

CURRENT STATUS OF INCORPORATING COMPOSITION INTO MUSIC
EDUCATION CLASSROOMS IN KANSAS

BY

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ABSTRACT

Incorporating the National Standards for Music Education includes a component of composing, specifically Standard 4. The purpose of this study was to examine the frequency and/or infrequency of incorporating the composing standard into music classrooms, specifically in those classrooms that include large ensembles such as band, orchestra, and choir, as well as general music and to determine the reasons for which a music educator would or would not include composing into his or her own classroom. Subjects included music educators (N = 173) from various public school districts in Kansas representing various sub-disciplines of music education including band and orchestra. Results indicated that 80.2% of music teachers in Kansas include composition in their music classrooms at least one time per year. However, 19.8% of music educators report that they never use music composition in their music classrooms. Leading reasons for not including composition in the music classrooms included lack of time and lack of resources.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Music education philosopher David Elliott asserts that “our musical knowledge is in our actions; our musical thinking and knowing are in our musical doing and making” (1995, p. 56). Music-making can take many forms; one of those active forms of music is in music composition. Music composition is creating music from nothing – that is, some music never exists until it is written or composed.

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME, formerly MENC: the Music Educators National Conference) have already established music education standards for what should be taught to students in music classrooms across the United States. Included in these standards is a requirement of including music composition in the music classroom. While the standards have been apparent in music classrooms since their establishment and adoption in 1992, many music educators may gloss over the component of composition. But why? What makes the concept of composition challenging to teach to students, and why might teachers be reluctant to teach composition in their music classrooms, especially the large ensemble classrooms? Or, perhaps most importantly, why should composition be included in the music curriculum at all?

The 1960s were a time of change in the field of music education. Projects such as the Contemporary Music Project, which paired up-and-coming composers with schools, as well as the idea of comprehensive musicianship, were at the fore. Comprehensive musicianship is the understanding that music students should receive music education in all areas of music. This idea was later reiterated with the charges of the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 and the subsequent implementation of the initiatives to be put into place such as placing music at the core of education, establishing a music curriculum that included singing, playing instrument, moving to

music, listening to music, arranging and composing music, understanding music notation, listening to various styles and genres of music, and placing highly qualified music teachers in the music classrooms (Choate, 1967). These ideas were the basis for the later-created National Standards for Arts Education in Music.

Even though, NAFME advocates for the incorporation of composition into a music curriculum, there are many more reasons to include music composition into the music education environment that are more deeply rooted in our society as a whole. Music composition allows people to create something new from elements that already exist. To parallel, a chef does not always use a recipe, but rather, a chef uses ingredients that are already familiar to create edibles that may challenge the palate or excite the senses in a new way. A writer does not simply copy down text that others have written; a writer puts together words and sentences to weave a story that is yet to be told. A painter does not only paint by number; that painter mixes colors and adds tints and shades to create new colors that represent a picture that exists only in the mind of the painter before the brush ever engages the canvas.

In the same way, a musician must also create. Creation of music can be achieved through composition. Too often, musicians are slaves to the printed work that represents the true music. The musician becomes a craftsman, who learns to follow printed instructions in the directions. Craftsmanship is nothing to scoff at, but true creativity can only occur when something new is created. The process of teaching music composition and also therefore, teaching music creativity, is not easy to define.

Creativity, which is inherent in music composition, is an abstract concept with which adults struggle to classify. Children are often deemed creative until their creative efforts are reasoned into more pragmatic approaches by adults who mean well. While children are young, in

school, and learning, composition should be taught to those students to fully engage their creative minds before the creativity is suppressed or fully educated out of them. Creative children who can use problem-solving in artistic endeavors such as composing music will ultimately be the innovators in business, science, and other areas of the future. Those same students will also develop sensitivity to creativity, a confidence in unique ideas, and an appreciation for viewpoints that are different than their own. Composition is a vehicle through which creativity can be developed as well as allowed, and even encouraged, to flourish.

Some music educators may already be utilizing various techniques to teach composition to students in their classrooms. If there are teachers who are using composition, then what can other teachers who are not as experienced with incorporating composition learn from the teachers who are more seasoned and including the composition component? What are some effective ways to meaningfully incorporate composition into currently existing music classes such as large ensembles? How can teaching music composition help to ensure that creativity is not lost in the public education systems in the United States? This research seeks to find the answers to some of the questions surrounding the ambiguity of use of composition in the music classroom in Kansas.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meaningfully Incorporate Musical Composition into Large Ensembles

Brief History of Including Composition in Music Education Programs

The teaching of the reading and writing of music has been at the forefront of music education since the establishment of the earliest music education classes in Boston in 1838 (Brophy, 1996, p. 15). The use of composition in the classroom has been continually debated since the earliest establishment of music in schools on how to best incorporate the practice of composition into music classrooms and even if it was necessary to include at all. Many music scholars have agreed that composition is important to teach but are largely varied on how exactly to complete the task of meaningfully incorporating music composition.

In 1922, Rosario Scalero and Theodore Baker wrote “The pedagogy of composition must be considered, from a general point of view, as a problem as yet unsolved in convincing fashion” (p. 488). Even almost one hundred years after the Boston schools, music educators had not yet found the best way to incorporate composition in music education courses. Years later in 1935, Leonard Sabaneev commented that “Unfortunately it has to be admitted that the methods of teaching composition are abnormal” (p. 881). While newer methods of teaching composition were integrated into music classrooms, they were largely unsuccessful according to Sabaneev. The composition classes were centered around basic music theory, voice-leading, and harmonization at a time when those constructs of music were being challenged by composers who were praised. In short, music students received conflicting information on the components of “good” music. The aesthetic music of the time, the art for art’s sake, such as works by Debussy and Wagner, did not follow the conventional rules of harmonization or voice-leading that composition students were being taught. Sabaneev explained that “It is always better to

connect these exercises with the music of the present or the future, and not with that which has had its day and is outworn” (1935, p. 883).

Connecting the present music to current students in music classes was one of the issues that emerged during the first Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. The symposium originally “took place because of the serious and widespread concern of many music educators, who strongly urged the profession [to] appraise its role and think ahead” (Choate, Fowler, Brown, & Wersen, 1967, p. 80). Over 800 representatives including musicians, sociologists, psychologists, educators, labor leaders, scientists, representatives of corporations, and other people concerned with the “many facets of music” (Choate et al., 1967, p. 50) assembled for the purpose of addressing the role of “Music in American Society” – the theme for the Tanglewood Symposium. An important outcome of the Tanglewood Symposium includes a call for “music to be placed in the core of the school curriculum” (Choate et al., 1967, p. 51).

Within the core of the school curriculum, the implications for music in education became more defined and forward-thinking at the conclusion of the Tanglewood Symposium. One of the basic tenants coming out of the Tanglewood Symposium is that music is for everyone. The representatives at the Tanglewood Symposium deemed music not to be only for the privileged few but that music should be made available to every single student. Another important idea that arose during the Tanglewood Symposium is that art educators, and therefore, music educators, should also be teachers of creativity. Teaching creativity as part of the curriculum included “arranging and composing music for instruments and voices” (Choate et al., 1967, p. 77). As the basis for reformed music education curricula, the results of the Tanglewood Symposium “have set the standards for music education over the last 40 years” (Connaughton and Carr, 2007, p. 30).

Perhaps because teaching composition seems challenging to many music teachers, the practice fell out of many music education programs. There was a large increase in music programs in the areas of performance and the rise of musical competitions in band, orchestra, and choir led to greater emphasis in those areas in public school music programs. The level of performance and the number of competent performers may have increased but Sherman (1971, 22) argued that by not including composition as a central part of the music education curriculum, the music educators were in danger of not giving the students a personal point of view in music. Randles explained this idea in greater detail in 2010 and asserts that Sherman's viewpoint is still applicable. Randles clarified that the act of actually creating, that is composing, music places the role of who is 'in charge' in the hands of the creator. Conversely, Randles explicated that when a student is always a performer rather than a creator (composer), the student is forever a slave to the music, the composition, and the composer. Composing changes the role of the student, and therefore, also changes the balance of power that the student feels within himself or herself. While Sherman made his assertion in 1971, many music educators would argue that his aforementioned statement is still applicable at present.

Finally, in 1995, the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) – now called the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) – established the National Standards for Arts Education in music that included the teaching of composition. MENC included benchmarks and indicators so that certain criteria could be met at various age levels. Many states adopted the National Standards as their own state standards, while some states used that National Standards as a model for creating their own state standards. These standards are, for the most part, what currently guides the various curricula in music education at present. The National Standards were meant to serve as guideposts of what should be included in a music education curriculum without

specifically dictating the steps and lessons necessary to accomplish such as task. Standards-based teaching in music education was adopted in many states because of this document.

Defining Composition

Many people may accept the broad definition of composition as the process of creating a new piece of music. However, this definition may need more specificity when referring to music in education. Ruthmann defined composition as the “organizing and expressing musical ideas and feelings through sound” (2007, p. 40). Kratus defined composition as “the act of leading to the production of a unique, replicable sequence of pitches and durations” (1989, p. 8). There are many items to consider in composition which may include but are not limited to: melody, harmony, rhythm, form, timbre, orchestration, etc. The challenging part may come in defining those terms used in composition to students who will be composing, are composing, or have composed.

Why compose?

Besides composition being a National Standard in music education, there are several reasons why a music educator might want to include composition in the music classroom. Composition activities should not be relegated to only some classes or grades, but composition should be prevalent, or at least, evident in all grades in schools and across all music disciplines.

To begin with philosophy, to learn about music, students must be actively involved in *doing* music. “[O]ur musical knowledge is in our actions; our musical thinking and knowing are in our musical doing and making” (Elliott, 56). Music making is not just composition, but rather music making includes: singing, playing instruments, dancing, composing, and any activity where music is an active function of the people doing the music-making. There exists contrasting views of what is music, but Christopher Small explains that “music is not a thing at all, but an

activity, something people do” (1998, p. 2). Small also has coined a term for active music-making activities, which has been adopted by many music teachers – he calls active music-making “musicking” (1998, p. 9). Musicking, then, also includes composing as a music-making activity.

Through composition, music becomes more personal to students. “The key aspect in anything that can be called art is that the person creating it...forces meaning [into the art] that makes the resulting experience special, or significant” (Reimer, 68). Reimer’s view of art, and therefore music, is that the person who is creating the music brings themselves into the music that is being created. This could include student’s culture, their personal experiences, their thoughts and beliefs about the world, and their viewpoints of the world. The way that each student approaches composition is then both different from and deeply personal to the person who is creating the music composition. “Composition as a creative form of music making puts the composer [student] in the role of creator, making musical decisions and imposing ownership on the product of his or her efforts” (Randles, 2010, p. 10). The ownership of the music and responsibility to the music can lead a student to the best and strongest possible outcome of the musical creation.

Music composition allows for more performance opportunities, especially by non-traditional groupings of instruments and performers. Elliott asserts that “composing and performing are not mutually exclusive but interdependent” (1995, p. 169). The composition serves the performer and the performer serves the composition, for without one or the other, the music would never be heard by listeners. “[Performance is] the only medium through which isolated, self-contained work has to pass in order to reach its goal, the listener” (Small, 1998, p. 5). Without composition, the performer would never be able to re-create lengthy musical pieces.

Composers may write for any combinations of music instruments, voices, and various other sounds including found sounds, speech narration. Composers then are responsible for writing music that is enjoyable for others to perform and replicate.

Music composition encourages cooperative learning in small groups. “New models of music education should allow control over the educational environment to be extensively shared inside the classroom by allowing students to experience self-directed learning and peer-directed learning” (Williams, 2011, p. 52). Much of the literature on composition in the music classroom utilizes small and large group composition including full ensembles such as school bands (Ginocchio, 2003; Hickey, 1997; Koops, 2009; Strand, 2006; Wiggins, 1989). Smaller groups could be from two to five students and incorporate many of the same problem-solving strategies, cooperation, and techniques as the larger groups that compose. Strand suggests that students in small groups have well-defined roles to encourage greater cooperation between group members, and also encourage belonging and contribution to the group (2005, p. 165).

Including music composition into music education classes provides for evaluation, assessment, and analysis of music. “[T]he development of musical creativity requires a receptive environment that encourages risk taking and the constructive evaluation of students’ efforts to achieve creative results” (Elliott, 234). Students must be evaluated either by themselves, their music teacher, or their peers in a constructive way so that they can learn from their learning. However, teachers must take great care to construct the compositional music environment as constructively evaluating and providing constructive criticisms so that the learner can grow in their knowledge of compositional practices. Additionally, the teacher must also take great care that emphasis is not just on the product of the final composition or final performance, but rather there is equal or more emphasis on the compositional process as well.

Music composition helps to provide a chance for inclusion of students' personal and cultural backgrounds. Many public schools are diverse in the students that they serve in one or more of many ways including but not limited to: socioeconomic status, ethnicity, cognitive/developmental abilities, family arrangements, living arrangements, and others. Elliott asserts that "Music is inherently multicultural" (1995, p. 291) and that by utilizing this facet, composition in the classroom can reflect the multiculturalism of the classroom. Composition then becomes a means to the end of understanding different cultures. Exploration of various cultural genres of music through composition can achieve the same goal.

How should composition be taught in a music education setting?

There are various approaches to teaching composition in an educational setting. The review of literature identified several approaches that will be discussed forthwith. Some of these approaches are concerned with how the created (composed) music is actually presented, while other approaches are concerned with the process of composing and the arrangements of the students and the teacher.

There seems to be some debate about which type of notation is best to use for composition in the classroom. The debate concerns traditional notation, graphic notation, or technology-assisted notation. Traditional notation refers to how standard music notation appears on a page such as sheet music with clefs, staves, notes and rests with various values, and accompanying music symbols that are widely accepted by musicians in various countries of the world. Traditional notation allows other musicians to perform what the composer has written and makes the composition replicable (Berkley, 2001; Brophy, 1996; Ginocchio, 2003; Kratus, 1989). Graphic notation consists of using various non-musical symbols to represent sounds. Graphic symbols could include vertical lines, squiggles, stars, or anything else that the composer

feels represents the sounds. The challenge with graphic notation is that other musicians besides the composer may not be able to replicate the compositions as the composer would. However, students who are young and/or less familiar with instruments or traditional notation may be able to express their musical ideas and compositions through the use of graphic notation (Wiggins, 1989, 1994; Wilson & Wales, 1995). On the other hand, graphic notation could be effective in compositions that are aleatoric in nature where performers are invited to perform some type of music by chance that contributes to a particular soundscape. Technology-assisted notation could be notation software such as Finale, Sibelius, or others or looping software such as GarageBand or the Super Duper Music Looper or others. Again, this approach can work well with those students who are less experienced or less exposed to traditional instruments and or notation. The loop programs especially, allow young and/or inexperienced composers simply paint or fill-in where they want the loops to occur (Randles, 2010; Reese, 1995; Ruthmann, 2007).

Other compositional approaches address the role of the teacher. In a compositional activity in the music classroom, the teacher can provide direct instruction or guided discovery. The music teacher can provide concept-based lessons and exercises or provide free composing to encourage exploration. The teacher can also decide if the compositions and composition projects should be graded and how they should be graded. Direct instruction can be beneficial for young composers who are just learning the concepts associated with composing. In contrast, in guided discovery, the teacher presents an idea and the student must 'discover' the possibilities/answers for himself or herself (Strand, 2005; Wiggins, 1989). Concept-based lessons are composition experiences that are centered around learning one particular item in inquiry such as dynamics, articulations, road map symbols, etc. (Hickey, 1997; Strand 2005). The free composing is usually designed for individuals and encourages students to explore different musical possibilities

without much guidance or assistance from the teacher (Berkley, 2001; Strand, 2006). The decision of how to grade students' compositions or composition processes or to grade them at all (DeLorenzo, 1989) rests with the teacher. Many teachers agree that assessment and evaluation should be a part of the composing process but DeLorenzo also warns that if the composition is too task oriented (i.e. for a grade) that students will rush through because they are treating the compositions task as 'assignments' rather than creative projects (1989).

The arrangement of the students can also be considered when doing composition projects in a music education class. Students may work individually, in small groups of two to five members, and as a large group such as the entire class/ensemble. When composing individually, students can really take the composition at their own pace, and this is why free composing and using composing as an exploratory activity can work well (Berkley, 2001; Strand, 2006). Small groups can be very effective as long as group members' roles are defined for maximum group cooperation, cohesiveness, and participation (Strand, 2005; Wiggins, 1989). Large class composition can be effective, usually more so if the composition is lengthier in scope than the individual or small group assignments.

The cognitive process of students can also be considered when teaching composition. For example, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences outlines that musical intelligence is a type of cognitive profile (1993). Therefore, some students may be more adept at all musical tasks, including composition, than other students. Berkley (2001) mentions the cognitive development ideas of Vygotsky and his idea of the 'zone of proximal development' (1978) that illustrates what students can accomplish when they are led by a competent adult on tasks that they can accomplish with assistance. The zone of proximal development indicates why modeling, direct instruction, and guided discovery work as composition tasks for many students (Ormrod, 2012).

Who should compose?

Supporting information for which students should be involved in composing activities in music education has been found for all levels of students in all types of music classes. Kodály believed that all students “should receive training in the reading and writing of music just as they received training in the reading and writing of their native language” (Carder, 1990, p. 55) The greatest frequency of composing activities has been found to be occurring at the elementary level by the general music specialists. There is much recommendation for children beginning to compose in the early grades of elementary school so that the students get composing experiences before they are given any indication that they are not able to complete such activities (Brophy 1996; Kennedy, 2002; Laker, 1973; Wiggins, 1989, 1994).

At the middle school or junior high level, evidence was found for composition occurring in large ensembles such as band as well as exploratory classes and summer enrichment programs. The ensembles utilized composition as mostly concept-based to learn particular musical or compositional concepts with one study showing a large ensemble, group-effort, end-of-the-year composition (Ginocchio, 2003; Hickey 1997; Koops, 2009). Exploratory classes that were based solely on composition occurred more frequently at the middle school level rather than at the high school or elementary school levels. Composition exploratory classes included a Composers Workshop, a MIDI and Technology-assisted composition class, and a middle school general music class that had a component of composition (Reese, 1995; Ruthmann, 2007; Strand, 2005).

At the high school level, much less composing occurs in the ensemble classes, but may have greater frequency in the specialized music classes such as music theory. Kennedy asserts that “creative activity may occasionally play a part in the elementary music program, but is most

often absent and the middle and high school levels” (2002, p. 96) and the results of a survey of music educators in public secondary schools, which was sponsored by MENC: The National Association for Music Education (2000) supports this viewpoint. There are certainly still multiple ways that a director can include composition into his or her ensemble as mentioned in the previous paragraph (Ginocchio, 2003; Hickey, 1997). More often, composition activities occur most often at the high school in music theory courses. As students are taught appropriate scales, intervals, inversions, and appropriate voice-leading, they often practice these techniques in composing or arranging (Laker, 1973; Thomas, 1964). Students might also be encouraged more to compose on their own at home (outside of the classroom).

Processes of composing

The process of composing varies slightly between many of the authors represented in the review of literature. Several authors are of the ‘sound before symbol’ approach, even in composing. (Jordan-DeCarbo, 1997; Kodály, 1969; Strand, 2006). Other music educators have students first compose and then play instruments or perform to confirm their compositions. Many of the authors represented had similar approaches for teaching the process of composition. Some of these are outlined below.

Timothy Brophy (1996) works with elementary students and has his students compose by creating, making a draft in standard/traditional notation, making a final copy, and performing. Throughout the process, Brophy coaches students in correct notation and drafts are done on lap-sized chalkboards to allow for easier revision if necessary.

Maud Hickey (1997) uses a method within the creation step of composition to help her students better elaborate their ideas into longer compositions. Hickey uses the acronym SCAMPER for “Substitute, Combine, Adapt or Add, Minify (diminution) or Magnify

(augmentation), Put to other uses (other instruments), Eliminate, Reverse or Rearrange” (p. 19). This method works very well with students who may need more guidance to allow their ideas and compositions to grow. Hickey also advocates for a revision process, which, she asserts, is absent from many other composition processes. Hickey works with individuals, small groups, and performing ensembles using composition and hopes “that by changing the traditional performance class process, teachers will discover the final products, although different, will still be polished and students will develop into more sensitive and aware musicians” (1997, p. 21).

Stan Bennett (1976) worked with eight composers to decipher the compositional process most often used by professional composers. He found that many professional composers generally followed the same composing path when creating a new composition. These composers were an average of 12.1 years old when they completed their first composition. The first step is the generation of a germinal idea. This germinal idea could be as simple as a certain melody, rhythm, a single chord, a texture, a simple chord progression, or even just a “kind of sound” (Bennett, 1976, p. 7). The next step is to make a sketch of the music. The sketch is really important to remembering the germinal idea because the sketch, the writing down of the germinal idea, allows the germinal idea to grow. The next step is the first draft. In the first draft, the composer writes down as much music as possible. Then the composer goes through a process of elaboration and refinement, which allows him or her to include only the best musical material in the composition and to make that musical material more in line with his or her original thoughts. The last steps are to make a final draft and complete any final revisions to the piece before it can be possibly published.

John Kratus (1989) observed how much time young composers, ages seven to eleven, spent in each of four defined composition activities on the piano during timed intervals. His

stages of composition for the project were exploration, development, repetition, and silence. However, Kratus realized that there are several cognitive processes occurring as well such as preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Kratus, 1989). These cognitive processes are aligned with his stages of composition for the young composers at the piano.

Mary Kennedy found that listening was an important aspect for high school aged composers in her study of the processes of high school composers (Kennedy, 2002). Listening became an important part to the high school students in the discovering or creating of an initial or seminal idea. The students would then take that idea and think about it for a while before actually doing any composing. Kennedy admits that these students may have just been procrastinating and avoiding working on the project on their own time. Though the initial process of having a beginning idea and then letting it rest may support the processes of Kratus mentioned above. Additionally, Erickson (1988) mentions that he, too, is usually inspired by listening, or rather hearing. Erickson describes how he generates his initial or germinal idea for a composition. The original idea is “almost always triggered by something heard, occasionally a musical sound, but more often an intriguing natural sound, something in the environment” (1988, p. 87).

Alex Ruthmann (2007) worked with middle school students in a Composers’ Workshop setting that was housed in a library technology/computer lab for students not currently enrolled in band, orchestra, choir, or other ensemble classes. Ruthmann took a different approach from other music teachers mentioned here because he was working with students who considered themselves to be “failed musicians . . . because they had not succeeded to desired to continue with traditional, performance-based music classes” (2007, p. 38). Ruthmann used a combination of directed instruction and guided discovery to develop the compositional process that included:

exploration, mini-lessons, and conferring with the teacher or a peer (2007). Ruthmann also developed various ways to reveal students' compositions' final products which included: sharing sessions in class, online galleries, and celebration sessions for sharing students' best works.

How to assess/evaluate students' compositions?

An issue with teaching composition in the classroom is how to effectively assess and evaluate such projects. Another question is how does a teacher judge creativity? Certainly some compositions are better than others, but why? Compositions can be assessed through recorded or live performance, written evaluations, or verbal evaluations. Hickey (1999) questions if teachers should assess (that is, assign a grade) compositions at all in some cases.

Performance is certainly an important aspect of music and as mentioned before, several music educators and music philosophers encourage music composition and music performance together (Berkley, 2001; Elliott, 1995; Hickey, 1999; Small, 1998; Thomas, 1964). Many of the aforementioned music educators regard live performance as the media choice; however, Wiggins (1989) found success in having students record their compositions. Hickey (1999) encourages the use of a performance rubric with a quality line to assess such performances.

Hickey (1999) also outlines several other written assessments and provides examples of each that can be used to effectively assess music composition in the music classroom. These assessments include using Likert-type scales, using a quality line, using advanced rubrics, and using self-evaluation. Each of these provides the student with written feedback for the student to improve his or her composition and encourages revision. Strand (2005) also uses peer evaluation/peer mentors as a means of evaluation. However, Strand warns that the teacher must carefully establish a classroom environment that is supportive and encouraging when students

evaluate other students' compositions so that students are not dissuaded from composing in the future.

Verbal assessment and evaluation can also be effective if structured correctly. Lasker (1973) and Ginocchio (2003) found positive ways to incorporate verbal evaluation into the compositional process. Ginocchio mentions that "evaluation is an important part of any creative process. However, evaluation must feel safe for the composer. . . Students need to feel that their work has merit" (2003, p. 53). Ginocchio also mentions that it is extremely important for the evaluator to *always* find something positive to say about the composition. For this reason, Ginocchio also suggests an establishment of a supportive classroom environment for evaluating compositions especially. Private evaluations of student work can be beneficial for those students who may be particularly sensitive.

How do music educators respond to the use of composition in the music classroom?

Several challenges to meaningfully incorporating composition into music classes have been identified by researchers. These include but are not limited to: the importance of music composition, the ability of the music educators to teach composition in their classrooms, student issues, and other factors that limit composition that are out of the control of the music teachers. Conversely, the music teachers who do utilize composition in their classrooms, feel very positive about meaningfully incorporating composition into their curricula.

A dichotomous relationship between music teachers exists in the area of the importance of composition in a music education curriculum. The teachers who use composition think that including composition in the music curriculum is very important (Berkley, 2001); conversely, the teachers who do not use composition in the classrooms think that composition is not important or

not as important as other parts of their curriculum (Strand, 2006). Some teachers may value composition, but still do not utilize it in their classrooms due to other constraints (Moore, 1990).

Proponents of utilizing composition in the classrooms cite enriched learning, assessment of musical learning, and encouraging creativity (Strand, 2006) as well as challenging students, contribution to musical learning, and aiding in building creativity and confidence in students (Berkley, 2001). Some of the main controllable reasons for not including composition in music classes include student issues such as lack of ability or too wide of range of abilities in a single classroom (Berkley, 2001; Strand, 2006), lack of knowledge of composing or how to teach composing on the part of the teacher (Berkley, 2001; Hickey, 1997; Kennedy, 2002; Strand, 2006), and adverse viewpoints on the part of the music teacher such as competition with rehearsals or time factors (Strand 2005, 2006) or that composition should be taught elsewhere such as in a specific composition class (Strand 2006). The not-controllable limitations include time (Strand 2005, 2006), technology or instrument resources (Kennedy 2002; Koops, 2009; Strand, 2006), staff support or administrative support (Strand, 2006), conflicting schedules and rehearsals (Strand, 2006), and lack of curriculum (Koops, 2009).

Needs for Further Research

Gathering data from other states about the use of composition in the music classroom would help to more greatly generalize some of the findings of Katherine Strand and her investigation in Indiana music teachers and their use of composition in the music classroom. While this study was comprehensive, it was only one state, so investigations of other states would be helpful in advancing the knowledge of the use of composition in the music classroom on a National, and therefore, a more generalize-able level.

Additionally, Hickey, Koops, and Strand have found many needs in the areas of curriculum development and professional development opportunities in the area of utilizing composition in the music classroom. Curriculum development may include the development of composition lessons or exercises compiled into a book, of the development of composition units to be used at various levels of music education (Hickey, 1999). Professional development can include education and training for teachers in the area of composition so that music teachers feel more confident teaching composition to their music students. Professional development can also include in-services, professional workshops, and professional presentations. Overall, music teachers claimed to need more strategies for teaching composition to music students in various music environments, classroom ensembles, set-ups, resources, and materials. The current study addressed the status quo of including or not including composition in music education classrooms in Kansas; however, further research must be done to find the solutions to the aforementioned problems so that music teachers will be more confident teaching this often-ignored part of the music curriculum.

Purpose statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the frequency or infrequency of incorporating the composing standard into the music classroom. Specifically, the researcher aims to specifically target those music classrooms that included large ensembles such as band, orchestra, and choir as well as general music. A second purpose of this study was to determine the reasons for which a music educator would or would not include composing into his or her own classrooms. An ancillary purpose emerged after examination of the data, which was to gather ideas for composition that were already being utilized in the music classroom.

Research questions

The research questions that guided the study were:

1. What percentage of teachers in Kansas use composition tasks in their classrooms?
2. What are the reasons that music teachers in Kansas give for including or not including music composition tasks in their classrooms?
3. What are some composition techniques and practices that are being used in music classrooms to teach students to compose?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine the frequency or infrequency of incorporating the composing standard into the music classroom. Specifically, the researcher aims to specifically target those music classrooms that include large ensembles such as band, orchestra, and choir as well as general music. A second purpose of this study was to determine the reasons for which a music educator would or would not include composing into his or her own classrooms.

Subjects

Subjects included music educators (N = 173) from various public school districts in Kansas representing various sub-disciplines of music education including: band, orchestra, choir, and general music. Subjects were all certified music teachers, who were teaching full time in a music teaching capacity for various public school districts in Kansas. Subjects for this study were those individuals who responded to an invitation to certified music educators in Kansas presented to them by the researcher.

The researcher visited all Kansas public school districts' websites online and gathered the public e-mail addresses for individuals who were listed on the websites as teaching in an area of music. Teaching areas of music included: band, orchestra, choir, vocal music, music, general music, guitar, music exploration, elementary music, instrumental performing arts, fine arts, and instrumental music. These classifications were the headings or position titles for individuals as they were listed on the school websites. Five hundred thirty-three (533) e-mail addresses were gathered for public school music teachers in Kansas, and invitations were sent by the researcher to the addressees to complete the survey. This number of music teachers represents all of the e-

mail address for public school music teachers that were available online to the researcher in Kansas. One hundred seventy-three (173) subjects responded within the five-day opening for the survey. $N = 173$ represents a 32.4% response rate for the survey; thus, the response rate was judged marginally generalizable to the sample population.

Instrument Construction

In order to construct the survey, the researcher consulted Mildred Patten's book *Questionnaire Research* (2001). This text offered several ideas for accurate wording of questions as well as how to accurately reflect the results of the information that was gathered. After initial questions were developed, the researcher ran a pilot study to test the questions. Following the conclusion of the pilot study, the researcher amended one of the questions initially included in the survey with reference to Patten's book.

The researcher obtained self-reported data regarding the subject's area of musical teaching and age groups with whom each music educator teaches. The researcher obtained a self-reported frequency for how frequent or infrequent composition is included in the music classroom. Additionally, the researcher allowed subjects to choose reasons for which they may not include composition. Finally, included in the study, was an open-ended comment section that provided subjects with the opportunity to provide additional information that they thought was relevant to the study. The researcher then coded the open-ended responses to analyze them.

Materials

Minimal materials were required. The only necessary components to this study were the questionnaires and writing utensils for the pilot study and computers for the online survey.

Design

The values in each category for indicated responses in multiple choice questions were represented and compared using percentages. Open-ended responses in the comment section were coded and compared to one another based on similarities and were completely coded to exhaust the data set.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with music teachers in one Kansas school district. The pilot study included teachers in the areas of band, orchestra, choir, general music, and music theory. Those pilot study participants taught students aged Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. The pilot study included participants $N = 44$ who answered similar questions to those asked in the final survey for the current study in a mostly multiple-choice format with one Likert-style question. The pilot study survey was virtually identical to the current study survey though the pilot study was given in pencil-and-paper format at a professional development session in one Kansas public school district. Teachers involved in the pilot study were not coerced into participating and were given opportunities to abstain from participation.

The pilot study also included an open comment/free response section at the bottom. Responses in this section were coded based on similarities and analyzed the responses. Through data analysis, three categories emerged in addition to an omit option. Respondents $N = 29$ (65.9%) omitted responding to the open-ended question. The three other categories that emerged from the data analysis were lack of time, lack of support and resources, and praise for the project. Lack of time for including composition accounted for seven or 15.9% of responses in the open-ended comment section. Both the lack of support and resources and the praise for the project categories had four or 9.1% of responses.

In the pilot study, results of the “I do not teach composition in my classroom because...” question, indicated that the top three reasons for not including composition in the music classroom were: “I need more ideas to teach composition effectively”, “I have other things to teach”, and “I don’t have ideas for structuring the composition activities”. These findings initially support the research already completed by Berkley (2001), Hickey (1997), Kennedy (2002), and Strand (2006).

The pilot study aided the researcher in amending the questions on the current study as well as providing preliminary data. The data from the pilot study were not included in the data of the current study. After the pilot study, the Likert-style question was removed in favor of a question that was delivered in a multiple-choice format and an open-ended “Other” option was added to each question to include items that the researcher might have inadvertently omitted in the current study.

Procedure

Subjects included public school certified music teachers in the state of Kansas and were asked to participate in a survey regarding their use of music composition in their music classroom(s). The link to the online survey hosted by Survey Monkey was sent to subjects via their public school e-mail address, which was obtained by the researcher visiting public school websites of all public school districts in Kansas and finding the e-mail addresses for music teachers or teachers identified in music subject areas on the websites. Participants had five days to complete the survey. Responses not collected within the five-day window were not analyzed. Basic demographic data were collected as well as a self-reported frequency of use of composition based on a multiple choice format. Subjects were then asked to identify various reasons why they may not implement composition in their music classrooms from a list of

possible answers as well as an “other” option. Additionally, subjects were encouraged to offer any additional comments or opinions that might be relevant to the scope of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

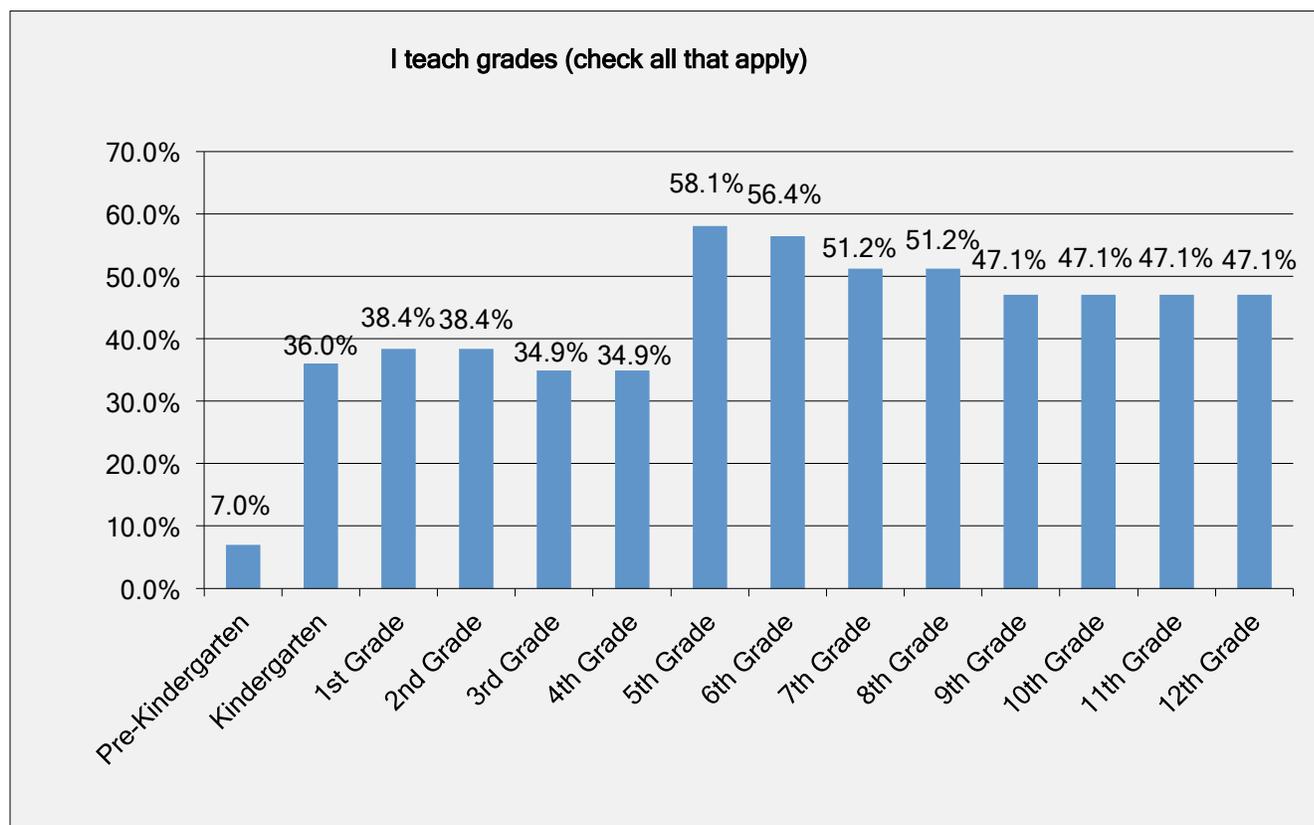
After administrating the survey and allowing invited respondents five days for completion of the survey, 173 responses of the original 533 were collected. All respondents answered the question for informed consent. However, on each subsequent question, at least one person skipped one question. While this study initially focused on large ensembles, the researcher expanded the scope to include those music educators in the state of Kansas in general music, music theory, and other areas as well since many of the invited music teachers indicated that they taught in more than one sub-discipline of music.

The first question of the survey was the informed consent page. All subjects (N = 173) identified that they would participate in the study by acceptance of the informed consent. See Figure A in the Appendix for the Informed Consent Form.

For the second question regarding the grades that each teacher taught, one person chose to skip the question. The second question allowed subjects to choose more than one grade level. For this reason, the sum of percentages is greater than 100%. Respondents numbering 12 or 7% teach at the Pre-Kindergarten level; 62 or 36% teach at the 1st grade level; 66 or 38.4% teach at the 1st and 2nd grade levels; 60 or 34.9% teach at the 3rd and 4th grade levels; 100 or 58.1% teach at the 5th grade level; 97 or 56.4% teach at the 6th grade level; 88 or 51.2 % teach at the 7th and 8th grade levels; and 81 or 47.1% teach at the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade levels. Additionally 5 people responded to the “other” choice. See Figure 1 (below) and Table 1 (Appendix) for percentages in each grade level.

Figure 1.

Grade levels in which surveyed music educators teach



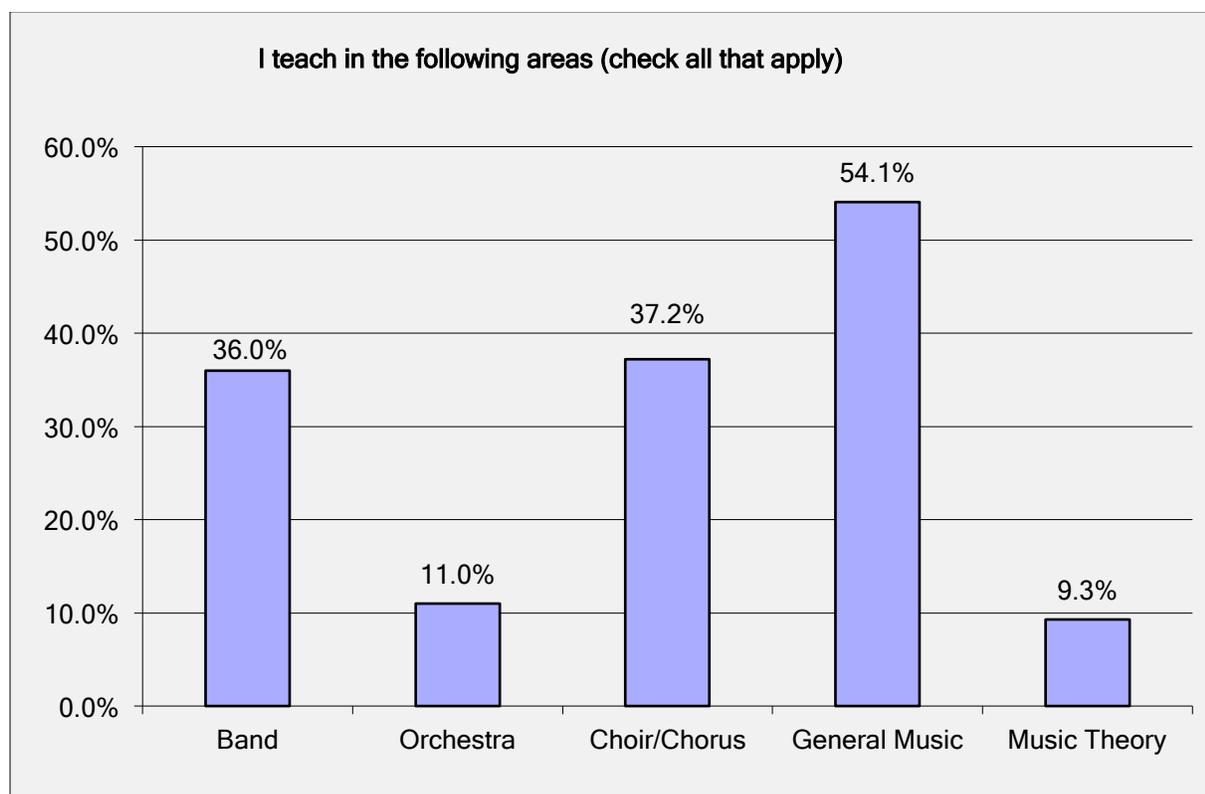
The five respondents specified other grades or areas beyond those that were originally presented.

These other areas and grades include: after-school choir for 4th through 6th graders, a K-5th Autism classroom, private lessons, assistant at a high school, and a college music educator.

These other responses can be found in Table 2 (Appendix).

The third question asked about the areas in which music educators teach. The given choices were band, orchestra, chorus/choir, general music, and music theory as well as a choice and subsequent blank for other teaching areas. Figure 2 shows the areas in which the respondents teach.

Figure 2.

Teaching areas for surveyed music educators

Respondents numbering 62 people or 36% teach in the band area; 19 people or 11% in the orchestra area; 64 people or 37.2% in the choir/chorus area; 93 people or 54.1 % in the general music area; 16 people or 9.3% in the music theory area; and 15 people responded that they taught in an area not given as a choice. See Table 3 (Appendix).

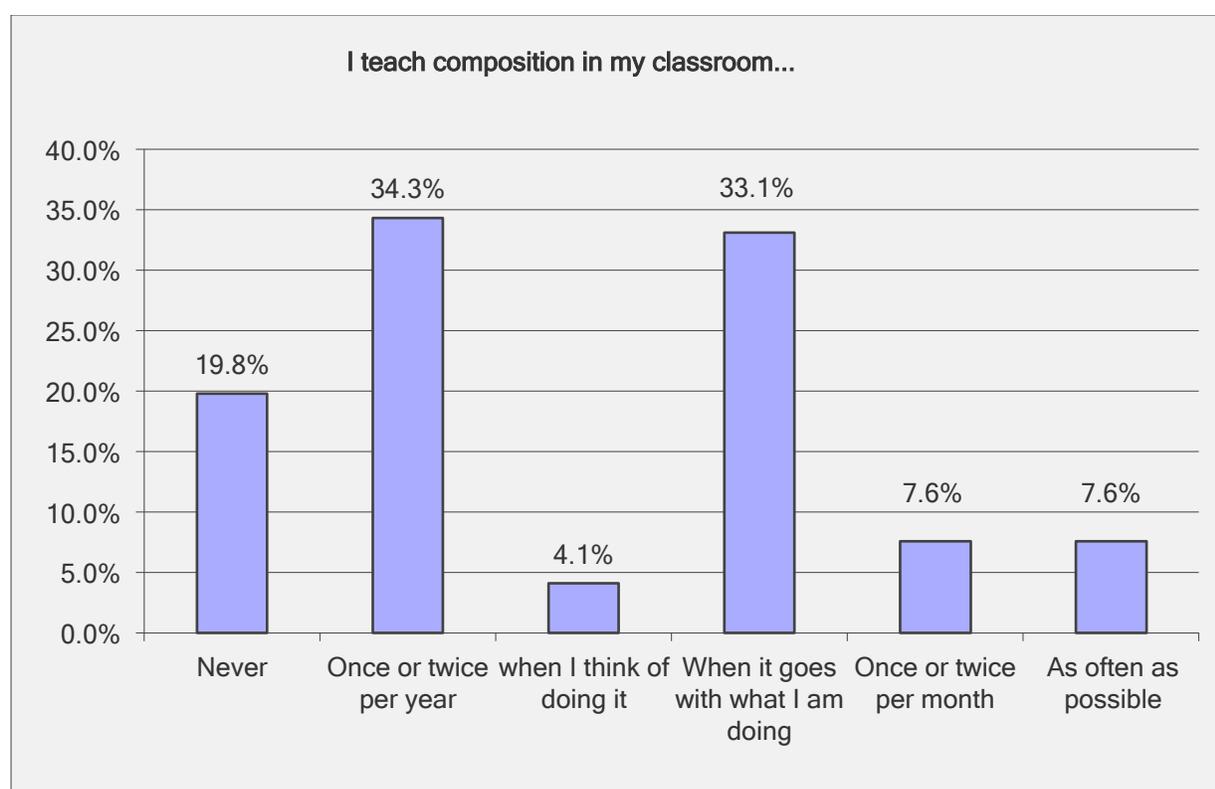
The “Other” blank for question 3 included varied and unanticipated responses for the area in which respondents teach. These other areas include: elementary art, world music, guitar, music history, music appreciation, music technology, jazz, piano, jazz band, and world drum ensemble. See Table 4 (Appendix).

The fourth question asked participants to identify how often they include composition in their classrooms. While several choices were offered, there were ten additional responses in the

“Other” category for question four. Respondents numbering 34 or 19.8% answered that they “never include composition”; 59 people or 34.3% answered that they include composition “once or twice per year”; 7 people or 4.1% answered that they include composition “when [they] think of doing it”; 57 people or 33.1% answered that they include composition “when it goes with what [they] are already doing in the class”; 13 people or 7.6% answered that they include composition “once or twice per month”; 13 people or 7.6% answered that they include composition “as often as possible”. See Figure 3 and Table 5 (Appendix).

Figure 3.

Frequency or infrequency of teaching composition in the music classroom

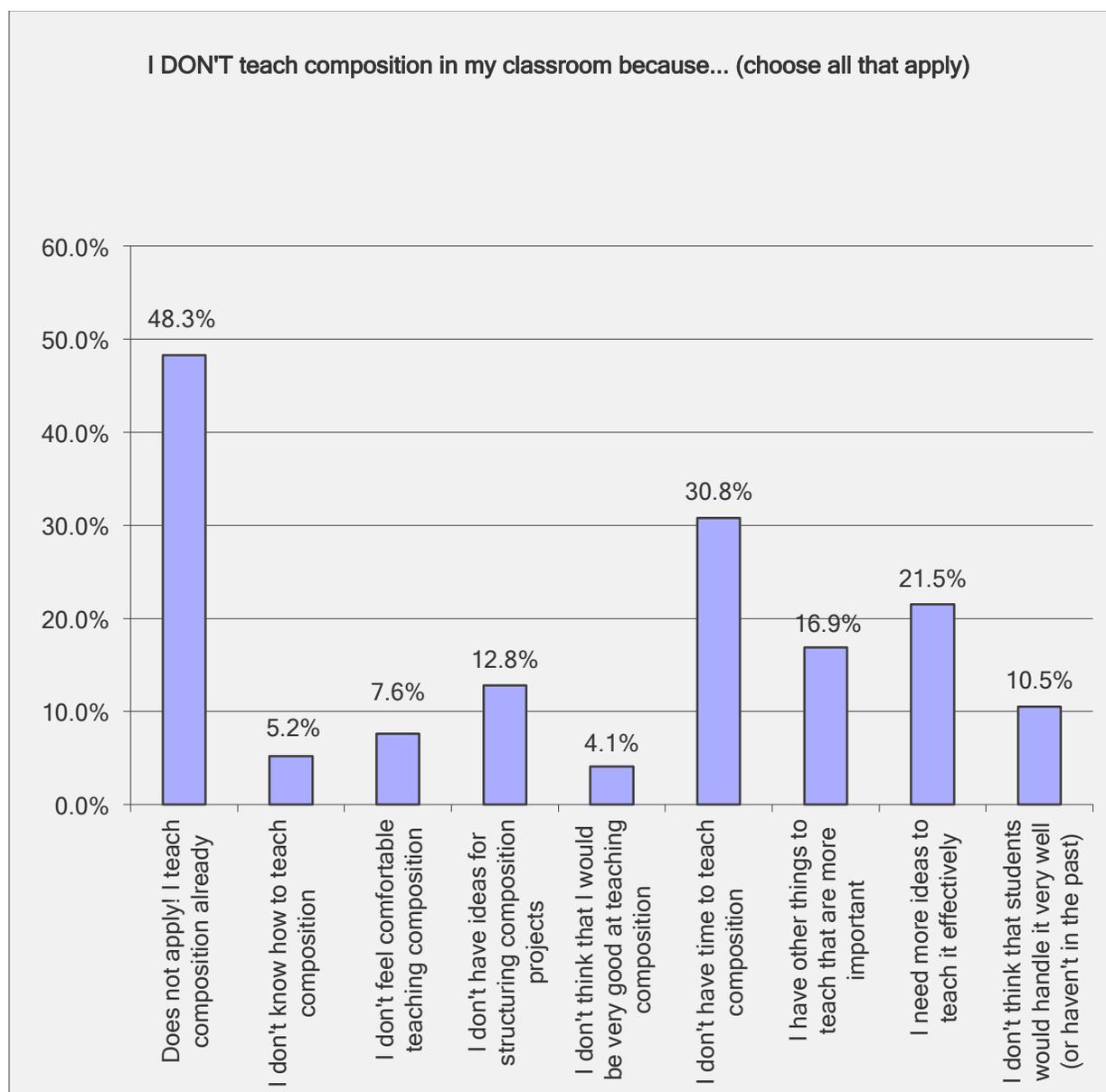


Other responses to question four included statements such as “if a student asks about composing,” “each nine weeks,” “as an assessment,” “to help with vocabulary,” and “as a

composition unit.” Three respondents had similar comments regarding once per quarter or once every nine weeks. See Table 6 (Appendix).

The fifth question asks why a teacher may not teach composition the classroom. Surprisingly, 83 respondents or 48.3% of teachers answered that they already teach composition. These teachers may include composition frequently or infrequently, but composition is included. However, the next two highest responses were “I don’t have time to teach composition” (53 respondents or 30.8%) and “I need more ideas to teach in effectively” (37 respondents or 21.5%). Respondents numbering 29 or 16.9% answered that they “have other things to teach that are more important”; 22 respondents or 12.8% answered that they “don’t have ideas for structuring composition projects”; 18 respondents or 10.5% answered that they “don’t think that students would handle it very well (or haven’t in the past)”; 13 respondents or 7.6% answered that they “don’t feel comfortable teaching composition”; 9 respondents or 5.2% answered that they “don’t know how to teach composition”; 7 respondents answered that they “don’t think that they would be very good at teaching composition”; and 18 respondents had other answers to this question. See Figure 4 and Table 7 (Appendix) for a percentage comparison of why teacher may not include composition in their music classroom.

Figure 4.

Reasons for not including composition or composition activities in the music classroom

The “Other” responses to question five about why teachers did not include composition in their classrooms fell into five categories. Limitations to composition categories include: teaching composition is rough or hard, lack of time, differing levels or learning gaps, do not enjoy music composition, lack of resources. The category of “lack of time” dominated the

“other” responses with 10 of the 18 responses being coded to this one category. Two responses fell into the rough or hard category, 4 responses in the differing levels or learning gaps category, 1 response in the do not enjoy music composition category, and 2 responses in the lack of resources category.

For the final category, there was simply an open-ended question for respondents to make any other comments that they felt should be included in this research or simply write “none” if the respondents chose not to share any of their comments. Of the 172 respondents to the sixth question, 84 responded with “none” or “no”, but 88 respondents left comments or questions for the researcher. Categories that emerged during the coding process and related to the original intent of this study included Category A – constraints to composing in the classroom or teaching composition in the music classroom, Category B – composing ideas used by teachers in the music classroom, and Category C – praise for the project or general interest in teaching composition. Some comments bridge two or even all three of these categories; therefore, those comments that are two or more categories are coded as such.

Of the 88 comments collected in question six, 40 fell into Category A (constraints to composing in the classroom or teaching composition in the music classroom), 41 fell into Category B (composing ideas used by teachers in the music classroom), and 12 fell into Category C (praise for the project and general interest in teaching composition). Again, note that some comments had parts that fell into two or more categories.

Category A, constraints to composing in the classroom or teaching or teaching composition in the music classroom include statements such as “Time and large classes are the biggest reasons [that I do not teach composition]”, “The hardest part of composition is just getting started”, “I do not have many ideas to teach [composition] in lower grades”, “I need more

materials and ideas to teach [composition] more effectively,” and others. Within category A, regarding constraints to teaching composition, there emerged three sub-categories which include: (1) ensemble and performance-related constraints, (2) time-related constraints, and (3) lack of resources and/or materials constraints. Again, there was some overlap with some comments being coded into two of these sub-categories.

For ensemble and performance-related constraints, sub-category (1), N = 12. Comments in this sub-category include: “I have large classes and the practicality of teaching composition and getting out needed materials is daunting”, “Composition is very difficult to include with concert and competition deadlines”, “We focus more on performance rather than composition”, “Large class sizes is [one of the biggest] reasons that I do not teach [composition]”, and others.

For time constraints, sub-category (2), N = 20. This was the largest sub-category in the constraints section. Comments in this sub-category include: “As a choir director, I do not typically have time to teach composition”, “With so many things to teach, [composition] is just the one that gets left behind”, “Time is a factor with my non-music appreciation classes...we just cover the basics”, “With 30 minutes per class, I have found it difficult to incorporate composition because of time”, “With reduced time in the band classroom, I am able to teach composition less and less”, “I have more time at the elementary level than at the junior high or high school level”, and others.

For lack of resources and/or materials constraints, sub-category (3), N = 16. Comments in this sub-category include: “I would like to have tools on incorporating composition and performance on a middle school level”, “I would love to have computers which would make composition more accessible”, “I just need a lot more material and ideas to teach [composition] more regularly and more effectively”, and others.

Category B, composing ideas used by teachers in the music classroom, 41 comments listed ideas for teaching composition or described composition activities already in practice in music classrooms. The responses to Category B indicated responses that were directly relate to Research Question 3 of the present study. Some of these comments were brief while others were detailed and lengthy. A list of included composition activities already in place follows:

- Composing using B-A-G on recorders.
- Aleatoric bean bag composition with first graders.
- Garage Band looping with recorded parts.
- Pentatonic ostinati on Orff instruments.
- Small elements (ex. only rhythm) of composition taught throughout the year.
- Using Sibelius, Finale Note Pad, or Noteflight.
- Arranging hymns.
- Composition unit where students compete a composition “project.”
- Using composition to link new information with previously learned information.
- Class composes a new middle part of a band piece.

The last category for the open-ended question was Category C, praise for the project or general interest in teaching composition, and included 12 responses. Comments in this category were generally positive and encouraging in the use of teaching composition. These positive comments included: “Students seem to thrive on [composition], and they think it is fun”, “Students seem to enjoy the creative aspect of the [composition] exercise”, “I would love to do more!”, “I would like to include more composition into my classroom in future years”, “I really

enjoyed watching the students get into [composing] when I have taught composition in the past”, and “Kids are endlessly creative!” among others.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the frequency or infrequency of incorporating the composing standard into music classrooms, specifically in those classrooms that include large ensembles such as band, orchestra, and choir, as well as general music and to determine the reasons for which a music educator would or would not include composing into his or her own classroom. The data suggest that the teachers surveyed in Kansas have many of the same attitudes, ideas, and beliefs about composition as those surveyed in Indiana by Katherine Strand. Additionally, the music teachers in Kansas have many of the same needs for additional resources and materials that other music teachers have such as those identified by Katherine Strand and Alexander Koops.

While 48.2% of respondents indicated that they already teach music composition in their classroom(s), which seemed like a high incidence, the actual inclusion of composition or composition activities in the music classrooms could only truly be included once or twice per year, 34.3%, as a small unit or project or once per quarter as a final project. Since frequency or infrequency was the aim, the quality of composition instruction was not examined here. Thus, some teachers might include a fairly lengthy composition unit whereas other teachers may only include a short exercise, but the frequency would still be only one instance. Some of these clarifications were reached in the qualitative portions, that is, the “other” responses in the survey. Further research in the quality and effectiveness of composition activities and strategies to teach composition to students to garner the most effective of these strategies could be a focus of future study.

Additionally, 33.1% of surveyed music teachers include composition when it goes with what they are already doing in class, but there is only minimal indication of how many times that might be in the time of a school year. Perhaps to those music teachers, composition only “goes with what they are doing” one time per year. Then according to those same music teachers, they are, in fact including composition, albeit minimally.

So while teachers indicated that they teach composition, it may be that composition or composition-related activities are actually included for very little class time at all. This practice of only including composition once or twice per year is likely doing a dis-service to the National Music Standards and the reasons that those National Standards are in place. Presently, this study did not address this particular issue.

Some of the surveyed teachers in this present study indicated that they only teach composition when there is interest shown by the students or if there is a student who asks about composing. How long would a teacher choose to not include composition because the students never knew that they had to ask the teacher to teach them how to compose? It seems that the chance of including composition into the music curriculum at that point is just that, only a chance. With this practice, students are being deprived of part of their music education without ever knowing that they had to ask for composition to be included in the curriculum. Omitting the chance to compose and the chance to create from the music curriculum is eliminating a part of creativity as a whole from the curriculum. The teachers who omit composition from their music education curriculum are also omitting the philosophies of Elliott, Reimer, and the foundational principles of music curriculum established at the Tanglewood Symposium for students to be an active participant in the making of music.

Additionally found in this study, 19.8% of music educators did not include composition in their classrooms at all. When asked about the reasons that teachers do not include composition in their music classrooms, the teachers who responded noted reasons such as: there is not enough time, they did not have enough resources or ideas, they had other things to do that were more important to teach than composition, or that there would be issues with managing students and/or materials. In the multiple choice question as well as in the open-ended question at the end of the survey, time and the lack thereof was the most prevalent reason for why teachers did not include composition in their classrooms. This finding is similar to the findings by Higgins, Koops, and Strand. Katherine Strand (2005) found that there was much content to be covered to teach composition at the elementary level and very little time in which to teach the lessons. This sentiment is echoed in the present study with respondents noting lack of time or competition for time with other music lessons in the classroom. To the researcher, it seems that there is far less time to be allocated to teaching composition at the middle school level than the elementary school level and even less time available at the high school than at the middle school level.

A solution, then, to this lack of time to teach composition might be to find ways to include composition projects and activities that do not take a lot of time or too much time to complete. Perhaps if composition projects and activities were structured in a way that would take very little time but still be effective and authentic, then more music teachers might choose to incorporate music composition into their curricula. Even better would be to include composition activities that fulfilled the composition expectation, did not take a lot of time to complete, and deepened the musical learning and understanding for the students involved. Maud Hickey proposed that including these composition activities with individuals, small groups and even in large ensembles, though some time may be taken from rehearsals, the students' understanding

and overall sensitivity to the music would be expanded. The final product goal then would be not necessarily a polished and perfect performance on stage but rather a more aware and sensitive student musician. The student can take the lessons learned in musical composition activities and apply them to future rehearsals and musical experiences, which will lead to an ever-broadening of the musical constructs around them. This viewpoint also keeps the student at the center of music education rather than the performance of musical literature.

In addition to time, the other prevalent constraint to teaching composition was the lack of resources, materials, and ideas for teaching composition. The present study found that 5.2% of respondents did not know how to teach composition and 21.5% of respondents needed more ideas to teach composition more effectively. This is also related to the findings of Berkely who explained that “the vast majority of teachers have not studied composing in either undergraduate or teacher training courses” (2001, p. 128). Likewise, Hickey (1997), Kennedy, and Strand (2006) also found that music educators cited a lack of resources for teaching composition effectively. When teachers are not prepared to teach composition to their students, then the prospect of creating a curriculum to teach composition could seem daunting to some teachers. The question then becomes where is the appropriate music teacher training in the area of composition? Music teacher preparation courses should address how to teach composition to students so that they are better equipped when standing in front of their own classes.

Alexander Koops developed a short composition unit complete with step-by-step lessons for band directors to follow in California. While Koops presented a short composition curriculum that was ten lessons of approximately fifteen minutes in length to five band directors in California, the results and implementation of the lessons were, in some cases, not desirable and directors slightly changed the lessons. Some of the band directors were willing to include the

composition lessons into the curriculum, some of the band directors combined the lessons to shorten the implementation period, and one of the band directors only implemented two of the ten lessons. The composition lessons could be tailored by the band directors to their particular ensemble to achieve the result that they wanted. Overall, Koops found that the band directors felt like at least 40% or more of all students involved grew their understanding of composition practices during the lessons, and one director felt like 80% to 100% of his students grew their understanding of composition.

There is a void of resources to teach music composition to large ensembles in a way that is customizable and that does not take up too much time. Koops minimally addressed a few compositional teaching techniques for the area of band. However, there is a need for more advanced development of curriculum in the areas of teaching composition to ensembles. In the present study, the open-ended questions garnered questions from the respondents asking how to implement composition activities to a large (75+ member) high school choir; more development of composition curriculum is needed in this area.

In questions five and six, respondents cited lack of technology, lack of materials, lack of structural space, lack of ideas, and lack of training as reasons in the lack of resources and materials categories for not teaching composition in their music classrooms. This finding is also comparable to Higgins, Koops, and Strand in that music teachers in those studies also cited lack of resources, lack of materials, lack of accessible curriculum, and in some cases, lack of confidence in teaching composition. In the present study, the researcher found that music teachers had many practical reasons for not including composition. While the Tanglewood Symposium as well as Hickey, Kennedy, and Ruthmann and others advocate for the use of technology to teach and explore composition, many respondents mention a lack of technology as

a reasons that they do not teach composition. Therefore, perhaps a composition curriculum would also include lessons that could be taught with or without the aid of certain technologies in the music classroom.

Recommendations

A compilation of effective, authentic composition lessons and activities seems as though it would be extremely useful to many music teachers, especially if those lessons could be completed in a very short amount of a time. Such a reference book should include composition lessons and activities for every grade level especially since several music educators indicated that they did not have ideas for including compositions with certain groups of students such as younger students, middle level students, or high school students. This was done at one level and in one area by Koops, but it could be expanded to include more music areas as well as grade levels. While some of the music teachers represented in the present study had ideas for including composition into their music classrooms, many other teachers did not have very many ideas or ideas to teach composition at all levels or in all areas of music. At least sixteen people in the present study mentioned that lack of resources and materials was a constraint to teaching composition in the music classroom.

Perhaps, there are needs for more professional development in including composition to be included in teacher preparation or continuing education courses. Maud Hickey found that more professional development was needed to teach teachers how to teach composition in her study, but those needs are still present in Kansas according to the present study. Professional development would need to be accessible to the most music teachers as possible to make the greatest impact for students. Berkley also found that many music teachers are not properly trained to teach composition while they complete undergraduate degree requirements, so perhaps

an update in the curriculum at the post-secondary level is needed as well to more appropriately prepare music teachers to include music composition in their own classrooms.

Several respondents to this survey were supportive and even enthusiastic about learning more about how to include composition in their own classrooms. If the music teachers are interested, able, and willing to teach composition, then students will be served with a music education that encourages creativity in music-making as well as music literacy. The resources for music teachers must be in place for the teaching of authentic music composition to occur.

Limitations

The most prevalent limitation to the present study was lack of return on the survey. If more certified music teachers had participated in the survey, then a more representative sample could have been attained. Additionally, in the e-mail collection process, the researcher noticed that some school districts did not list the e-mail addresses for teachers and staff; therefore, some music teachers had to be omitted from this study due to lack of information available; however, the pilot to this study would indicate no large differences had those responses been included.

Summary

Conclusively, the present study in Kansas reiterates the findings by Katherine Strand in Indiana and the research done by Alexander Koops in California. All three of these studies corroborate that generally music teachers do want to teach music composition or already are teaching music composition, but those same teachers need more time, resources, ideas, and technology to feel like they can teach composition more effectively to their students. The present study also reaffirms the need for a curriculum that addresses teaching music composition. Music teachers want to teach students to think creatively and to create music for themselves; the hard part is defining how to teach creativity in composition and even how to teach composition at all.

Music teachers want to see their students grow in their understanding of music and of the world and encourage creativity so that those same students will be productive members of society who can appreciate, enjoy, and thrive in culturally rich aesthetic environments. The next step is to develop a curriculum to teach composition that can be implemented by any music teacher, in any musical ensemble or any music classroom setting that does not take a lot of time to teach or implement and that can be flexible enough to be molded by the personal teaching styles of each instructor.

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APPENDICIES

Figures

Figure A.

Jennifer J. Antonetti (First Investigator)

Department of Music Education and Music
Therapy – The University of Kansas

Dr. Christopher M. Johnson – Faculty Advisor

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee University of
Kansas, Lawrence Campus (HSCL). Approval expires one
year from 4/5/2013 HSCL # 20797

Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to examine the frequency or infrequency of incorporating the composing standard into music classrooms, specifically in those classrooms that include large ensembles such as band, orchestra, and choir, and to determine the reasons for which a music educator would or would not include composing into his or her own classroom. Subjects will be licensed music teachers in the state of Kansas currently teaching in a music classroom. Participants will answer an online questionnaire that consists of five questions, two of which relate to the subject area and grade level that each participant teaches.

There are no foreseeable discomforts or risks to the participants, and participants will likely spend less than ten minutes answering questions in the questionnaire. Data collected from participants of this questionnaire will be helping to further the knowledge of frequency of use of composition in music classrooms and identify reasons why teachers would not include the use of composition in the classroom.

All questionnaires will be anonymous as names and identifying information will not be collected by the researcher. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response. Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary and subjects may choose to discontinue participation at any time. Discontinuance will not cause a penalty or loss of benefits to the subject. Consent signatures will not be collected as the nature of the questions included in the questionnaire are non-invasive and consent is granted by participation.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email irb@ku.edu.

Any inquiries regarding the project may be directed to:

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Tables

Table 1.

Grade levels in which surveyed music educators teach

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Pre-Kindergarten	7.0%	12
Kindergarten	36.0%	62
1st Grade	38.4%	66
2nd Grade	38.4%	66
3rd Grade	34.9%	60
4th Grade	34.9%	60
5th Grade	58.1%	100
6th Grade	56.4%	97
7th Grade	51.2%	88
8th Grade	51.2%	88
9th Grade	47.1%	81
10th Grade	47.1%	81
11th Grade	47.1%	81
12th Grade	47.1%	81
Other (please specify)		5
	<i>answered question</i>	172
	<i>skipped question</i>	1

Table 2.

Other indicated teaching levels & specialties

Number	Other responses for teaching areas and/or grades
1	After school choir of 4th, 5th and 6th graders-volunteer.
2	K-5 Autism Classroom
3	Private Lessons
4	Assist at the high school-band
5	College

Table 3.

Indicated teaching areas

I teach in the following areas (check all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Band	36.0%	62
Orchestra	11.0%	19
Choir/Chorus	37.2%	64
General Music	54.1%	93
Music Theory	9.3%	16
Other (please specify)		15
<i>answered question</i>		172
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Table 4.

Other indicated teaching areas

Number	Other music teaching areas
1	Elementary Art
2	World Music
3	Music History
4	Music Appreciation
5	Music Technology
6	Music History, Musical Theater
7	Guitar
8	Music Technology
9	World Drum Ensemble
10	Guitar/Piano
11	Jazz band
12	Guitar
13	Jazz
14	Music Technology
15	Piano

Table 5.

Frequency or infrequency of including composition in the music classroom

I teach composition in my classroom...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	19.8%	34
Once or twice per year	34.3%	59
When I think of doing it	4.1%	7
When it goes with what I am doing	33.1%	57
Once or twice per month	7.6%	13
As often as possible	7.6%	13
Other (please specify)		10
<i>answered question</i>		172
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Table 6.

Other reasons or frequencies to include composition in music classes

Number	Other reasons for teaching composition
1	If a student asks about composing
2	We do improvise in Jazz if that counts
3	3-4 times a year
4	Usually once or twice per month, but more often if I can manage
5	In my high school music theory class for about 4 weeks per semester
6	I find that composition (especially in the 5th and 6th grade general classroom) opens students' minds to the musical vocabulary (both terminology and the tonal aspects). Students listen better, they stay focused on other musical tasks (like rehearsing or listening to compositions) and they anticipate musically. It helps teach sight singing/reading and it allows me to teach cooperation because they work with a wide variety of students.
7	each 9 weeks
8	as an assessment to see if they can apply what they have learned
9	I teach composition to students in an advanced music class in a composition unit throughout the year.
10	One every 9 weeks

Table 7.

Reasons for not including composition in the music classroom

I DON'T teach composition in my classroom because... (choose all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Does not apply! I teach composition already	48.3%	83
I don't know how to teach composition	5.2%	9
I don't feel comfortable teaching composition	7.6%	13
I don't have ideas for structuring composition projects	12.8%	22
I don't think that I would be very good at teaching composition	4.1%	7
I don't have time to teach composition	30.8%	53
I have other things to teach that are more important	16.9%	29
I need more ideas to teach it effectively	21.5%	37
I don't think that students would handle it very well (or haven't in the past)	10.5%	18
Other (please specify)		18
	<i>answered question</i>	172
	<i>skipped question</i>	1

Table 8.

Other indicated reasons for not including composition

Number	Other (please specify)
1	I do with my 6th grades for a project in groups by the end of the year. It's messy though.
2	Depends on the grade level. I do a large project in the 5th grade.
3	Learning gap is to extreme.
4	It is hard to squeeze everything in when I only see the students twice per week and every other Friday.
5	Always preparing for concerts
6	I don't like composing, and it's hard to make my students spend time doing something that I really don't enjoy when there are other things we could be doing that are just as important.
7	Time: elementary music classes are 20 minutes in my district. That's perfect for most things, but makes doing anything with paper and pencil almost impossible.
8	There is so much to the curriculum that I get to every concept about that often. Also have to work around performances. Also have a lack of resources to make composition more effective and engaging.
9	Student's ability to think creatively has declined dramatically since the implementation of no child left behind. Before the emphasis on standardized testing, I had my students doing at least one composition a month. Now they can barely handle one or two a year because they are not taught to think for themselves, only to memorize for the test.
10	I wish there were more time for the students to experience it!
11	Need spaces to allow "noisy" composition or access to iPads/keyboards/headsets, etc.
12	With the way classes and performances are structured, it leaves very little time to teach composition. Also, teaching composition removes time from the fundamentals of playing their instrument.
13	I design a project where my students can, to a limited degree, compose through improvisation or designed parameters. I personally compose a major work for band each year and discuss the compositional techniques with my students from December through May. I also conduct one on one lessons with students as I review and provide feedback for their personal compositions
14	It takes too long to grade from so many students.
15	There is no room in my schedule for composition, theory, or even music appreciation. This is an issue we are currently talking to our administration about.
16	I teach it during our recorder unit.
17	I teach composition in music theory, but not in choir. I think choir is too large a setting with too varied student readiness and too little time.
18	There is no time to go into real depth. We discuss compositional techniques as it applies to literature we are rehearsing. I have had students compose variations on the melody...short and simple.

