an organized event with goals, expectations, and pedagogically appropriate music can be a very valuable experience for the students. In my experience, it can also be a fun community event for the music program that causes less stress than a performance of older students.

Advantages: gives them the opportunity to perform, can be a joyful experience.
Disadvantages: it can be a lot of pressure for some kinders

Personally I do not see much benefit in a performance at this age. I think at this age we are just starting to scratch the surface of music education and to throw the stress of a performance on both students and teacher would not be beneficial.

I think it would be beneficial for students to participate in performances. I believe it would help their overall discipline and improve social skills.

Personally I do not find any benefit to kindergarten performances. I believe they put unwanted stress and anxiety on young students who should be more focused on enjoying music and the learning process.

I think kindergarteners participating in performances would give them great early experience with it at a young age so they are not intimidated later.

I always preferred selecting a theme/musical revue over an informance. It seemed to be more enjoyable for the students.

I prefer to present a polished performance. Informances are not as entertaining.

We present a program for Veterans Day, so it is fun for the Kinders to have their first "performance" (1 song) be in front of a group of people who are so important.

I think it is good to get students performing in front of an audience early to help them feel more confident and comfortable performing for others and to get them interested in music. You have to keep in mind with students this young that anything can happen while they are on stage, but no matter what they do the parents will love it. Parents are so excited for their child to start school and be able to watch performances. They love to see a glimpse of what their child does all day at school. Parents expect their children to have many of the same experiences in school as they did.

Advantages: some students enjoy it and learn from it if it is designed that way, it's a way to show what they're learning, parents love/expect it, community loves/expects it, sometimes donors contribute as a result

Disadvantages: It can be SO stressful for some children. I have had preschoolers run away during preschool graduation, and I always find myself wondering why we do this. Why can't these things be optional for children?

I think the disadvantage to a performance is spending so much class time perfecting the piece that students miss out on other music learning/creating opportunities.

They are super cute! Parents love these and they make great memories. Disadvantages: they are incredibly time consuming to put together well.

Performances are a memorable experience for kindergarteners, to get dressed up and present for their families, but are not truly representative of their music education.

Absolutely! I think the advantage would be if there is a school function every year that lets them perform, it helps them get the fun experience early! My kindergarteners do some winter songs for their parents that are organized by the kindergarten teachers, I always offer to help so that makes me feel happy! I personally don't have the pressure on me to have them perform so I don't. I let them sing, dance and play in the classroom and let them be kids first.

Disadvantage is sometimes their attention span is too short to rehearse.

The k students perform as part of their Move Up to 1st grade. The students and families enjoy the ceremony and performance. As the music teacher I find it to be stressful for myself, the classroom teacher, and the students at times. They are so little and need to learn a lot of songs including all the words and movements. (The number of songs is chosen by the K teachers) Preparing takes many weeks. Fighting for use of the stage for practice is also a real pain.

I think it is beneficial if they are singing 1-3 songs in a short performance. However, I do but think it will be as beneficial if they have to sit through a long performance or sing in an entire concert.

Advantages = sense of purpose, achievement after hard work, working as a group
Disadvantage = pressure to perform rather than just explore music at a young age.

Performances promote the music department, children gain live performing experience end it brings the community together for a great purpose.

I believe it is a wonderful culminating activity for our K students. They look forward to the performance and it helps foster intrinsic motivation that we can build on in the upcoming years.

There are certainly advantages if one participates in relevant musical experiences.

Advantage - can be a very positive musical experience for students that sparks a desire to continue participating in music.

Disadvantage - can take a lot of instructional time to rehearse and prepare.

It is a good experience to get them on stage and give their parents/guardians the opportunity to see them perform.

Do you think there are advantages and/or disadvantages to having Kindergarten students participate in an INFORMANCE? Please explain your answer.

33 responses

N/A

Though I haven't done this in K, I do have these with my third grade students. They are an excellent opportunity for students to share real knowledge and explore without as much pressure.

Parents are a little confused at first, but come around. Students can demonstrate what they do in a typical music class instead of spending weeks on a standalone show.

No

N/A as I've never done it.

There are both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include student experience, exposure to performing to an audience, and advocacy for programs. Disadvantages are scheduling, time, and kindergarten attention spans.

Advantage, demonstrating class material in low pressure situations

While my school does not do this, I think that any time parents can observe what our students are doing in class is an asset to the program.

Definitely. A lot of what I do with kindergarten students doesn't always naturally lend itself to performance material, but is still appropriate, valuable and fun! An informance is a terrific way to share what the students are doing in a highly engaging setting.

Advantage: involves families with music class/curriculum

Disadvantage: can be difficult to schedule, not all parents can make it to an informance.

I think there are some advantages to an informance. It can be beneficial for others outside of the classroom, especially non-music related individuals, to see what it is that we do in the classroom. I think the benefits are mostly for the teacher though as they can receive feedback from individuals that may not usually see what we do.

I think informances are beneficial to students for the same reasons as those presented in the above answer with the added benefit of them being lower pressure and allowing for more student exploration and expression.

The advantage to an informance would be focusing on the learning process and getting more students enjoying music from a young age. By putting the focus on their enjoyment of making music and the learning process they will be more likely to join a performing group later in life. Before getting to a performing group kindergarten students could have a day where parents join and participate in music class with them. This would give the kids an illusion of performing without the stress and anxiety of a concert or musical.

I think kindergarteners participating in performances would give them great early experience with it at a young age so they are not intimidated later. This also gives the audience an idea of what it is like to put something like this together and show what they are learning and why.

The advantage is that students can show off what they've learned in music class.

Informances seem like they might be a good idea for learning, but they are not a polished performance. Preparation seems harder and informances feel contrived.

Kinders LOVE being on stage and singing for their parents and grandparents. The fact that we don't have to "get it right" every time or make it perfect makes it a lot easier for the kids (and for me!)

I have not done an informance with kindergarten, but I can see how it would be beneficial for parents who may be sending their first child to school to learn about how the students learn and why music can be so important in their child's life/education. The disadvantage would be the attention span of the students you are working with. It may be easy for them to get bored and start to have problems if not kept engaged the whole time. Everything would have to be very organized and well thought out ahead of time.

Advantages: parents get to see what children are learning, children can share their music experiences without so much pressure

Disadvantages: donors would be unlikely to attend, parents will complain, standards require performance

I think an informance is a great way for parents and administrators to see the music making process.

Informances support the curriculum and are a natural extension of the kinder music classroom. Disadvantages: they can look less flashy or impressive to families and colleagues than a canned performance.

Informances are a great window into the classroom, without putting the pressure of performing on such young students. All students get to be involved, versus only parents who can provide transportation to a concert.

I think informances are great if you can get your admin on board! I personally do videos or a big write up I send to parents which really helps them understand what I do and helps a majority of them appreciate that it just isn't "patty cake" all day! Lol!

I think it would be great for the students to share their knowledge of music learning and skills during class. To be honest though, I would hope that parents would be interested. I'm not sure if they would be interested in the process of learning as much as a prepared "show". I also think it would be hard for parents to attend an informance during the school day since many work.

I think the students are likely to get silly in front of their parents if the parents are right in front of them in an informal setting. However, the parents could get involved in singing along and participating which will take more attention off of the performance aspect of it. Kindergarteners are not quite as self conscious as older students, so this would be a great way to get them comfortable at a young age.

Advantages = sense of purpose, achievement after hard work, working as a group, getting to share music making with families in an informal setting

These are nice for family members to see what goes on in the classroom when you don't need to do a big show with all the bells and whistle 's.

I think informances in conjunction with performances help set the bar for future years in our music program.

I think the "informance" generally promotes concert expectations and simulates actual performing. Inadequate time within the schedule can be a disadvantage to my ability to invite families to events..

Advantage - not sure

Disadvantage - I think informances involve a lot more "down time" while things are being explained to the audience. I think it would be difficult for Kinders to remain focused while the explanations are being presented.

never really thought about it

Do you prefer presenting performances, informances, both, or neither for Kindergarten students?
Please explain your answer.

33 responses

I think the focus for performances needs to be on the experience so students have a positive initial performance opportunity.

Informances!

Performances

I enjoy the kindergarten program, although their teachers do all the staging and I only teach them the songs.

I prefer neither at this time, mostly due to funding and professional schedule conflicts

Informances, less pressure on the children

Either is fine

Performances- The students are more eager to perform for family and friends when they are prepared.

It depends on the district and, more importantly, the families in the community. Despite my personal preference for informances, I can think back to some of the districts I taught in whose families would not have been receptive to the idea, at least at first. However, wherever possible, I think an informance is a better choice for Kindergarten music.

I prefer informance- less pressure on kids, smaller setting, and it's beneficial to educate families about music program.

To be honest, just getting through a lesson can be enough of a challenge with Kindergarten. Adding the pressure of performing on any level is not something that I am interested in at this point in my career.

I have never done performances as they were not expected in my district and all informances were done as a full school or for other classes. I enjoy informances as I feel they build a sense of community within the school.

I would prefer an informance where parents can visit and participate in the class with students. Something where the material is not rehearsed and students can have a more enjoyable time engaging with music. My belief is that a performance scares young students and makes them less likely to stick with music in the future.

I would prefer Informances because they are much more realistic and show how the final product comes about.

Neither. Kindergarteners only have music class once in a 6-day cycle which equates to 30 classes per year. It takes at least 10 classes to prepare for a concert. If I saw them twice a cycle, I'd be more open to bringing back concerts. There is also a concert for the lack of a decent music budget.

Performances do not feel as manipulative with the children. There is more student pride in a polished performance. Informances seem like exposing an audience to a typical Music class session.

Informances are much more informal and relaxed and I can have fun with the students as we interact with the audience.

I have only given performances with my kindergarteners so I think they would prefer to perform the whole time and not have much information given between songs. As long as you find a way to keep the children engaged the whole time I could see the benefit of an informance. With children that young every second counts!

Informance with an optional performance for children who wish to participate, and they can bring a parent or special grown up with them to perform if they want to.

I wanted to do an informance this year, but covid! I'd like to do one in the future.

I like a blended approach. I like to take classroom material and elevate it by adding a theme that can tie the curriculum pieces together. For example, one year I had my librarian read "My many Colored Days" We took a classroom song and matched it to every color. Grizzly Bear became brown and the kids sang and demonstrated the game. Bluebird through my window became blue and kids demoed that classroom song. It was the best of both worlds!

I get a different crowd of parents, community members and staff at each event, so I enjoy doing both!

Honestly, I could do without them but if it was offered I would give it a go!

I enjoy presenting performances. The students get very excited to perform for the school and their families.

I feel a lot of pressure at all types of parent observations whether a performance or informance. Parents can be very critical and very unsupportive of teachers. I realize this sounds very negative. I do feel there are families that would be truly interested in the students music learning, but I think they are the minority. Parents are so busy and have so much on their plates. Seeing 1 Move Up in June that is prepared is probably a good fit for their schedule.

I think either would work. I've had older students do informances for my kindergarteners. I've also done talent sharing days where a couple of students performed fire the class. It was very well received by the class.

Informances because creates a sense of purpose, achievement after hard work, working as a group, getting to share music making with families in an informal setting

I prefer performances

I think both are very purposeful for all grade levels, including kindergarten. They each have different curricular purposes.

I would say, I perform for the students and we strive to turn our informances into a finished product, sometimes over the course of several weeks. Overall, even if students aren't performing directly, they are exposed to various types of performances through video.

Performances only for the reason provided above. I think informances have too much potential down time for students in this age group.

performances, never really had the opportunity to do an informance