

**Differentiated Assessment in High School Band: Investigating Assessment Strategies that
Account for the Variety of Learners in High School Bands**

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DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT IN BAND

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DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT IN BAND

Abstract

High school band classrooms are comprised of diverse and unique students with varying skill, experience, and grade levels. These factors suggest that a ‘one size fits all’ assessment may not adequately assess these band students. This empirical study investigated the use of differentiated summative assessment, also known as differentiated assessment, of musical performance in high school band classes. A survey was created and administered to 30 high school band teachers to determine if and how high school band teachers were implementing differentiated assessment of musical performance. Those not implementing differentiated assessment were asked to identify implementation inhibitors. The survey found 11 teachers actively using differentiated assessment, 12 who stated they were but did not provide evidence to support their statement, and 6 who were not implementing. The amount of time it takes to create, implement, and evaluate these types of assessments was identified as the most common inhibitor. Open-ended responses of those using differentiated assessment were analyzed and compiled with differentiated assessment strategies from literature to create a compendium of techniques and strategies for high school band teachers. The findings highlight a need for additional training in differentiation and differentiated assessment in music education.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Statement of Purpose	1
Rationale	1
Expected Findings.....	2
Chapter 2: Differentiation and Differentiated Assessments	4
Defining Differentiated Assessment	4
An Overview of Differentiation and Differentiated Assessment.....	5
The Case for Differentiated Summative Assessment in High School Band.....	8
Barriers to Differentiated Assessment	10
Documented Differentiated Assessment Strategies in High School Band	10
Chapter 3: Study Construction, Administration, and Results	15
Survey Construction.....	15
Survey Administration	18
Results and Analysis	18
Chapter 4: Conclusions	28
Making Sense of the Data	28
Improvements to the Study	32
Future Research Implications	33
Key Takeaways and Needs	34
Final Thoughts and Future Actions.....	39
References	41
Appendix A: Survey	44
Appendix B: Demographic Information of Respondents	49
Appendix C: Open-ended Responses of Teachers Not Using Differentiated Assessment.....	51

DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT IN BAND

Appendix D: Open-ended Responses of Teachers using Differentiated Assessment.....	52
Appendix E: Respondent Coding on What is Being Assessed	59
Appendix F: Differentiated Assessment Strategies and Techniques	60

List of Figures

Figure 1. Survey Results: Home Teaching State of Respondents	18
Figure 2. Survey Results: Years of Experience of Respondents	19
Figure 3. Survey Results: Community Type of Respondent's School	20
Figure 4. Survey Results: Use of Differentiated Summative Assessment.....	20
Figure 5. Survey Results: Primary Reason for not Implementing Differentiated Assessment.....	21

DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT IN BAND

List of Tables

Table 1: What is being assessed? Coding Totals by Category	24
Table 2: Coding Totals Based on Type of Differentiation	25

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of differentiated summative performance assessments in high school band classes. In this study, teachers of mixed grade high school bands were surveyed to determine if and how they implemented differentiated summative performance assessment strategies to account for the diversity of learners in their classroom. Those who stated that they implemented differentiated summative assessment strategies for any aspect of performance were asked to detail their assessment practices. Those who stated they did not implement differentiated assessment were probed to determine the factors that inhibited them from implementation. Results were compiled and analyzed to determine factors that inhibit high school band teachers from differentiating assessment and create a compendium of differentiated assessment models and strategies. Additionally, this study investigated and reviewed documented musical performance based differentiated assessment strategies.

Rationale

Over the last several decades, assessment has played an increasingly important role in the landscape of education in the United States. Assessment data can be valuable in informing instruction, improving student achievement, longitudinally tracking student progress, and advocating for music programs (Payne et al., 2019; Shuler, 2011). Additionally, assessment data that demonstrates student growth is often a required component of teacher effectiveness evaluation systems in many states and school districts (Shuler, 2012). For these reasons, music educators instructing high school bands are designing and implementing assessments to evaluate student performance and show evidence of student growth. While all teachers teach a variety of

diverse students, high school band directors often encounter some unique considerations concerning the diversity of learners in their classrooms. These considerations commonly include needing to teach and assess students of varying grade, skill, and experience levels in a single class. Band teachers designing instruction and assessment also must consider that students frequently enroll in the same class for several consecutive years. These variables, along with the diversity of student interests and backgrounds, suggest that a standardized assessment for learners may not effectively allow for longitudinal tracking, improvement of student achievement, or demonstration of growth from each of the diverse learners in the classroom. Teachers can potentially solve this problem, at least in part, by differentiating assessments or employing differentiated assessment models that innately individualize or differentiate the content, process, or product of assessment (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 2). In some school districts, building administrators ask teachers to differentiate the assessments used for student learning objectives or growth measures. While these types of assessments are likely ideal in the high school band classroom, there is limited research exploring if and how they are being implemented. Furthermore, there is sparse documentation of differentiated assessment models and strategies for high school bands. Currently, there is no comprehensive compilation of these assessment strategies in the field of music education.

Expected Findings

Before beginning the study, I made some predictions about the results that would be collected from the survey based. I speculated that most band directors would say they are not implementing differentiated summative assessment in their band classroom and would select a lack of training as the primary reason for not implementing them. I expected that a few directors would select that they do use differentiated summative assessments and I hoped to uncover a

variety of differentiated summative assessment strategies through their open-ended responses.

From the responses of those who stated they are using summative differentiated assessments; I also anticipated that several directors would note strategies that do not constitute differentiation such as grading students differently.

Chapter 2: Differentiation and Differentiated Assessment

Defining Differentiated Assessment

Within the literature on differentiated instruction and assessment, the term differentiated assessment has been used in two different contexts which without clarification can cause confusion. In one context, the term is defined as “an ongoing process through which teachers gather data before, during, and after instruction using multiple formative and summative tools” (Chapman & King, 2012, introduction, para. 1). This definition of the term is broad and encompasses the collective array of assessments: pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments; and their role in creating and instructing differentiated classrooms (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Stefanakis (2011) similarly referred to this context of the term but used the words ‘differentiated assessment systems’ throughout her book, *Differentiated Assessment: How to Assess the Learning Potential of Every Student*. Within this context of differentiated assessment, the individual tools, tasks, and strategies for assessing may not in themselves be differentiated. In other words, these assessments may be standardized assessments which create data that help inform differentiated instruction. This is not the intended understanding of differentiated assessment in this study or paper.

The second context of differentiated assessment is narrower in nature and is commonly used when addressing assessment tools, tasks, or strategies that themselves provide opportunities or variations that respond to the needs of learners (Varsavsky & Rayner, 2013). Within the literature of differentiation, the terminology that best matches this understanding is summative differentiated assessment. This term was coined by differentiated instruction and assessment pioneers Carol Ann Tomlinson and Tonya Moon (2013) in their book *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom* (p. 97). The important clarifier, summative, made clear

that the authors were referring to formal assessments which account for student variance; not pre-assessments or formative assessments used for collecting data to guide instruction.

Tomlinson and Moon (2013) stated that creating differentiated summative assessment should be a response to the question: "What needs do my students have that I can address in crafting this summative assessment so that they are most likely to be fully able to demonstrate their current points of knowledge, understanding, and skill?" (p. 98). The modes and methods in how these needs can be met will be covered in the next section. In this paper, the term differentiated assessment is always used in the latter mentioned context, synonymous with differentiated summative assessment.

An Overview of Differentiation and Differentiated Assessment

When discussing differentiation in the classroom, educators and administrators alike often focus on its practicalities: What are you doing to account for the variety of learners in your classroom for this assignment? Yet, differentiation is more complex than understanding a set of protocols, guidelines, strategies, or formulas that lead to differentiated practices in the classroom.

Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) asserted that: "Differentiation is a philosophy—a way of thinking about teaching and learning. It is, in fact, a set of principles" (p. 13). Tomlinson (2014) outlined four primary tenets of this philosophy: "Diversity is normal and valuable...every learner has a hidden and extensive capacity to learn...it is the teacher's responsibility to be the engineer of student success...educators should be champions of every student who enters the schoolhouse doors" (pp. 26-27). From these accepted truths in the philosophy, key principles of effective differentiation form and help turn philosophy into practice. They include learning environments that promote learning, a need for quality curriculum, a use of assessment and assessment data to drive instruction, using knowledge of student variance, and diversity to design instruction, and

leading a flexible classroom (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 25). The philosophy of differentiation is a holistic approach to education that places the student and their uniqueness at the center of the learning process. It is a philosophy that dignifies all students, not just as learners, but as unique human beings (Tomlinson, 2014).

How does the philosophy of differentiation result in instructional, assessment, and learning practices in the classroom? The tenets and principles of differentiation philosophy empower teachers to plan instruction and assessment that give the diverse and unique students in classrooms the tools and support they need to reach learning goals (Gregory & Chapman, 2013, p. 2).

Throughout her writings, Tomlinson has outlined structures through which this philosophy can be applied to instruction and assessment by differentiating to account for the various learners in the classroom. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) explained that, teachers can differentiate through content, the materials or information used in learning; process, the activities or processes of learning; product, how students demonstrate their knowledge; and affect/environment, the tone and physical conditions of the classroom. Tomlinson (2014) further clarified that any or all of these elements can be differentiated by a student's readiness, where they stand in relation to learning goals; their interests, and/or their learning profile, the various modes through which students learn.

Teachers can use these structures to design lessons, activities, or assessments that are differentiated based on their knowledge of students. Teachers can also use this framework to design tools that innately differentiate by allowing students to choose, often with guidance, various elements of their instruction or assessment. While this process may seem formulaic, the

application of differentiation, within the context of the philosophy and principles, requires the practitioner to make thoughtful and informed decisions to help students reach goals.

Although the creative possibilities presented by this structure seem almost boundless, there are two critical limiters to consider when differentiating. The first is that differentiation is not intended to be an individualized form of education for every student (Tomlinson, 2017). Designing and administering completely unique instruction and assessment for every student is not practical. Instead, Tomlinson (2014), as well as Chapman and King (2012) have recommended using strategies such as groupings, option menus, learning contracts, and other strategies to meet the needs of learners in the classroom. This is not to say that differentiation strategies will not allow for individualization, especially when the differentiation empowers students to make choices about their instruction or assignments.

The second limiter for differentiation is the learning goals. In the practical application of differentiation, content, process, or product should never be differentiated in a way that would obfuscate or modify the learning goal itself (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). For instance, if a learning goal calls for students to play a Bb Major scale at quarter note equals 120 beats per minute, differentiating the process by asking students to write out the scale in treble clef would not be appropriate. Changing the tempo requirement to 100 beats per minute would also not be appropriate as it would modify the learning goal.

As an extension of this limiter, Tomlinson and Moon (2013) noted a differentiated assessment should not only maintain the same expectations of learning goals but also use the same grading system to evaluate a student performance against them (p. 102). The goal of differentiation, in philosophy and in application, is not to lower the standards but to help provide structures that allow students to achieve them (Reeves, 2011).

The Case for Differentiated Summative Assessment in High School Band

Why use differentiated summative assessments of musical performance instead of standardized assessments in the high school band class? First and foremost, Tomlinson and Moon (2013) have asserted that accounting for student variance in test design and application should improve the ability of the assessment to do its job: expose what students know or are able to do (p. 75).

For instance, giving all students a unison melody with various articulation markings to assess their ability to perform accents and staccatos would be ineffective in assessing students who struggle to play the melody due to its excessive range or complexity. In this scenario, the unison melody, acting as the content, is the barrier to effectively assessing students on articulation. Providing several melodies of varying difficulty that include the same articulations would likely prove more fruitful in determining if students can adequately perform the articulations.

Differentiating in this way also creates the opportunity to provide students who are more advanced with a melodic selection which is at or just above their readiness level. Varsavsky and Rayner (2013) argued that advanced students deserve rigor in assessment to reach their maximum learning potential in the same way that students at lower readiness levels deserve the differentiated structures and supports. Chapman and King (2012) further supported readiness differentiation practices for assessments saying, “One of the best ways to develop self-efficacy is to design assessment tasks on the student’s success level. When the assessment is too easy, students often work carelessly. When it is too difficult, they become frustrated” (ch. 3, self-efficacy).

Differentiated assessments that are designed to account for student interest or learning profile can also increase student engagement and motivation in the assessment process (Dunlop, 2018, p.16). While it can be more difficult to differentiate for student learning styles when assessing students, particularly on musical performance tasks, there is ample opportunity to differentiate for student interest. Differentiation can be done in this manner by allowing students to choose repertoire through which the learning goals are assessed. This is a form of differentiation through content based on student interest. It can also be done by allowing students to be assessed in a customized ensemble that satisfies them musically, an example of differentiation through process.

Applying differentiated assessments can also help teachers in addressing ethical and social justice concerns posed by standardized assessments. Mellizo (2020) said, “Although there are important reasons why we should document our students’ musical learning, we should recognize the ways in which the increased focus on standardizing assessment practices in music education has in many cases served to deepen our hegemonic tendencies” (p. 61). While it has already been identified how differentiation can play a role in dignifying students and passions, differentiating assessment content can help teachers avoid favoring certain cultural contexts through assessment. Dunlop (2018) posited that “the increase in diversity among children in schools obligates educators to embrace differentiated instruction and assessment at all grade levels” (p. 14).

While there are not an overwhelming number of research studies documenting the benefits of differentiated assessment, there is some research evidence available that supports its use. Varsavsky and Rayner (2013) provided students in collegiate biology and chemistry with classes with the choice of taking a differentiated assessment or a standardized assessment. The

differentiated assessment was specifically designed to engage high performing learners in these classes. They found that most students appreciated the ability to have a choice in assessment and that those who chose the more rigorous differentiated assessment activity felt they had a more meaningful testing experience (Varsavsky & Rayner, 2013).

Barriers to Differentiated Assessment

Even though differentiated assessments offer many benefits compared to their more traditional or standardized counterparts, researchers have found several barriers preventing educators in many subject areas and grade levels from implementing them. A study of teachers in Malaysia found a variety of factors preventing teachers from using differentiated summative assessments including expectations of standardization from parents, a lack of opportunity due to departmental standardization, a lack of administrative support or guidance, and a lack of time to design and implement these assessments (Kaur et al., 2019). Nweke and Elliot (2014) had teachers take a seminar on differentiated assessment and grading concepts and then asked them to apply them in their classroom settings. The teachers were then surveyed about their attempted implementations and they revealed several similar barriers as the previously mentioned study, including time restraints and differentiated assessments not being aligned with district or state policies (Nweke & Elliot, 2014). Additionally, they discovered that a lack of time and ability to explain the strategies to stakeholders and a resistance to both individual teacher change and systemic change hindered teachers from applying these strategies (Nweke & Elliot, 2014).

Documented Differentiated Assessment Strategies in High School Band

Former National Association for Music Education President Scott Shuler (2011) said, “Expert teachers understand that they need a variety of strategies to design and score the rich

performance tasks that students need and prefer” (p. 11). Differentiated assessments play a role in providing a variety of strategies to music educators. While there are not many strategies documented for assessing music performance in high school band, further highlighting the need for this study, a few in the field have documented strategies. Stephanie Standerfer (2011) explained that content can be differentiated in ensembles by having an instructional unit where students work on solo or small ensemble repertoire that specifically meets their needs. While Standerfer documented this as a differentiated instruction strategy, it is clear how the practice and performance of this repertoire would result in differentiated assessment as the content is already differentiated. It is also mentioned in the article that differentiation by readiness may occur through seat placement and part assignment (Standfer, 2011, p. 26). High school music educators thoughtfully assigning instrument parts and assessing students on those parts may already be providing differentiation by readiness to both instruction and assessment.

Another documented strategy for differentiated assessment of musical performance in high school bands is the National Association for Music Education [NAfME] (2017) Music Model Cornerstone Assessments for performing ensembles. These National Core Arts standards aligned assessments not only have built in differentiation by allowing students to choose performance repertoire, but they also come with suggestions for differentiation based on the writings of Tomlinson. Although this study seeks to uncover differentiated assessments for performance, it is notable that these assessments are multi-modal, requiring written responses, that assess music standards besides performance (NAfME, 2017).

Portfolios have also been documented as a tool used for differentiating assessment of performance in High School Ensembles. Peter Briggs (2017) shares a model he calls the differentiated portfolio model designed to address student readiness saying,

Everyone gets to start where they are at and move forward as far as they are able. Each student has one portfolio with three elements: music theory, scales/rudiments, and instrument-specific exercises. Students collect evidence of mastery (either proof of online theory assignments or videos of scales/exercises, etc.) into an online portfolio, through which I provide feedback, and assess student work (para.3).

Portfolios are not necessarily differentiated but easily accommodate differentiation by providing students with opportunities to decide what will be assessed based on their interests, readiness, or learning profile. They also allow opportunity for teacher directed differentiation as noted above.

Another strategy that is not noted as differentiated assessment, but does differentiate innately based on its design, is known as the Longitudinal Scale Assessment (LSA) (Simon, 2014). Students are given a point for one octave of a major or minor scale or arpeggio, ascending or descending, in a two-minute period with the hopes of achieving a goal score that students select collaboratively with their teacher based on prior achievement (Simon, 2014). This assessment is differentiated performance because each student goal score will be unique and rigorous based on their past performance. Even though this method for scale assessment has some wonderful benefits such as allowing for long term tracking and comparative analytics, it is important that educators assure that it matches the learning goals of their classroom. If the goal is to assess students on their ability to play specific scales or arpeggios, it may not be an effective method.

Grant and Lerer (2011) mentioned the Band Olympic Program (BOP) and the Grade Performance Steps (GPS) programs offered by the Ontario Music Education Association as ways to differentiate summative assessment (p. 27). Further investigation into both programs found that they are primarily designed for K-8 instruction but are included in this document because

some high schools may include students of these grade levels. The BOP is a sequential performance task completion program that provides differentiation by allowing students to assess at different levels based on readiness and by differentiating the environment by giving students choice in determining when they complete elements of the tasks (Merkley, 2002). The GPS program is a similarly designed sequential task completion program that has built-in differentiation suggestions based on the writings of Tomlinson (Ontario Music Educators' Association, n.d.). Sequential performance task programs like these are common at the elementary level and offer unique opportunities for integrated differentiated assessment. Well-structured programs like these at the high school level could serve an important role in differentiating assessment to the diverse learners in the band room.

Modern technology, learning management systems, and software are not strategies for differentiated assessment but are wonderful tools that can aid in differentiating assessment. Cloud based platforms such as Smartmusic.com allow for teachers to assign individualized, grouped, or tiered assessment content to students (SmartMusic, 2018). It offers music, exercises, and sight readings at various levels of difficulty that can be useful in differentiating for readiness. Performances can be recorded directly into the software by the student and automatically graded by the software and reviewed by the teacher. The site also contains a large library of content that can be used to help provide student choice in assessment repertoire. Noteflightlearn.com provides some very similar offerings to Smartmusic.com. Other cloud-based tools like sightreadingfactory.com allow for teachers to assign unique and tiered assessments based on readiness. Teachers can adjust keys, range, and many other factors to maximize student potential in demonstrating their learning.

Learning management systems (LMS) such as Blackboard, Canvas, Google Classroom, and Schoology also can aid in differentiating assessment. These LMS help the teacher more easily create, assign, collect, organize, and grade assessments. Through these platforms, teachers can assign assessments in groups based on groupings and provide students flexibility in how and where they complete their assessment. They can also be an ideal place to collect artifacts for an above-mentioned portfolio.

These differentiated assessment strategies are only those which are documented within the field of performance assessment for music education. There are other documented strategies in other fields in education. For the purpose of this study, a compilation of known strategies, respondent strategies, and strategies modified from texts outside of the field of music education that can be used by high school band teachers (see Appendix F).

Chapter 3: Study Construction, Administration, and Results

Survey Construction

In order to collect data to determine if and how high school band directors were using differentiated summative assessment of student musical performance, a survey was created and administered using Google Forms. The survey consisted of six unique sections which employed multiple choice and open-ended responses to collect data from respondents about their use of differentiated summative assessment. The full survey is viewable in Appendix A.

Section one of the survey contained the title of the research, some brief biographical information about the researcher, the purpose for the study, and a note that the research was in partial fulfillment of a degree program. Additionally, the section included clarifying information about the individuals that qualify to participate and an estimate of how long the survey should take respondents to complete. Most importantly, this section asked respondents a qualifying question: if they taught a mixed grade level high school band. The goal of this question was to filter out respondents who did not qualify for the survey. Those who did qualify were forwarded to section two of the survey and the survey ended for those who did not qualify.

Section two of the survey asked respondents demographic information to determine the state in which they were teaching, how long they had been teaching, and a general sense of community type. While the target participants were any active mixed grade level high school band teachers, it was anticipated that most of the participants would be from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Therefore, states from this region were listed as options for question one in the demographics section. An 'other' option was included which allowed respondents to type in a state that was not listed. In this section, respondents were also asked how long they had been teaching music. Four options were provided: a 1-5 year category representative of a novice

category, a 6-10 year category representative of an intermediate category, an 11-20 years category representative of experienced teachers, and a 20+ years representative of highly experienced teachers.

Section three of the survey served the main purpose of this research by inquiring as to whether respondents use differentiated summative assessments of musical performance in their high school band classrooms. Before answering this critical question, a somewhat lengthy but critical section including definitions and frameworks of important terms and concepts was presented. Summative assessment was defined according to Chapman and King (2012). An explanation of differentiated summative assessment as well as a framework for how differentiation can occur were also provided based on the writing of Tomlinson and Moon (2013). Differentiated summative assessment was used in place of differentiated assessment to avoid any confusion about the multiple understandings of the term differentiated assessment. Using differentiated summative assessment allowed for more succinct definition and explanation in the survey and had the additional benefit of making clear that the survey was particularly inquiring about formal assessments. The framework of differentiation provided was needed to make clear what did and did not constitute differentiation.

After this passage of definition and clarification, respondents were directly asked if they implement differentiated summative assessment of student assessment in their classroom. Those who chose the 'No' response were then directed to section four of the survey, while those who selected 'Yes' were directed to section five and bypassed section four.

Section four contained a required response question as well as two optional open-ended response questions only for those who selected that they were not using differentiated summative assessment in the previous section. The required response question was a multiple-choice

question asking respondents to identify the primary reason they did not use differentiated summative assessment. The options provided were created based on the findings of Nweke and Elliot (2014) and Kaur et al. (2019), referenced in the Barriers to Differentiated Assessment section of Chapter Two. There was also an ‘other’ option provided where respondents were instructed to provide a written response if none of the options matched their primary reason for not using differentiated assessment. In order to further make sure respondents were not biased by the multiple-choice options and elicit additional data, an optional open-ended question was available for respondents to explain their response and identify supplemental barriers to implementing these types of assessments. The final optional open-ended response question asked the respondents to explain their current summative assessment strategies with the intent of identifying respondents who had misidentified their assessment practices and were in fact using some form of differentiated assessment.

Section five was for respondents who selected that they were using differentiated summative assessment of musical performance in their band classes. This section contained one open-ended response question which had three components with the intention of eliciting a narrative response about the assessment practices of each teacher who stated they differentiated. It sought to uncover what teachers were assessing students on, what tools and strategies they were using to assess, and how they were differentiating assessment. This open-ended response also served the function of validating their response to section three and assuring that the strategies being used met the standards and expectations of differentiation.

Regardless of whether respondents completed section four or five, all respondents were then sent to section six of the survey. Any respondent who did not clear the qualifying question was also sent to this section. Section six contained a reference list from the definitions in section

three as well as final instructions for closing the survey. It concluded with a message thanking all participants for taking the survey.

Survey Administration

The survey was opened to respondents on February 25, 2021 and closed on April 16, 2021 with the goal of having 30-40 respondents. During this time, the survey was shared through multiple avenues. First, the survey was shared via social media, including on a Facebook group entitled PA/NJ/DE Band Directors. Posts to this group occurred on February 21, 2021 and March 26, 2021. In these posts there was a clarification that the survey was specifically for high school band teachers, as group membership includes band directors teaching at all levels. The survey was also shared via email from a contact list developed by the researcher over the course of their career. A formatted email was used to contact the email list and read very similar to the social media postings. These emails were sent on February 25, March 10, March 24, March 30, April 6, and April 8, 2021. Each email was sent to randomly selected high school band directors on the list without repeating recipients.

Results and Analysis

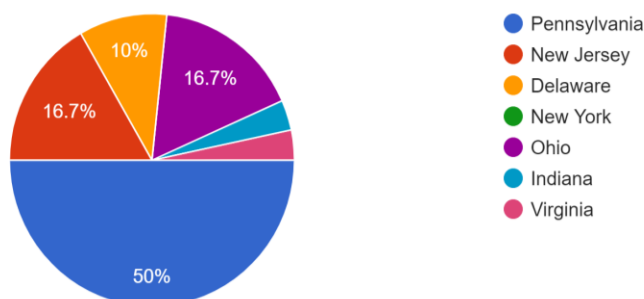
When the survey was closed on March 26, 2021 there were thirty participants who responded to the survey, cleared the qualifying question, and completed the survey in full. The first question in the demographic section pertained to the respondent's state in which they teach. Of these respondents, 15 were teaching in Pennsylvania, five in New Jersey, five in Ohio, three in Delaware, and one each from Indiana and Virginia. This breakdown is viewable by percentage in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Survey Results: Home Teaching State of Respondents

In what state are you a high school band director?

30 responses

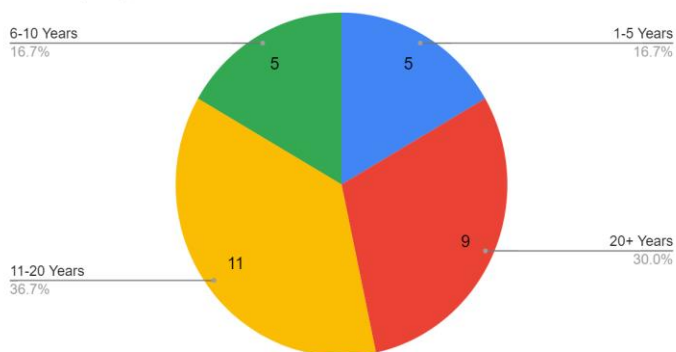


When it came to the years of experience of respondents, two thirds of the participants were experienced or highly experienced teachers with 11 or more years of experience. One sixth of the teachers were novice teachers, with 1-5 years of experience and the final one sixth of teachers were in the intermediate group of 6-10 years (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Survey Results: Years of Experience of Respondents

How long have you been teaching music in a public, private, charter, or parochial school?

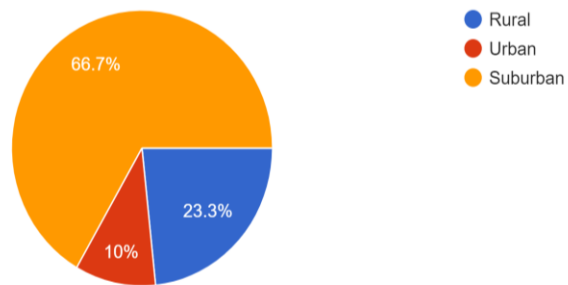


In relation to the community types of the schools these teachers were teaching in, the overwhelming majority of respondents, 20, taught in suburban schools while seven identified as teaching in rural schools, and only three identified as teaching in urban schools. This breakdown is viewable by percentage in Figure 3. The complete demographic information of each respondent is viewable in Appendix B.

Figure 3*Survey Results: Community Type of Respondent's School*

My School District is primarily:

30 responses

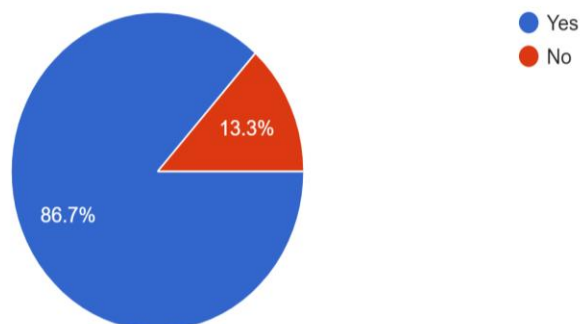


In section three, the respondents were asked if they implemented differentiated summative assessment of student musical performance as part of their band class. A large majority of respondents, 26, selected that they were using differentiated assessment while four selected that they were not (Figure 4).

Figure 4*Survey Results: Use of Differentiated Summative Assessment*

Do you implement differentiated summative assessment of student musical performance (playing) as a part of your band classes?

30 responses



In section four of the survey, the four respondents who identified that they were not using differentiated assessment selected the primary reason for not implementing it in their band class.

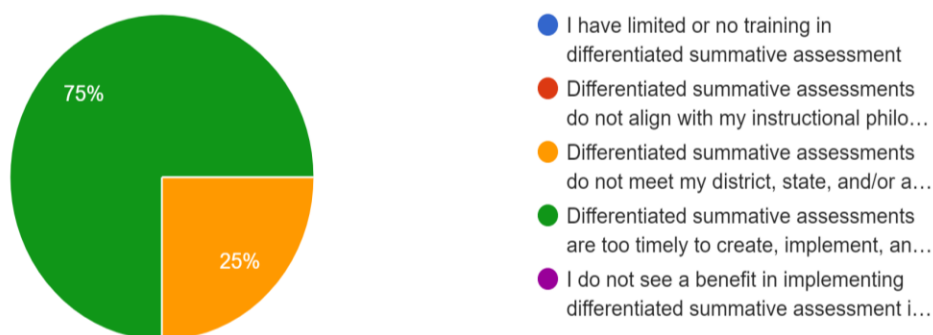
Three of the four selected that differentiated summative assessments are too timely to create, implement, and evaluate. The other respondent selected that differentiated summative assessment did not meet their district, state, and/or administrative expectations of assessment. This breakdown by percentage can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Survey Results: Primary Reason for not Implementing Differentiated Assessment

What is the primary reason you do not implement differentiated summative assessment of performance for your band class?

4 responses



Two of the respondents, identified in this survey as Teacher 8 and Teacher 16, chose to answer the optional open-ended questions. Both respondents listed these types of assessments as being too timely to create, implement, and evaluate as the primary reason for not using them. Their responses in full to both questions are available in Appendix C. When answering the follow-up question, asking the respondent to explain their response and identify any supplemental factors to implementing differentiated summative assessment, Teacher 8 highlighted that they were using differentiation strategies in their rehearsal instruction, but assessment was not differentiated and mostly focused on ensemble performance. Responding to the same question Teacher 16 reiterated their primary concern but also stated that they were

concerned about issues of fairness, saying that some students may see it as lowering expectations for some or completing less difficult tasks for the same grade. They summed up their response saying,

In my heart, I know differentiation would be the best thing. It would simply take a good deal of explanation toward the students, as well as a culture shift toward the idea that as the students improve, the expectations placed on them should grow accordingly. I'm not sure I am willing to wade into that water right now.

The second open-ended question in this section asked the respondents to describe what they are assessing students on and the strategies they are using to do so. Teacher 8 stated that they were primarily assessing students on concert repertoire but were moving more towards individualized and differentiated assessment activities due to the impact of school closures because of Covid-19. They highlighted the benefit of web-based software that would allow greater differentiation and individualization. Teacher 16 stated that they were assessing students on performance selections or exercises via video submission or Smartmusic based on a rubric they had created. They further stated they planned on moving more towards an individualized benchmark assessment model but are not sure if this constitutes a summative assessment because it would be continual.

Those who had selected 'Yes' for using differentiated summative assessment were required to respond to the open-ended question in section five. This question had three components. The first asked teachers to identify what they assessed students on. The second asked them to identify the process, tools, and strategies they are using to assess them. The third component asked them to identify how their assessments were differentiated. The full answers

of the 26 respondents, as well as their differentiation coding, to be explained below, are available in Appendix D.

The open-ended responses of participants who stated they are implementing differentiated assessment were analyzed and coded in two different ways. First, they were coded and categorized according to what the respondents identified assessing their students on. Nine categories were created according to common trends found in the responses of respondents. These categories included: technical, rhythm exercises, etudes/solos/method books, ensemble repertoire, practice videos, sight-reading, unspecified performance assessments, and non-performance assessments.

Non-performance assessments included assessments as such as projects, essays, or theory assignments. Technical encompassed scales, arpeggios, rudiments, technique, and instrument specific tasks. Unspecified performance assessments encompassed the responses of participants who implied assessment of performance activities but did not provide enough detail about what specifically they were assessing. These respondents had to provide some type of indication that they were using assessment of musical performance. These indicators included responses mentioning the use of video or SmartMusic submissions or generalized terms referring to playing assessments.

Several respondents recorded multiple different types of assessments and were coded accordingly. Two of the respondents were coded as 'Not Provided' as they did not respond to this portion of the open-ended question. Non-performance tasks were coded even though the focus of this study was on differentiation of performance assessments. Table 1 below shows the total number of tallies from survey responses for each code.

Table 1*What is being assessed? Coding Totals by Category*

<i>Code Name</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Unspecified Performance</i>	<i>Ensemble Repertoire</i>	<i>Etudes/Solo Studies/Method Book</i>	<i>Non-Performance Tasks</i>	<i>Rhythm Exercises</i>	<i>Practice Videos</i>	<i>Sight Reading</i>	<i>Not provided</i>
Total Number of Responses Coded:	11	10	8	6	5	2	1	1	2

The data revealed that there are a wide range of topics and skills high school band students were being assessed on and disparities among respondents on how many of these skills/topics were being assessed. For example, Teacher 3 noted only assessing students on scales (technical), while Teacher 24 noted assessing students on technical tasks, ensemble repertoire, non-performance tasks, and practice videos. A full table showing how each respondent's open-ended response was coded is available in Appendix E.

Secondly, open-ended responses were coded by the type of differentiation applied to performance assessment. These codes included differentiation according to student readiness, interest, or learning profile based on the framework of Tomlinson and Moon (2013). Combinations of these three codes were also possible coding options. A coding of 'does not qualify' was used for respondents who mentioned using a technique that was not aligned with the differentiation framework. Of the 26 respondents in this section there was also a contingency who either did not respond to this part of the question, which asked how they differentiated assessment, or did not provide enough detail to allow for specific coding. These responses were marked with the code 'Not enough information'. Table 2 below shows the full tally of coded responses and the response of each survey participant as well as their relevant code is available in Appendix D.

Table 2*Coding Totals Based on Type of Differentiation*

<i>Differentiation Code</i>	<i>Number of Respondents Identified</i>
Does not qualify	3
Not enough information	12
Readiness	10
Readiness and Student Interest	1
Total Respondents	26

There were two primary reasons that responses did not qualify as forms of differentiation. The first was found in the response of Teacher 2 and Teacher 9 who noted differentiating by grading students differently or on a “sliding scale” on assessment tasks. This strategy does not align with the principles and framework of differentiation. The second primary reason was because the differentiation mentioned modified the learning goal or created separate learning goals for different students. Teacher 7 was coded as such because they stated, “each student is playing something that addresses one of their specific weaknesses.” While very likely a noble teaching endeavor, the strategy is more aligned with individualized curriculum and assessment than differentiated assessment as students were not all being assessed on the same learning goal. Teacher 7 and Teacher 9 both identified as teachers with 1-5 years of experience.

All teachers who were able to be coded for differentiating an assessment within the framework were doing so based on student readiness. The ways in which respondents differentiated based on student readiness varied. For instance, Teacher 10 documented differentiating content for readiness by using tiered assessment; using musical selections of various difficulty levels on the same assessment. Teacher 17 noted a similar strategy of assigning musical selections based on “note range and technical difficulty.” Meanwhile, Teacher

14 also differentiated content for readiness but instead opted to modify one musical selection to assess students. Teacher 30 used a combination of these techniques both modifying the performance content and using various musical selections as the content for assessment. Teacher 25 was coded for differentiating according to student readiness because they mentioned adjusting parts to fit student grade and skill level, but they also mentioned adjusting scoring rubrics based on these two factors, a technique not accepted within the differentiation framework.

Other respondents, such as Teachers 3, 6, 24, and 26 differentiated for readiness through process by allowing students flexibility in the tempos they used to perform scales or musical excerpts. Teacher 1, through their benchmark portfolio assessment, also differentiated assessment through process by allowing flexibility in timing of when students could meet benchmarks. Teacher 1 stated, “Progress happens at different rates, but there is a [*sic*] documented evidence of improvement over time as it relates to curriculum objectives.” Teacher 26 stated similarly, “This really allows them to progress at their own rate. We’ve seen immense growth after implementing this method,” referring to an individual scale assessment tool which differentiates through flexible tempi.

Teacher 18 was the only respondent to be coded for differentiation for readiness and student interest. Their response was coded as differentiating for readiness because their assessment strategy had students to use musical selections at their current skill level chunked into smaller sections as needed. They were coded for differentiating by student interest because they stated they differentiated assessment by, “allowing students to choose from a list of songs on the same concept.” While they did not further specify the types of musical selections listed, the opportunity of choice increases the opportunity for students to use a musical selection they are interested in.

Several other trends and notable comments appeared in this open-ended response section. Multiple teachers noted grading students on growth as a part of how they measure and grade summative assessments. Many of these respondents mentioned using a baseline or pre-assessment which growth can be measured against throughout the year. Teacher 23 used their pre-assessment, a seating audition, to create groupings, a differentiated instruction strategy, in which students learned throughout the year. They did not mention any differentiation to the summative assessment of the seating re-audition though.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

Making Sense of the Data

The data clearly indicates that an overwhelming majority of responding teachers self-identified as using differentiated summative assessment of musical performance, but the open-ended responses when analyzed do not always confirm these results. With this conflicting data in mind, one must ask the question: are these teachers really using differentiated summative assessment of musical performance?

There were 11 respondents who provided evidence that they were implementing these types of assessments. This was more than I had predicted. The evidence showed that these recipients had considered and planned for student readiness when designing assessment, but student interest was not used as a point of differentiation. No respondents differentiated by learning profile. Under the parameters of this study, which was centered specifically on performance-based assessment, it is logical that differentiation for learning profile would not be commonly found. Differentiating for learning profile, by allowing students to describe a musical concept verbally, in writing, or express it kinesthetically; would not be sufficient when the goal is to have them perform it musically. That is not to say that there are no ways to differentiate performance by learning profile. For example, teachers can allow students to record performance assessments in a variety of settings including in ensemble, solo, with a partner or with a group. Teachers can also differentiate for learning profiles by allowing students flexibility in their submission format, offering both in person and online completion options.

Three of the respondents believed that their assessment practices constituted differentiated summative assessment but did not. In fact, their strategies were directly counter to the writing on differentiated summative assessment. Two of these teachers only had 1-5 years of

teaching experience, yet the other had 20+ years. Having already done some reading and studying and casual conversation with colleagues on differentiation and differentiated assessment, I anticipated that some respondents would state that they were using differentiated assessment but engaging in practices not in aligned with the framework and philosophy.

The remaining 12 respondents who selected that they were using differentiated summative assessments did not provide enough evidence in their open-ended responses to confirm that they were using it. While some of these respondents were probably using differentiated assessment, it is plausible that not all truly used it in accordance with the framework of differentiation outlined in the study.

Some of these respondents were likely using strategies such as grading students differently and believed that constituted differentiation. It seems possible that some respondents selected that they were using differentiated assessment because they felt like it was a practice they should be partaking in but did not have enough background or training on the topic to effectively implement it. Others may have needed further training or explanation on topics of differentiation before determining if their assessments fit within the framework. Another consideration is that the open-ended question contained multiple parts and some respondents just missed the parts of this question which would have prompted relevant evidence response.

It was also notable that several respondents stated that they assessed musical performance as well as other tasks such as paper and pencil tests, written reflections, and research or presentation projects but did not detail how they differentiated their performance assessments. Although this study was specifically interested in differentiation of performance tasks, these other assessments could in fact be a means of differentiation in general. If teachers were assessing students through multiple modalities on the same content, that would be differentiation

through process for learning profile. For instance, if a teacher had a goal for students to understand staccato, students could demonstrate this understanding by performing it on their instrument, defining it via written definition, defining it verbally, or even visualizing it kinesthetically. There were no respondents who explicitly outlined differentiation in this way. Teacher 15 did draw a connection between their performance and written assessments but without further detail it is hard to tell if there was an element of modal differentiation on the same learning goal. Most of the respondents who mentioned using different modes of assessment stated or implied that they were using them to assess goals or content different from those of the performance assessment goals. There may have been some confusion or misunderstanding regarding using different modalities to assess which resulted in respondents believing that this method always constituted differentiated assessment.

Four respondents self-identified as not using differentiated instruction. Those who provided optional open-ended follow-up responses did not provide any evidence or indication that their selection was inaccurate. I had predicted a lack of training as the primary reason differentiated assessment was not being used by respondents, but no respondents selected this option. The most popular primary reason it was not being used, according to respondents, was the amount of time it takes to design and implement them. Creating and implementing any type of assessment program for a high school band can be both daunting and time consuming, especially when individually assessing the performance of a class that could have a much larger than average size. Based on this trend, it is important to reiterate that teachers do not need to design a unique test for every single student to differentiate.

One respondent identified differentiated summative assessments as not meeting the assessment expectations of their state, district, or administrators. This response aligns with

similar findings of Kaur et al. (2019). Admittedly, I had not given much consideration to this response option before beginning this survey because of my personal experience where administrators expressly requested the use of differentiated assessment. Through this research I have come to realize that while in many districts and states band directors have a lot of autonomy in how and what they assess, there are locations with more stringent assessment expectations for teachers. The only respondent from Virginia mentioned a county wide curriculum which would lead one to believe that there may be standardized assessment practices.

Teacher 16's concern about fairness or perceived fairness of differentiated assessments was a unique concern that had not been considered when constructing response options. I found this response particularly interesting because concerns of student perception about differentiated assessment are not something I had come across in the literature or something I have experienced personally. This certainly is a legitimate concern that may need to be investigated in the future.

The most compelling insight from those not using differentiated summative assessment who completed the open-ended was their interest in or progress towards using these types of assessment. Teacher 8 made an intriguing self-observation, saying that the Covid-19 Pandemic forced them to think more about differentiation as they were had to instruct and assess more individually than in the ensemble setting. Teacher 16 explicitly stated that they believed differentiation was what was best for their students but were not ready to address potential concerns about fairness and make the switch. A change in approach to assessment can be difficult and time consuming, particularly when teachers have already found a method that is working for their program. For high school band directors who have previously implemented institution changes, it is easy to see how changes of this nature could be met by resistance from students and parents who established a comfort and understanding of the current assessment

model. Ultimately, Teacher 16 plans to move to a benchmark portfolio model which could provide ample opportunities for differentiation. Hopefully the strategies and resources found in Appendix F can be valuable in helping these teachers implement differentiated assessments

Improvements to the Study

Although in many ways the survey was effective, there are four ways the survey and study could have been improved to get more clear, precise, and accurate results. The first way would have been by allowing respondents to return to Section 3 while they were responding to Section 4 or 5. While responding to the open-ended questions in Section 4 or 5, which elicited more deep thought about assessment practices than the simple ‘Yes or No’ selection in Section 3, respondents may have determined that their initial response was inaccurate. Allowing time for respondents to reflect on practices and modify their answers may have helped achieve more accurate results in Section 3.

The second way the survey could have been modified for improvement was by separating each of the three questions that were posed together in Section 5 for those who stated they were using differentiated assessment. The original intention of posting three questions with one text response region was that it would be easier for the respondents to answer these questions in a narrative format as the answers were likely intertwined. What ended up happening in several cases is that respondents did not respond to all three questions in the response space, leaving gaps in the data. Had all these questions been organized independently with their own response area, respondents would have been required to respond to each. This was a crucial issue as multiple respondents who stated that they used differentiated assessments did not provide any evidence of doing so, making it difficult to know if they really are implementing it or not.

The third way the study could have been improved is by having some interview style follow-ups with respondents. While this may not be necessary for every respondent, following up to receive evidence to support a response would have helped provide a clearer picture of the use of differentiated assessment of performance. Following up with respondents employing unique differentiated assessment strategies would have brought additional value to the study and been beneficial to others looking for strategies to implement.

The final way this study could have been improved is by adding questions asking respondents if they have received some type of formal training or professional development on differentiation and more specifically on differentiated assessment. Asking these questions would have helped provide context to how informed participants were when responding to other parts of the survey. While this was missed in this survey, it has potential as an avenue of future research.

Future Research Implications

This study and its findings instigate several specific questions for future research as well as more broad topical areas in need of continued exploration in the field. One specific question of intrigue, which was formulated from the response of Teacher 16 is ‘do students perceive differentiated assessment as a fair practice?’ This was clearly a point of concern for Teacher 16 and could be of concern to teachers, administrators, and parents.

Another specific question which stems from the data is ‘why do teachers believe practices that are contrary to the principles of differentiation constitute differentiation?’ Multiple respondents throughout the survey mentioned using techniques that were not aligned with the principles of differentiated assessment. Where are these misconceptions stemming from? Is

there a need for additional training in the area of differentiation? It may be important to survey teachers and determine what they already know and believe about differentiation.

As a follow-up to this study, a comparative study could be completed to directly compare standardized musical performance assessments against differentiated assessments. Not only could the scores of students from both assessment types be examined but student perception of the assessments could be collected. While there is a lot of theoretical and philosophical support of differentiated assessment, additional numerical data in the field of music education would help to support the practice. There is also potential for case study work into the use of differentiated assessment in musical performance classrooms.

More broadly, there is still a lot of room in the research field for studies and discussion regarding differentiation in the fields of music education and music performance classrooms. There is a plethora of research and articles in the general field of education regarding differentiation but as we approach the field of music education and even more specifically performance-based music classrooms, there is less and less information and academic research available. The field is especially lacking concrete examples of differentiated performance-based classrooms.

Key Takeaways and Needs

One significant realization I made through the course of studying differentiation literature and analyzing the results of the study is that differentiation as a philosophy and practice is complex. Due to this complexity, it is often oversimplified, misunderstood, and misapplied. To some extent, the term has been used so casually that its meaning has become nebulous. From conversation with others, readings on the topic, and responses from this survey, the term

differentiation is used to mean anything from recognizing diversity, to meeting students where they are, to adjusting learning, assessment, or grading for students.

While some of these elements are ingredients in the recipe for differentiation, true differentiation requires an understanding and acceptance of a philosophy, awareness of student needs and differences, and actions that improve instruction and assessment. I would venture to guess that these obscured uses of the term are part of the reason that some respondents indicated they were using differentiated assessments but did not provide any detailed explanations of how they are using it. Similarly, it may help explain why several respondents' strategies were not aligned with the principles of differentiation.

I misunderstood and oversimplified elements of differentiation as I worked on this study. Throughout the process of survey creation and writing, I had to continually review literature to make sure I was using correct vernacular and accurately framing the tenets of differentiation. One example of this was the realization that my understanding and definition of the term differentiated assessment was not always consistent with the literature. This conflict in definition delayed my initial survey creation process as I sought out more clear and consistent terminology for differentiated assessment within the framework of differentiation. Ultimately, this resulted in the first section in Chapter Two which hopefully helps clarify the multiple definitions of differentiated assessment for future research.

Contemplating on these misunderstandings and oversimplifications, there is a clear need for continued professional development on differentiation both in theory and in practical application. If schools are serious about differentiated classrooms, it is important that they provide training so teachers and administrators can understand and apply it meaningfully. I would hypothesize that most music teachers have limited training in differentiation. Teachers

like me received just a few lessons on the topic in their teacher education classes and a few brief professional development sessions on the topic. Furthermore, these sessions were not even specific to the content area.

Adjacent to this lack of training, one common misunderstanding about differentiation, worth mentioning as a key takeaway, is grading students differently based on their needs; a practice several respondents mentioned. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) put it most simply, “differentiation is not about jiggling grades” (p. 126). Grading practices will vary based on personal philosophies, administrative, district, and state expectations but teachers should use caution when considering grading different students using different criteria, rubrics, scales, or systems. Not only is the practice counter to the tenets of differentiation, but it also presents serious concerns regarding equity and fairness. I would highly recommend that performing ensemble teachers have a conversation with their administration about this grading technique if they plan on or area already using it.

I have already begun reviewing and modifying my grading practices based on my readings about grading from scholars in the field of differentiation. Probably the most impactful piece of literature I read on the topic was the sixth chapter of Tomlinson and Moon’s (2013) book *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom*. I would recommend reading this relatively brief chapter to anyone looking to refresh their grading practices or better align them with the philosophy of differentiation. Moon et al. (2020) further clarified these grading practices specifically for performance tasks in their book *Using Differentiated Classroom Assessment to Enhance Student Learning* (pp. 98-99). This may serve as a helpful resource for differentiated assessment grading concerns specifically brought about by the nature of assessments in music performance.

Another significant and positive takeaway from this study is that while not all high school band directors are implementing differentiated assessment, many of the respondents did provide evidence that they are aware of the uniqueness of the students in their classroom and care deeply about helping every student improve. Teacher 9 said, “Each student grows at a different speed and each student has different levels of ability.” Teacher 14 said, “Every student is at their unique playing level when they walk into my class, so the goal is for them to progress on their individual playing level through the year.” Teacher 12 went as far as to compose their own exercises specifically tailored for their students.

Even those who mentioned grading students differently or had different learning goals for different students did it with the intention of helping their students; believing they should be recognized for their individual growth. While some assessment practices being used may not align with differentiation, it is promising and hopeful that teachers have a mentality that every student can grow and achieve. It is especially encouraging to know this mentality exists in classrooms that are stereotypically known to focus on the ensemble. These beliefs purveyed by respondents paired with adequate training and resources form the groundwork for effective differentiation.

The most surprising takeaway from this study is the number of high school band teachers implementing differentiated assessments. Eleven of the 30 respondents are actively differentiating their performance-based assessments for students; higher than I had anticipated. Even more are possibly doing it, but just did not provide enough evidence to confirm. While just over 1/3 of respondents may not seem remarkable, there are some important contextual considerations.

First, while certainly not impossible, it seems highly unlikely that respondents have received extensive training on differentiated assessment, especially in the field of music performance. Second, there are not many examples or strategies for differentiated assessment available that teachers can easily draw from in the field of music education. Third, many high school band directors are fully responsible for creating and implementing their own assessments receiving little to no direction from overseeing entities and administrators. This means that music educators in the field are using their base knowledge of differentiation, mastery of content, creative prowess, and philosophy that all students can succeed to design these unique types of assessment.

Additionally, the lack of standardization for both curriculum and assessments in high school bands means that teachers are often left to their own devices in determining on what and how students should be assessed. This is evident from the many different types of content teachers assessed their students on as well as comments from respondents like Teacher 23 who said, “unfortunately, the curriculum in my school is very broad.” While this vagueness helps provide teachers the freedom and flexibility to differentiate, it can also leave teachers directionless and feeling unsupported in what and how they teach and assess.

For these reasons, it is critically important that music educators start or continue to seek out professional development in assessment and participate in professional organizations that allow them to share assessment ideas with other music educators. Evident from this study, music educators already have a wonderful variety of assessment tools and strategies. Many of these are already differentiated or easily allow for differentiation with proper training and knowledge. Sharing these strategies will not only benefit educators working in the field teaching high school band, but it also has the potential to influence other subject areas and education as a whole.

Music educators have a unique opportunity to develop and highlight differentiated assessments where their colleagues in other subjects may be unable to due to standardized testing.

Final Thoughts and Future Actions

I am hopeful that this study can spark an interest in the use of differentiated assessment in high school band classrooms and in all music education classrooms. The list of strategies and techniques for differentiated assessment found in Appendix F are just a starting point for discussion and application among high school band teachers. I plan to continue to talk with fellow educators and document differentiated assessment strategies. I will likely be applying many of these strategies in my own practice as a High School Band Director. Particularly, I'm interested in implementing a portfolio assessment which allows students flexibility in what musical repertoire they submit for assessment.

Furthermore, I plan on working with my colleagues who teach other performing ensembles to modify the strategies in Appendix F so they could be effectively applied to a wide range of performance ensemble classes. I would like to share these through professional conferences and possibly archive them digitally for ensemble teachers around the world to access. I hope that these strategies can be valuable resources for teachers looking to differentiate and enhance their assessments in their ensemble classes.

More broadly, I hope this study helps fuel conversation and collaboration with regards to how we assess students in performance-based classes. Assessments can be valuable tools for teachers to improve instruction and help their students grow. As our schools, communities, and bands evolve, it is important that our assessments do as well. Continued research, discussion, and collaboration among music educators on assessment, whether differentiated or not, is

necessary to make teachers aware of contemporary practices and enhance practices currently in place.

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APPENDIX A*Survey*

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

Hello, My name is Mark Stanford, I am a music educator and band director currently working on my Masters Degree through The University of The Arts. This survey is to help me collect data for my Masters project to determine if and how high school band directors are using differentiated assessment strategies of student musical performance to account for the diversity of of learners in their band classes.

The survey is intended for teachers who instruct band as a class during their instructional day and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your time.

* Required

Do you currently teach mixed grade level high school band as part of your curricular teaching assignment? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Next

Section 2: Demographic Information

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

* Required

Demographic Information

Please answer the following demographic questions:

In what state are you a high school band director? *

- ☐ Pennsylvania
- ☐ New Jersey
- ☐ Delaware
- ☐ New York
- ☐ Other:

How long have you been teaching music in a public, private, charter, or parochial school? *

- ☐ 1-5 Years
- ☐ 6-10 Years
- ☐ 11-20 Years
- ☐ 20+ Years

Optional: Explain your current summative assessment strategies: What are you assessing students on? What tools and strategies are you using to assess their musical performance?

Your answer

Back

Next

Section 3: Main Purpose Question

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

* Required

Use of Differentiated Summative Assessments

Please see the definitions below before responding to the following questions:

What is summative assessment?

Summative Assessment-"evaluation of student work occurring at the end of a unit or period of study."
(Chapman & King, 2012, p. 5).

What is Differentiated Summative Assessment?

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson and Tonya Moon (2013): Differentiated Summative Assessment is a response to the question: "What needs do my students have that I can address in crafting this summative assessment so that they are most likely to be fully able to demonstrate their current points of knowledge, understanding, and skill?" (p. 98).

"When summative assessments are differentiated, the various versions should:

- Keep the KUDs (know, understand, and do) constant for all versions.
- Be designed to open up the assessment process so that all students have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, understand, and skill.
- Use the same scoring system regardless of the type of differentiation" (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 102).

Assessments can be differentiated through:

Content-The information and ideas students grapple with to reach the learning goals

Process-How students take in and make sense of the content

Product-How students show what they know, understand, and can do

Affect/Environment: The climate or tone of the classroom

according to the student's:

Readiness-A student's proximity to specified learning goals

Interests-Passions, affinities, kinships that motivate learning

and/or

Learning Profile- Preferred approaches to learning" (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 2).

Please note that accommodations and modifications you are required to provide to students with Individualized Education Plans are not considered differentiated assessments.

Do you implement differentiated summative assessment of student musical performance (playing) as a part of your band classes? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Back

Next

Section 4: Replied No to Use of Differentiated Summative Assessment

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

* Required

Replied No to use of Differentiated Summative Assessment

Please read all responses before answering the following question. If none of the provided responses best match your response please use the "other:" selection and provide a written response.

What is the primary reason you do not implement differentiated summative assessment of performance for your band class? *

- ☐ I have limited or no training in differentiated summative assessment
- ☐ Differentiated summative assessments do not align with my instructional philosophy
- ☐ Differentiated summative assessments do not meet my district, state, and/or administrative expectations of assessment
- ☐ Differentiated summative assessments are too timely to create, implement, and evaluate
- ☐ I do not see a benefit in implementing differentiated summative assessment in my band classroom
- ☐ Other:

Optional: Explain your response and identify compounding or supplemental reasons you do not implement differentiated summative assessment if applicable.

Your answer

Optional: Explain your current summative assessment strategies: What are you assessing students on? What tools and strategies are you using to assess their musical performance?

Your answer

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

Section 5: Replied Yes to Use of Differentiated Summative Assessment

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

* Required

Replied Yes to use of Differentiated Assessment

Please respond to the questions in the open ended prompt.

Explain your current summative assessment strategies: What are you assessing students on? What process, tools, and strategies are you using to assess their musical performance? How are these assessments differentiated? *

Your answer

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

Section 6: Reference List

Survey: Differentiated Assessment in High School Bands

Reference List

Chapman, C. M., & King, R. S. (2012). Differentiated assessment strategies: One tool doesn't fit all (2nd ed.). Corwin.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Moon, T. R. (2013). Assessment and student success in a differentiated classroom. ASCD.

Please finish by clicking submit-Thank you!

[Back](#)

[Submit](#)

APPENDIX B*Demographic Information of Respondents*

Respondent Identifier	In what state are you a high school band director?	How long have you been teaching music in a public, private, charter, or parochial school?	My School District is primarily:
Teacher 1	Pennsylvania	1-5 Years	Rural
Teacher 2	Pennsylvania	20+ Years	Suburban
Teacher 3	Delaware	11-20 Years	Rural
Teacher 4	Pennsylvania	20+ Years	Suburban
Teacher 5	Pennsylvania	20+ Years	Suburban
Teacher 6	Pennsylvania	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 7	Pennsylvania	1-5 Years	Suburban
Teacher 8	Pennsylvania	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 9	Pennsylvania	1-5 Years	Rural
Teacher 10	Pennsylvania	20+ Years	Suburban
Teacher 11	Pennsylvania	20+ Years	Suburban
Teacher 12	Pennsylvania	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 13	Ohio	6-10 Years	Suburban
Teacher 14	Ohio	6-10 Years	Suburban
Teacher 15	Ohio	20+ Years	Rural
Teacher 16	Pennsylvania	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 17	Ohio	11-20 Years	Urban
Teacher 18	Ohio	20+ Years	Rural
Teacher 19	Pennsylvania	6-10 Years	Urban
Teacher 20	Delaware	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 21	Delaware	11-20 Years	Urban
Teacher 22	New Jersey	1-5 Years	Suburban
Teacher 23	New Jersey	6-10 Years	Suburban
Teacher 24	New Jersey	11-20 Years	Rural
Teacher 25	Pennsylvania	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 26	New Jersey	6-10 Years	Suburban
Teacher 27	New Jersey	20+ Years	Suburban

Teacher 28	Indiana	20+ Years	Rural
Teacher 29	Virginia	11-20 Years	Suburban
Teacher 30	Pennsylvania	1-5 Years	Suburban

APPENDIX C

Open-ended Responses of Teachers Not Using Differentiated Assessment

Respondent Identifier	Optional: Explain your response and identify compounding or supplemental reasons you do not implement differentiated summative assessment if applicable.	Optional: Explain your current summative assessment strategies: What are you assessing students on? What tools and strategies are you using to assess their musical performance?
Teacher 8	Students are given strategies so they can be successful. i.e. Reducing the range of a scale the ensemble is working on, modifying performance expectations of a piece. However in ensemble classes I have not been able to provide detailed feedback on students individual performance outside the context of a rehearsal.	It's still basically performance of concert repertoire. I hope to make it more aligned to standards and based on individual performance. The shutdown has totally changed how I teach band. And while there have been many obstacles the shut down has resulted in students submitting far more individual performances. And the use of tools like Sight Reading Factory, Practice First, and other web resources has resulted in more customized individual instruction and hence more differentiated instruction and assessment.
Teacher 16	My primary concern with this type of assessment is the time spent creating and implementing. An additional concern would be the idea of 'fairness' in my classroom. I'm sure many of my advanced players would feel that I would be unfair to inflate their expectations by making it more difficult for them to earn the same grade as some of their peers who would be required to complete simpler summative assessments. They may also feel that a simpler assessment for the younger or less advanced players would be lowering the standards for them and would bring down the quality of the ensemble. In my heart, I know differentiation would be the best thing. It would simply take a good deal of explanation toward the students , as well as a culture shift toward the idea that as the students improve, the expectations placed on them should grow accordingly. I'm not sure I am willing to wade into that water right now.	Current summative assessment strategies: group-wide video assignments graded using a rubric broken down by skill (tone, rhythm, etc) and SmartMusic assessment utilizing Band music (either full pieces from the concert repertoire, selected passages from these pieces, or exercises). I am indeed making plans to move toward an individualized assessment plan for each student which would include a series of standardized benchmarks or "check-offs" which the students would complete at their own pace, beginning upon entry to HS. I don't know that I would classify this as summative assessment as it would be ongoing.

APPENDIX D*Open-ended Responses of Teachers using Differentiated Assessment*

Respondent Identifier	Explain your current summative assessment strategies: What are you assessing students on? What process, tools, and strategies are you using to assess their musical performance? How are these assessments differentiated?	Differentiation Code
Teacher 1	<p>Benchmark portfolios. Each benchmark places emphasis on specific scales, rhythmic figures, instrument-specific goals (such as range, mouthpiece pitch, rudiments, etc.), and 1-2 etudes that fairly well correlated with the skills enforced throughout the benchmark.</p> <p>Students are graded on growth and effort (I.e. lesson attendance). Progress happens at different rates, but there is a documented evidence of improvement over time as it relates to curriculum objectives.</p>	Readiness
Teacher 2	Teaching students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and special needs, i differentiate the grading of their performance play quizzes in terms of their skill level/needs.	Does not qualify as differentiation
Teacher 3	For technical instrumental skills, individual students are given assignments of varying difficulty to demonstrate proficiency on the same skill, according to their needs. For example, when assigning a scale playing assessments, requirements such as minimum tempo and number of octaves are customized for different students. The primary tool used to achieve this is SmartMusic, which enables instructors to assign tasks to individual students.	Readiness
Teacher 4	I assess on playing, written tests and quizzes on circle of 5ths, enharmonic spelling, practice for success, vocab and I assess rhythm with rhythm sheets	Not enough information
Teacher 5	Meet them where they are. Assess their effort not the specific outcome whenever possible.	Not enough information
Teacher 6	Students submit a performance video of a selection for our repertoire. Students are listening to a practice track as they are playing, using headphones. Students may choose between 4 different performance tempi, with the last option mirroring the intended performance speed. The rubric is structured so that the choice of tempo has a minimal impact on overall scoring.	Readiness

Teacher 7	<p>Students submit a weekly video assignment by end of the day on Fridays. They get a 1 on 1 lesson with me for at least 15 minutes a week during our band class. In addition to practicing music for our virtual performances, I also assign them etudes/solo/technical excerpts to help them improve a specific part of their playing.</p> <p>These are differentiated because each student is playing something that addresses one of their specific weaknesses. I don't look for mastery; growth is more important. The kids are aware of that and are encouraged to practice the parts of their playing that need the most work.</p>	Does not qualify as differentiation
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Teacher 9	<p>I am assessing students on specific music criteria: Note accuracy, Rhythmic accuracy, articulation, and expressive qualities. In order to do this I first choose an ensemble appropriate piece. Meaning that each musician in the ensemble should be able to successfully demonstrate the above criteria after an average amount of ensemble rehearsals. While rehearsing the chosen repertoire I single out sections of the band to listen for students who may be struggling. I usually will focus on one aspect of the criteria above and make note of those students who are not meeting the criteria.</p> <p>In order to differentiate these assessments I will use a "sliding scale" to measure student growth. This is very helpful when assessing students of all ability levels. For example, if a freshman student is able to play 3 out of 12 major scales at the beginning of the school year and he/she works hard to be able to play 6 major scales at the end of the year, I consider that successful growth. The important part to point out is that if there is another freshman student who can also play 3 major scales at the beginning of the year, but can only play 5 at the end I do not consider that as a failure. Each student grows at a different speed and each student has different levels of ability.</p> <p>My over all goal is to understand each student's ability level, the rate that they grow in each music criteria, and then judge their growth. Yes, there is an ability level I would like them to achieve before they leave high school, but differentiating learning and assessment based on each individual student is important.</p> <p>As a final note this is my first year as a full time high school band director and there are a lot of other ways I wish to implement differentiation, though the current school schedule with COVID-19 limits certain strategies.</p>	Does not qualify as differentiation
Teacher 10	<p>Presently, doing audio and video submissions. Using PMEA rubric and scoring. Students are given unilateral assignments (scales, arpeggios, exercises) as well as tiered level assignments (different music selections). Student expectation is based on a baseline created at the beginning of the year (beginning - level 2, 3, 4, 5). Assessment is done based on ability and improvement.</p>	Readiness

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| Teacher 11 | Individual playing tests based on a rubric, program notes that focus on musical analysis and reflection, an ensemble performance based on a rubric and concert reflection. | Not enough Information |
| Teacher 12 | As part of our weekly sectional assignments, I assess the students using etudes that we go over, and then I give them independent time to record their assignment. Some of these are etudes that I have found on SmartMusic, but lately they are etudes that I am writing for the students. Each one has a key concept(s). For example, I might write a brass etude that employs frequent lip slurs, or a woodwind etude that includes grace notes. I do NOT use the SmartMusic auto-grade feature, but rather provide the students with commentary and then mark their work as complete. My questions in the back of my mind are (1) "Did the student achieve what I asked them to do with regard to the special features of this etude?" and (2) "How is the student progressing overall, and does this performance represent a new 'personal best' for them?" | Not enough information |
| Teacher 13 | Every student is at their unique playing level when they walk into my class, so the goal is for them to progress on their individual playing level through the year. I do this through giving students challenging literature and helping them work on practice strategies through the concert block so that they can do something they couldn't before. I assess this by listening to the students play and proving that the students have learned the material by giving a concert. | Not enough Information |
| Teacher 14 | I assess students on their progress with any music we work on. As a team of directors, we implement music checks on certain sections of music and pieces of music. These music checks are individual assessments, but we also listen during full rehearsals or sections to assess what students are doing and if any adjustments need to be made. Differentiation is implemented by changing or re-arranging music for students that might need a simplified or more advanced version. I constantly offer extra help for students outside of school or during their free time to help students get caught up or get extra help on the music we work on in band. | Readiness |

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| Teacher 15 | I assess students on what they know and can do. My students understand that they know quite a bit, but are not always ready to demonstrate that while playing their instruments. Assessments are, at times, written, and often are always linked to performance assessments. Performance assessments are often ongoing in my room, and students are not always aware that they are being assessed. A student will never earn a poor grade in my class if they demonstrate effort. | Not enough Information |
| Teacher 17 | Musical skills including note and rhythm reading, articulation, dynamics, technique and style.

Performance assessments including live auditions and recorded playing tests.

They are differentiated by grade/skill level. Excerpts are assigned based on note range, and technical difficulty. Progress for each student is tracked individually. | Readiness |
| Teacher 18 | I have students play various exercises out of the band book, scales and sections of their band music to assess understanding of rhythm, note reading, tone quality, articulation, etc. This is done through assignments on flip grid, in person performance, and self reflection. They are differentiated by allowing students to chose from a list of songs on the same concept, assigning specific material based on their current playing level, chunking sections into smaller portions as needed, and allowing for individual assessment. | Readiness and Student Interest |
| Teacher 19 | Smart music, recordings, written/playing tests, ear training, dictation, rubrics, writing assessments, etc. | Not enough information |
| Teacher 20 | Playing tests are usually our summative assignments. They are recorded at home and graded via rubric. Assignments are often the differentiated part (you play this vs you play this). | Not enough information |
| Teacher 21 | Every student is unique. I know their current ability level and challenge them to improve. I have different expectations for the senior all-state player than I do for a beginning ninth grade student. | Not enough information |

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| Teacher 23 | Unfortunately, the curriculum in my district is very broad and general. There are so real specifications to what we should be doing at what time. Much of what I do is designed by the standards set by our SGO's. In short, I design a "Seating Audition" to be given mid year, but use it to collect data for my SGO. Our sight reading process incorporates Sight Reading, a Lyrical and Technical Etude, and Major Scales. Based on a students performance on the pre-assessment (beginning of the year), they are placed in a appropriate lesson group with students at their level and instrument family. In lessons we review the fundamental techniques of reading and performing music and focus on the individual needs of each student in a small group setting. In February/March they are given the same "Seating Audition Material" to prepare this time around for about 2-3 weeks. They then perform it for me for a grade, and their seating in the ensemble is adjusted. The final scores and data are also used for the final submission of our SGO's. | Not enough information |
| Teacher 24 | We try to assess students on both understanding of a new topic (if that was part of the lesson) and also on personal improvement. Our assessments encompass: completion of a scale/rudiment video (with varying tempo and range requirements), listening assignments with a written assessment (opinion, critique), music theory (musictheory.net or questions based on a topic like intervals or key signatures), practice videos (showing their process and attempts, not a finished product), graded repertoire excerpts (from current band literature), and topical assessments (like a recent one for Black History Month asking them to explore Black composers and performers). | Readiness |
| Teacher 25 | Parts, scales requirements and scoring rubrics are adjusted based on a student's grade and skill level. For example: the minimum threshold for submitting a SmartMusic assignment is higher for seniors than it is for freshmen. | Readiness |

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| Teacher 26 | The general answer is we grade and assess based on individual progress, whether in music or fundamentals. The big differentiation tool I use is that every student has an individual scale chart with tempos ranging from quarternote=60 to 120, and students progress at their own pace by playing scales in 8th notes or 16th notes along that tempo line. Every student is at a different spot and is graded on whether or not they can increase their tempo wherever they're at. And for each student, one scale may be at 16th notes at 88, and another might be 8th notes at 104. This really allows them to progress at their own rate. We've seen immense growth after implementing this method. | Readiness |
| Teacher 28 | We will utilize a variety of in-class playing assessments, small group, and individual performance evaluations from rudimentary counting drills to performance. Technique, articulation, dynamics, timing, will all factor into the evaluation. | Not enough information |
| Teacher 29 | Our county curriculum includes both performance and theory across wind, strings and vocal ensembles. We do not have separate theory classes until the students reach the level of AP theory. Each quarter in all the band orchestra choir and combined ensemble classes, the students are tested on their performance abilities as well as a written theory and practices test. The performance test for instrumentalists includes scales, intonation/pitch matching, and a selection. The theory and practices exam covers basic to intermediate high school level theory, including chord structure, progression, rhythm, and style. All ensembles also participate in judications twice a year that also include sectional breakdowns, the results of which are factored in as well. | Not enough information |
| Teacher 30 | Students typically receive 3-4 Summative Assessments per quarter at our school. The most common summative assessment would be our performance exams where they have to play specific phrase from whatever musical work we are currently studying. The rubric that we use assesses them in the areas of pitch, rhythm, expressiveness, steady beat, and technique. The assessment may be differentiated depending on the specific student, for instance they may be exempt from a certain sub- category, have different lengths of the musical phrase to play, or may play a different phrase or piece of music entirely. | Readiness |
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APPENDIX E*Respondent Coding on What is Being Assessed*

Respondent Identifier	Technical	Unspecified Performance	Ensemble Repertoire	Etudes/Solo Studies/Met hod Book	Non-Performance Tasks	Rhythm Exercises	Practice Videos	Sight Reading	Not provided
Teacher 1	X			X		X			
Teacher 2		X							
Teacher 3	X								
Teacher 4		X			X	X			
Teacher 5									X
Teacher 6			X						
Teacher 7	X			X					
Teacher 9			X						
Teacher 10	X	X							
Teacher 11		X	X		X				
Teacher 12	X			X					
Teacher 13			X						
Teacher 14			X						
Teacher 15		X							
Teacher 17		X	X						
Teacher 18	X			X					
Teacher 19		X			X				
Teacher 20		X							
Teacher 21									X
Teacher 23	X			X				X	
Teacher 24	X		X		X		X		
Teacher 25	X	X							
Teacher 26	X								
Teacher 28		X							
Teacher 29	X			X	X				
Teacher 30			X						
Totals:	11	10	8	6	5	2	1	1	2

APPENDIX F:*Differentiated Assessment Strategies and Techniques*

This resource guide is intended to help music teachers implement differentiated assessment of performance in their ensemble classrooms. The technique section includes tools that teachers can use to differentiate assessments they already have in place or will in the future. The strategies section outlines practices that are innately differentiated assessments, designed with differentiation in mind. These strategies and techniques were compiled and created from participant responses from this study (see Appendix D), documented differentiated assessment strategies from literature, modified for high school band, and the author of this study. They are listed as such in the source section of their respective chart.

Before implementing any differentiated assessment strategies and techniques it is critical that respondents make sure that the differentiation does not obfuscate or modify the learning goal being assessed and that they grade all the assessment using the same metrics for every student (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013, p. 102). In other words, it will not be possible to apply each or sometimes any strategy to every assessment you may administer. Furthermore, it is not necessary to apply differentiation or use one of these assessment strategies for every assessment you use with your ensemble.

This information is not intended to be an all-encompassing list of differentiated assessment techniques and strategies for performing ensembles but rather an ongoing accumulation. These ideas and concepts can be creatively modified to fit your class, teaching environment, or assessment needs.

Differentiated Assessment Techniques for Musical Performance Assessments

Technique Type	Explanation and Application	Differentiation Classification	Source
Tempo Variation	Tempos can easily be adjusted to account for the readiness level of students completing a performance task. There are a few ways to differentiate tempo. The simplest is by allowing students to pick any tempo in which they can demonstrate the learning goal. One way to do this while maintaining rigor is by asking students to perform selections at the maximum speed possible while effectively meeting learning goals. This strategy is particularly effective for scale and technical exercises. Another strategy is having several tiered levels with preselected tempos which students could select. For instance, you could allow students to choose between 80BPM, 100BPM, or 120BPM. Remember, if a learning goal has a specific tempo specification, the tempo should not be differentiated.	Process According to Student Readiness	Respondents and Author
Repertoire Modification	There are many ways teachers can differentiate repertoire for student readiness. Parts can be dropped or raised the octave to accommodate range. Excerpt lengths can be shortened or expanded in length or scale/arpeggio octaves could be increased or reduced. Notes or rhythms can be simplified. To ease the workload on the teacher in assessment creation, tiered versions of the excerpt can be offered to students as opposed to trying to make individual modifications for students. Remember, if making any of these modifications changes the learning goal, the modification should not be made. For instance, if the learning goal is for students to play the concert Bb scale in two octaves, it should not be reduced to one octave for some students.	Content according to Student Readiness	Respondents and Author
“Chunking” Modification	Teachers can differentiate performance tasks for students by having them break the task, excerpt, or repertoire down into smaller sections or by allowing them to complete different sections at different times. As an example, imagine a teacher wants students to demonstrate competency playing the F, Bb, Eb, and Ab scale. Instead of having the students play this in one sitting, the teacher could have students	Content according to Student Readiness and/or learning profile	<i>Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom</i> (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013) and Respondents

	<p>record or perform one scale each over a two-week period. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) note that this strategy helps students who struggle with task management.</p> <p>This strategy could also be applied beneficially to sight reading. Instead of giving a student a minute to look at an 8-measure long sight-reading before performing, have them spend 30 seconds on the first 4 measures, perform, and then 30 seconds on the next 4.</p>		
Environment Differentiation	<p>One type of differentiation often overlooked is differentiation of environment. When assessing students, you can offer them a variety of formats for assessment. Teachers can differentiate by allowing them to be assessed in person or by making an audio/video recording in a setting of their choice. Students can be allowed to record and submit in a practice room, at home or in an environment of their choice outside of the school day. Students could potentially be offered a play along track or other accompaniment tools available through online music learning platforms. Giving students the flexibility to record assessments individually in an environment of their own choice also implies giving them flexibility with when they record their allowing them to pick an ideal time for them to perform the excerpt. Many students may perform musically and mentally best outside of the confines of a normal school day.</p>	Environment according to student readiness and/or learning profile	Author
In-Ensemble Environment Assessment Differentiation	<p>Another way to differentiated for environment is by assessing students in a full ensemble group. Instead of having one on one or video recorded assessments, teachers can have students perform assessments in full ensemble and do multiple takes. The teacher can assess students from the podium or more proximally closer to students during assessment.</p> <p>Another way to assess in this setting is by using individual audio/video recorders with microphones to allow student sound to be isolated in recording for assessment purposes while still maintaining the full ensemble environment. For many classrooms, ensemble playing is the</p>	Environment according to student readiness and/or learning profile	Author

	standard setting where most students play, so affording students the opportunity to be in these setting is logical.		
Grouping Differentiation	Very similarly to allowing students to be assessed individually or in full ensemble, students can also be assessed in groupings. These groupings could be chosen by students or chosen in advance by the teacher. Groups could be created by students of like or dislike skill level, instrument, grade level, interest, learning style and more. There are many resources in the literature on differentiation to guide teachers through effective grouping practices. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) suggest using flexible groupings, where students rotate through various groups in the same session (p. 12). Chapman and King (2012) also offer helpful resources on creating, implementing, and evaluating on flexible groupings		<i>Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom</i> (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013) <i>Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Tool Doesn't Fit All</i> (Chapman and King, 2012)
Replay/Retake Differentiation	One way to differentiated assessment for students is by allowing them multiple opportunities to perform their assessment repertoire including replays or retakes. The goal of assessment is for students to demonstrate what they know or can do. Allowing students multiple opportunities to perform allows them a better opportunity to achieve learning goals	Environment according to student readiness and/or learning profile	Author
Seating/Part Assignment Placement Differentiation	One differentiation technique that some directors may already be doing is placing students on assigned parts based on their readiness level. For instance, if a teacher puts a clarinet player on a clarinet 3 part with mostly lower register notes because they are still developing getting over the break, if the ensemble were to be assessed on this repertoire individually, it would be differentiation for readiness. Not all part assignment or seat placement constitute differentiation. For instance, having two tuba players, both playing the same musical content, in chair 1 and chair 2 doesn't help the student access or demonstrate knowledge of the learning goal. Additionally, putting a clarinet player on a clarinet 3 part does not constitute differentiation for readiness if it does not help them demonstrate learning goals.	Content according to student readiness	Differentiation in the Music Classroom (Standerfer, 2011)

Differentiated Assessment Strategies for Musical Performance Assessments

Title	Description and Differentiation Opportunities	Source Information
NAfME (2017) Music Model Cornerstone Assessments	The Model Cornerstone Assessments developed by NAfME are comprehensive standards-based assessments that can be implemented in ensemble classrooms. NAfME has developed them for a variety of different music classrooms and ensemble proficiency levels. They come ready with a variety of tools and supplemental paper and pencil questions which can be used to assess students on responding to music standards. The assessments are innately differentiated because they allow the student to select repertoire they will perform and be assessed on. This gives students the flexibility to choose music that matches their interests and is at or just above their skill level. This should be done with the guidance of the teacher.	https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/mcas/
Longitudinal Scale Assessment (LSA)	Students are given a point for one octave of a major or minor scale or arpeggio, ascending or descending, in a two-minute period with the hopes of achieving a goal score that students select collaboratively with their teacher based on prior achievement (Simon, 2014). This assessment is differentiated performance because each student goal score will be unique and rigorous based on their past performance. Even though this method for scale assessment has some wonderful benefits such as allowing for long term tracking and comparative analytics, it is important that educators assure that it matches the learning goals of their classroom.	<i>Using Longitudinal Scales Assessment for Instrumental Music Students.</i> (Simon, 2014)
Individual Assessment Choice	<p>Another strategy that can be employed by teachers to differentiated for students is allowing student choice in performance content for assessment.</p> <p>Students, with the guidance of their teacher, can be allowed to pick any selection that meets the criteria for performance for their assessment.</p>	Respondents and Author

	Online music learning platforms and libraries make it easier than ever for students and teachers to find individual pieces for performance.	
Assessment Contracts	Very similarly to the strategy above, assessment contracts empower the students to make decisions about their assessment. A formal agreement can be made between the teacher and student on paper as to what students will perform for assessment, a timeline, how they will submit or perform their assessment, and more. This strategy opens the opportunity for differentiation of environment, content, and process according to student interests, learning profile, and readiness. The strategy is based off the learning contract strategy from Tomlinson (2014, p. 139).	<i>The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners</i> (Tomlinson, 2014)
Tiered Assessments	Admittedly, assessment contracts or guiding students through individual assessment choices can be time consuming, which was a primary concern of respondents. One strategy to balance student choice with time is by offering students tiered options (Tomlinson, 2014, pp. 133-138). Teachers can select several musical excerpts at varying difficulty levels that can be used to demonstrate the same skill or concept. The teacher could also have one selection that has versions adjusted for readiness. This is an application of what Tomlinson (2014) calls cloning, adjusting material for student readiness.	<i>The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners</i> (Tomlinson, 2014)
Menu Assessments	Another similar strategy for differentiating assessment by allowing students structured choice is offering a menu of options. A collection of exercises that can be used to assess on the same key concepts can be organized into a list in which students can choose from for performing and assessment. They can be grouped by difficulty to help differentiate for readiness. Although collecting these resources can be time consuming, online music learning platforms and music libraries, as well as exercises, solo,	Respondent: Teacher 18 <i>Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Tool Doesn't Fit All</i> (Chapman and King, 2012)

	<p>and repertoire lists from state music education organizations, colleges, and other resources make the process easier.</p> <p>This menu strategy can also be applied in assessment situations where students are being assessed on multiple performance items. The selection options can be treated like a multi-course meal in which students select content for each part of the assessment. If a teacher was assessing on sight-reading, prepared content, and scales. The teacher could have a prepared menu where the respondent could pick one from each category. Furthermore, if the content is organized by difficulty in each category, students can choose the amount of rigor for each part of the assessment. This concept was modified from elements of Chapman and King's (2012) assessment agenda strategy.</p>	
Portfolio Assessments	<p>Portfolios are assessment tools that allow teachers to assess students on a wide range of content and topics. They are not differentiated assessments perse but allow a lot of opportunity for implementing differentiated instruction. Teachers can differentiate with portfolios by allowing students flexibility in what goes in the portfolio that will be assessed. For instance, maybe a director requires the portfolio to contain two recordings of concert repertoire, two solo etudes, and two scales. The teacher can allow students to decide which selections they use for each of these items. Teachers can also use menu options for these items to help narrow content choices.</p> <p>Portfolios also make effective differentiated assessment strategies because they allow for flexibility in submission type and timing. Portfolios could contain graded rubrics from live performances or video/audio recordings of performances. They can be</p>	<p>https://nafme.org/differentiated-portfolios-music-classroom/ (Briggs, 2017)</p> <p><i>Differentiated Assessment: How to Assess the Learning Potential of Every Student</i> (Stefankis, 2011)</p>

	submitted via a wide breadth of digital platforms or physically stored in folders. Portfolios can also be designed to give students the flexibility to submit assessments when they want. Say in the example a student already has scales prepared but needs additional work on solo repertoire, instead of performing all exercises at equal intervals, the student could submit both scales early on, allowing themselves time to focus on the solo selections.	
Benchmark Portfolios	Benchmark portfolios are very similar to other portfolio assessments but usually have some time of progress structure for various topics or content that students must progress through. These can usually be differentiated in the same way as portfolios but often with less opportunity for content differentiation. These types of portfolios can offer valuable environment differentiation by allowing students to complete benchmarks at their own pace. They can also be completed without the presence of the teacher if the student is using a recording device.	Based on the concepts of Merkley (2002) and The Ontario Music Educators' Association (n.d.)