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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the relationship between musical independence and: students' gender; home environment; high school and college academic and musical experiences; and college instrumental organization, major, and instrument. The study also evaluated students' opinions regarding attrition in music education and evaluated the spectrum of musical skills from moderate to advanced musical independence. Ball State University band students (N=153) were administered the Instructional Student College Survey and Colwell's Music Achievement Test 3. The study's findings included: (1) musical independence is developed by participating in numerous and varied high school ensembles and/or musical activities; (2) musically independent students practiced more, took more music lessons, participated in more recitals, earned higher Scholastic Achievement Test scores, and attended more classical concerts; (3) quantitative and qualitative practice time is related to musical growth; (4) musical independence is enhanced by some academic/family indicators; (5) acquiring and developing musical independence consists of four areas--native intellectual skills, musical experiences, time on task, and effective study habits; and (6) playing woodwind and brass instruments contributes more to developing musical independence than playing percussion instruments. (Includes five references) (JDD)

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POSTSECONDARY MUSICAL INDEPENDENCE AND RELATED HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

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POSTSECONDARY MUSICAL INDEPENDENCE AND RELATED HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

I. INTRODUCTION

Bobbett (1989) evaluated musical independence (MI) in conjunction with related academic and musical activities of instrumental music students and programs at the University of Tennessee (UT). Some of the study's findings were inconclusive and required validation/evaluation. For instance, if there is a direct relationship between student practice time and MI, what specific practice activities have the greatest or least influence on the student's growth? In addition, if advanced MI music majors tend to change their major after the freshman year and moderate MI students do not, is the UT study an exception or a possible trend?

The music faculty at Ball State University agreed to participate in a follow-up research project. The study's four questions were:

- (1) Do high school /college activities influence the students' and programs' musical independence?
- (2) What similarities/ differences are between: (a) the top and training ensembles, (b) brass, woodwind and percussion students, (c) music and non-music majors, and (d) male and female students?
- (3) If practice (time-on-task) influences MI, what types of practice activities accelerate and promote MI? and
- (4) Do advanced musically independent instrumental students quit after their freshman year and if so, why?

The student questionnaire consisted of Colwell's MAT3 and the Instrumental Student College Survey (ISCS), which expanded the UT demographic survey items. Since the research addressing post-secondary student outcomes (musical independence) is limited, many ISCS areas are not amply reflected in the music education literature. The additional "exploration" questions might help explain some of the present unknowns regarding excellence in instrumental music. Finally, if MI can be successfully identified and measured, then the next step is to evaluate the musical activities that promote MI. This might be accomplished by evaluating the relationship between MI and related academic and musical activities.

II. PURPOSES

The first purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between MI and the students': (1) home environment, (2) high school academic and musical experiences, (3) college academic and musical experiences, and (4) college instrumental organization, college major, instrument, and gender. The second purpose for this study was to evaluate the students' opinions regarding attrition in music education. The third, purpose of this study was to evaluate the spectrum of musical skills from moderate MI to advanced MI based on the collective results of the study.

III. TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics (ISCS) The three demographic categories include:

1. **General** questions sought information regarding the organization/s in which they played, their instrument, gender, age, race, years of instrumental experience, class (e.g., freshman, senior, graduate), major, years of piano training, and parents' educational background.
2. **High School** questions were subdivided into two categories: (1) academics and (2) musical activities. High school academic questions gathered data on student grade point average (GPA), ACT/SAT scores, states where they graduated from high school, grade they started band, school and band enrollment, amount of instrumental practice time and non-musical study time per week. Musical activities measured the number of years the student participated in all-state band, all-state orchestra, concert festivals, solo-ensembles, marching contests, instrumental private lessons, church/community choir, parades, jazz band, and community band. In addition, students described educational/musical characteristics of their most influential secondary musical educator.
3. **College** questions included student's college GPA, scholarships (musical, academic, other), amount of study time spent on non-musical courses and other musical courses, and number of nights and amount of time practiced on major instrument. The students described the percentage of time spent on specific practice activities such as scales, etudes, band music, sight-reading, solos, improvisation, other activities, and the percentage of time a metronome was used during practicing. Additional questions included time spent

listening to serious music per week, number of classical/jazz concerts attended per year, number of years the student took private instrumental, piano, and vocal lessons, number of recital performances per year, and number of ensembles the student participated in during the year.

In addition, freshmen were asked to list principal reasons why freshman music majors change their major to non-music fields.

Colwell's MAT3. This research used Colwell's Music Achievement Test 3 (MAT3) to evaluate the musical independence (MI) of Ball State University students who participate in the Wind Ensemble (WE), Symphony Band (SB), and/or the Concert Band (CB). These organizations have specifically defined missions. The WE and SB are "designated ensembles," fulfilling student performance requirements. The WE is the top or elite band whose membership is selected through audition. The SB is the largest of the three concert ensembles. The CB is the training and recreational organization. The WE, SB, and CB rehearse six, four, and two hours per week, respectively. The better instrumentalists are selected to perform in the WE; the remaining instrumental majors are assigned to the SB; and the weaker students are assigned to the CB. The SB and CB students advance to the WE when they are needed or when they have acquired a higher level of musical independence.

Colwell's MAT3 was used for this project because it best evaluates the student's musical independence (Bobbett, 1987), is easily administered, and has previously determined reliability estimates and validity. Colwell (1970) used the Kuder Richardson 21 (KR21) to evaluate the MAT3's internal consistency for grades 9-12. The KR21 ranged from .814 to .892 for students with instrumental experience. The MAT3 consists of four subtests (ST): (1) Tonal Memory (ST1), (2) Melody recognition (ST2), (3) Pitch Recognition (ST3), and (4) Instrument Recognition (ST4).

What distinguishes the skills tested by the MAT3 from identified skills found in other achievement tests? Essentially, skills are acquired from experience, study, or a combination of the two. When students learn a particular discipline exclusively from textbooks, they miss many of the subtleties and idiosyncrasies of the particular discipline. In other words, book knowledge divorced from practical experiences has limited value. Obviously, the music student needs to practice and participate by performing the music