UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN INVESTIGATION OF COLLEGIATE CHORAL DIRECTORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

JOSHUA GLEN CHISM
Norman, Oklahoma
2022

AN INVESTIGATION OF COLLEGIATE CHORAL DIRECTORS'

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Casey Gerber, Chair

Dr. Melissa Baughman, Co-Chair

Dr. Eric Pennello

Dr. Amanda Minks

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my dissertation advisor, Dr. Melissa Baughman. This document would not have been possible without her guidance, patience, and expertise. Thank you, Dr. Baughman, for your mentorship, excellence, and humanity. Thank you for investing in my family, my success, and my future.

I want to thank the committee members, Dr. Casey Gerber, Dr. Eric Pennello, and Dr. Amanda Minks. I appreciate their insight and feedback throughout this process. They have been incredibly supportive not only in the development of this document but also in the development of my occupational identity as I transition from graduate student to music teacher educator. I would also like to thank Dr. Chris Baumgartner and Dr. Charlene Dell. While their names do not appear on this document, their influence during my doctoral experience has been invaluable.

To my officemates over the past three years, thank you for your encouragement, motivation, and friendship. I would especially like to thank Geoff Harman and Ruben Alcala, who shared their knowledge, experience, advice, and humor throughout our studies—your friendships were truly irreplaceable during this journey.

Finally, to my family. I am indebted to each of you. To my parents and in-laws, thank you for always encouraging my studies and career path. Thank you to my son Jacob for making me laugh, bringing unending joy, and helping me to keep what is most important in focus—family. Most importantly, to my wife Natalie, you have sacrificed much to get me to this point. Without your unending love and support, none of this would be possible. Our family is the reason I can sing. I love you—endlessly.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment practices and beliefs of collegiate choral directors. Specifically, I examined (a) the use and frequency of musical and non-musical assessment criteria, (b) their beliefs and attitudes toward assessment, and (c) their perception of their role in shaping the occupational identity of preservice music teachers. Collegiate choral directors from NASM-accredited institutions in the seven states of the SWACDA region were invited to participate in a researcher-designed survey. Data were collected from directors in Spring 2022 ($N = 50$).

Results from this study indicated that non-musical criteria (specifically rehearsal attendance, rehearsal participation, rehearsal attitude/preparation, and performance attendance) were most commonly used by directors. Informal group verbal feedback and small group/sectional singing tests on choral repertoire were musical assessment methods used most frequently. Respondents reported high levels of assessment self-efficacy and generally valued assessment in the instructional process. On some level, respondents also recognized their role in the occupational identity development, and possible future assessment practices, of the preservice music teachers in their ensembles. Yet, they did not model assessment practices specifically with this in mind. Overall results from this study indicated a disconnect between self-reported assessment beliefs and actual assessment best practices. Implications for music teacher education programs, music teacher educators, and collegiate choral directors are discussed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Perceptions of assessment in music education have been personal, debated, and polarized. This dichotomy in assessment beliefs has been identified as either "ardent passion or blithe disregard" (Murphy, 2007, p. 361). Music educators' opinions of assessment are bifurcated—music teachers assess continually or assert that their goals cannot be assessed (Colwell, 2008). Assessing music performance in the collegiate setting has been challenging with respect to balancing the subjective, personal nature of artistic performance with the need to maintain some degree of consistency and objectivity to grade students fairly (Barry, 2009).

Assessment information is invaluable to stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents, schools, and communities) for determining the effectiveness of the music instruction in their schools (Asmus, 1999). However, many music teachers remain unlikely to employ appropriate assessment practices in their classrooms despite an awareness of them (Sears, 2002). Since the early 1980s, educational policy reform has spurred substantial change in classroom practices. These efforts have resulted in widespread skepticism of assessment by teachers (Barnes et al., 2017; Pishghadam et al., 2014) and a wide variety of assessment practices (Russell & Austin, 2010) and philosophies (Tracy, 2002). Music teachers "more than ever" need to utilize appropriate processes and tools for carrying out and documenting music performance evaluation (Barry, 2009, p. 249).

There has been a disconnect between policy efforts to improve how music teachers assess and grade student achievement and their actual employed methodologies.

Music teachers' assessment implementation has been shaped by conflicting, and often unreconciled, narratives (Armes, 2020). The complex interaction between internal factors (e.g., assessment training, beliefs, philosophy) and external factors (e.g., administrator, district, and legislative expectations) balanced against the practical realities of the classroom setting has created professional tension, and has often led music educators to sacrifice, compromise, or abandon best practices in the classroom (Armes, 2020).

Teachers' previous experience, familiarity, and training in classroom assessment has correlated highly with current beliefs and practices (Quilter & Gallini, 2000). However, many music teachers simply have not had the opportunity during their teacher education programs to adequately learn about specific music assessment strategies, forcing many educators to learn in the field (LaCognata, 2013; McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010). In higher education and music teacher education, there seems to be an "uneven and haphazard" level of assessment familiarity and implementation among music teacher educators themselves (Parkes & Rawlings, 2019). Scholars have suggested that assessment practices are overly subjective, incorporating a wide breadth of assessment criteria—both musical and non-musical, many of which are determined "haphazardly, ritualistically, and/or with disregard for available objective information" (Boyle & Radocy, 1987, p. 2).

Personal philosophy and subsequent methodological practices are influenced by music teacher identity in general. A highly complex topic, music teacher identity included connections between music making and personal identity, professional identity development, well-being, and teaching (Isbell, 2008; Pellegrino, 2015; Russell, 2012).

Identity is constantly changing and has been viewed as a construct influenced by both internal and external forces that also incorporated past and potential future experiences into present experiences (Wenger, 1998). Teacher identity and personal philosophy have been shown to impact assessment beliefs (Isbell, 2008; Quilter & Gallini, 2000; Tracy, 2002). Some music educators felt that assessment was not appropriate for the "subjective" experience of music and therefore outside of their role as a music educator (Denis, 2018).

Teacher identity, previous experiences, and personal philosophy (as an interactive construct) are filtered and impacted by the practical realities of the classroom (Armes, 2020). These obstacles may impact assessment practices. Music educators have faced unique classroom-level pressures due to the distinctive nature of the profession. Researchers have commonly reported inadequate student contact time (Kancianic, 2006; Tracy, 2002), school size (Hanzlik, 2001; Simanton, 2000), large class sizes (Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), and lack of resources (Shuler, 1996) as practical obstacles to their assessment procedures and methodologies.

Educational Policy and Reform

The educational environment has become more focused on holding teachers accountable for the opportunities they provide their students. Over the past 35 years, national organizations, policy makers, educational experts, and researchers have debated how to best reform education. In the process, the definition of assessment has diverged, often relegating assessment to high-stakes state testing (Colwell, 2008; Stiggins, 2014).

Educators have altered their teaching and assessment practices in response to pressures from district, state, and federal policy makers as well as other contextual demands within their specific jobs. In 1983, the publication of *A Nation at Risk* and an increased public demand for accountability and transparency birthed the quality and national standards reform movement in education (Armes, 2020). Teacher organizations quickly responded to demands for increased instructional quality. The seven *Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students* (*STCEAS*) were developed in 1990 to address inadequate assessment training in teacher preparation programs. In music education, these efforts resulted in the 1994 *National Standards for Music Education* developed by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). These national standards, and their associated assessment measures, provided educational stakeholders with measurable objectives of what students should know and be able to do. In 1996, MENC developed the *Performance Standards for Music Handbook*. In 1999, the *Music Educators Journal* published a special issue dedicated to assessment in music education.

The assessment environment of the early 1990s shifted dramatically toward an emphasis on high-stakes testing during the 2000s with the passing of the *No Child Left Behind* (*NCLB*) act in 2001 (Brookhart, 2001; Stiggins, 2002). *NCLB* was debated by educators, perhaps because, with this legislation, assessment data were tied to financial resources. It was labeled the "elephant in the room" (Colwell, 2008, p. 9) and "simply fool's gold" (Zhoa, 2007, p. 3) leading researchers to assert that teachers' general mistrust of assessment practices in general may be difficult to overcome (Steinberg,

2008). This effort spurred MENC's 2001 *Spotlight on Assessment in Music Education*, a publication containing 31 articles complete with measurement tools and best practices. In 2003, the *Benchmarks in Action* were designed to assist music teachers with the 1994 *National Standards for Music Education*, reframed in a standards-based approach (Lindeman, 2003). This publication recommended strategies for adopting valid, reliable, and objective practices that avoid non-musical assessment criteria.

In 2009, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), formerly MENC, responded to the *Race to the Top* initiative—a national educational reform policy passed in 2008 calling for improved teacher assessment knowledge and practices. In their official position statement, NAfME asserted that "assessment, and the accountability that stems from the public dissemination of the results of assessment, are key components in building quality instructional programs" (National Association for Music Education, 2022). NAfME asserted the importance of regular assessment designed to measure "student learning across a range of standards" with a balanced curriculum comprised of creating, performing, and responding to music (National Association for Music Education, 2022). Addressing legislative pressures, NAfME stated that assessment data would serve accountability efforts. This 2009 position statement revealed the necessity for a more flexible and comprehensive set of music education standards. To fill this need, NAfME (as a part of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards) developed and released the *National Core Arts Standards* in 2014. In 2018, Burrack and Parkes coordinated the development of the *Model Cornerstone Assessment* (*MCA*) to accompany the 2014 *National Core Arts Standards in Music*. The *MCA* represented a shift in music

education assessment—moving away from the "traditional notion of assessing limited knowledge with a standardized test" (Parkes, 2020, pp. 8–9). Accountability policy is still driving the changes in classrooms today, leading music educators to adapt and improve to best meet the demands of the profession and the needs of their students.

When policymakers have introduced reform legislation, the education profession has responded. Scholars have suggested that the music education profession may be ready to embrace an international set of standards for music education including: a shared language, quality norms, unified purpose, focus on social justice, and valuing of assessment (Brophy, 2019). However, while national efforts to the improve assessment practices of music teachers have taken hold to some extent, at the classroom level, changes have been slow. Despite the efforts of national organizations to instill knowledge and training about the implementation of assessment principles and practices, music teachers have appeared to fall behind their general education colleagues (Russell & Austin, 2010). Experts have stated that efforts to reform teachers' assessment practices have had a "minimal impact upon the classroom" with regards to "any effort to improve teaching and learning in music" (Colwell, 2008, p. 7).

The disconnect between reform efforts and improved assessment practices in music may be attributed to the fact that national standards in music education do not exist for schools of music in higher education. However, the accrediting agency for collegiate schools of music, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), does provide guidance for participating members. While NASM provides curricular program requirements for students pursuing music degrees in higher education, it fails to provide

specific performance standards. For example, concerning degrees leading to music teacher certification, NASM guidelines are vague, stating that students must acquire performance skills at a level "relevant to professional standards appropriate for the particular music concentration" (National Association of Schools of Music, 2022, p. 101). These recommendations allow for significant interpretation and assessment variety. In these situations, instructors, studio faculty, and conductors are left to determine the specific meaning of NASM's professional standards. As such, assessment methods and standards may vary greatly from one teacher to the next.

Impact of Literacy, Beliefs, and External Factors on Assessment Practices

The division between assessment policy and assessment practices is multifaceted, involving a complex interaction between internal factors (e.g., prior assessment training, pedagogical beliefs, and philosophy), external factors (i.e., parent, school, and district expectations), assessment beliefs, and assessment literacy balanced against the realities of the classroom setting (e.g., student discipline, class size, resources) (Armes, 2020). This intricate balance of multi-level factors has created professional tension, leading some music educators to sacrifice, compromise, or abandon best practices in the classroom (Armes, 2020).

Research conducted during the reform movement of the 1990s found that most assessment practices in music classrooms were informal and based on observation with informal group feedback given during instruction (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; McClung, 1996; Simanton, 2001). Grades served both accountability and motivational functions with behavior and attitude criteria comprising a large percentage of course grades.

Researchers have also discovered that music educators focus their classroom assessment practices toward the evaluation of performance skills. However, non-musical criteria (i.e., attendance, attitude, and participation) were still heavily emphasized when assigning course grades (Austin & Russell, 2017; Gonzales, 2017; Kancianic, 2006; LaCognata, 2010; Russell & Austin, 2010; St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017).

Music educators face unique pressures in addition to those faced by their general education counterparts due to the nature of the profession. Ensemble performance expectations, competition for resources, recruitment and enrollment, job security, and administrator support for the arts frame and influence the beliefs music teachers hold about assessment. Researchers have frequently cited systemic and classroom-level factors that impede music educators' efforts to improve assessment practices: inadequate individual student contact time (Kancianic, 2006; Tracy, 2002), school size (Hanzlik, 2001; Simanton, 2000), large class sizes (Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), and lack of resources (Shuler, 1996). Additionally, music educators commonly report a lack of training and experience in appropriate assessment techniques (Austin & Russell, 2016, 2019; Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000; St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017; Tracy, 2002).

Researchers have noted the significant impact of personal philosophy (Kancianic, 2006; Tracy, 2002) and assessment literacy (Armes, 2020) on music assessment practices. Quilter and Gallini (2000) stated that teachers' previous experiences with classroom assessment correlated highly with their current beliefs. Music educators hold

diverse beliefs about the profession in general, many of which downgrade the value of music education (e.g., focus on non-academic outcomes, focus on enjoyment, tailored for community engagement) (LaCognata, 2010; Richerme, 2016). Some music educators simply feel that assessment is not appropriate for the "subjective" experience of music and therefore outside of their role as a music educator (Denis, 2018).

Armes (2020) asserted that music teachers' assessment choices are greatly influenced by external factors:

> When external demands of parents and other stakeholders about the success, impact, and size of a music program outweigh the relative importance of music teachers' internal narratives (e.g., knowledge, values, beliefs, prior training, confidence), music teachers may subvert their personal desires and select fewer assessments or fail to see assessment as an integral component of instruction. (p. 141)

In contrast, when music teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and expectations outweigh the pressures of external factors, music teachers may decide to use a greater variety of assessments and view assessment as an essential element of instruction. Similar to occupational role identity (Isbell, 2008), assessment practices seem to be shaped by these conflicting, and often unreconciled, narratives (Armes, 2020).

Music Teacher Identity

Music teacher identity has been identified as a "dynamic, holistic interaction among multiple parts" including prior personal experience (both family and formal education), prior professional experience, reasons for entry, teacher education experience,

current teaching context and practice, and career plans and retention (Olsen, 2008, p. 25). The development of music teacher identity is "fluid, dynamic, evolving, situated, layered, and constructed individually, socially, and culturally" (Pellegrino, 2009, p. 50). Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) has been used widely to describe the socialization of music teachers. Isbell (2015) describes Blumer's perspective:

> Individuals inherently seek to understand why other people act in certain ways and based on this understanding they may or may not align their own actions with a particular role or identity. A person's sense of "self" and their sense of "other(s)" is a primary consideration when one interprets occupational identity using this theoretical framework. (p. 4)

Researchers have indicated that specific individuals (e.g., peers, parents, previous and current teachers) combined with authentic and contextual learning opportunities throughout undergraduate music education program had an influence on a preservice music educator's sense of identity as musician, teacher, performer, or music educator (Austin et al., 2010; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Isbell, 2008).

Formation of music teacher occupational identity occurs during primary, secondary, and tertiary socialization. Primary socialization experiences occur during formative years prior to preservice teacher training and includes the influence of family musical experiences. Often these experiences are not questioned and may be emotionally charged (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Secondary socialization occurs in the years immediately preceding preservice training (i.e., high school music) and is often critical to preservice music teachers' decision to pursue collegiate music training (Berg, 2014).

During this period, deeply seated notions of the teaching profession are developed (Isbell, 2008). Tertiary socialization occurs at the collegiate level and involves the influence of collegiate ensemble directors, private studio instructors, and music teacher educators (Isbell, 2008).

Many undergraduate music education programs have focused on moving students from the identity of musician/performer to teacher/educator throughout the undergraduate curriculum (Cochran-Smith, et al., 2008; Conway et al., 2010; Woodford, 2002). Isbell (2008) suggested that music teachers' self-identities may be formed during preservice training through contradictory narratives about their role as performers and educators. Such occupational identity formation may be influenced and reinvented through additional interactions with previous and current ensemble conductors and instructors (Berg, 2014).

Despite the efforts of national organizations to instill awareness and knowledge about assessment principles and practices, music teachers are slower to adopt sound assessment principles than their general education peers (Austin & Russell, 2017; Russell & Austin, 2010). This attitude seems to be common in secondary music educators, who often hold an occupational identity as directors or conductors rather than music educators (Isbell, 2008). The conflict between performer and educator identities preservice music teachers hold during undergraduate education may influence and contribute to a focus on either student-centered or teacher-centered pedagogical practices (Isbell, 2008). In a review of music education assessment literature, Denis (2018) suggested that music

teacher identity formation may even contribute to perceptions that assessment is inappropriate and outside their responsibilities as educators.

Quilter and Gallini (2000) stated that in-service teachers' previous experiences with classroom assessments correlated highly with their current beliefs. The interactions with assessment at the preservice level during their own ensemble experience, during tertiary socialization, have a direct impact on the current beliefs and employed methodologies when collegiate music education students enter the field. Recognizing the significant impact collegiate ensemble directors have on the professional identity and subsequent pedagogy of preservice music educators, it is imperative to understand assessment practices in collegiate musical settings. An examination of occupational identity development through the lens of socialization could serve as a viable framework for understanding why music teachers hold diverse beliefs concerning assessment practices and how assessment beliefs may be influenced during preservice education.

Need for the Study

Numerous factors contribute to the landscape of music education assessment: policy and legislation; assessment literacy; assessment beliefs; external classroom factors; assessment training and familiarity; and teacher identity. These factors interact in a highly fluid and seemingly infinite combination, resulting in a fragmented music assessment landscape. In addition, there may be a significant discrepancy between the musical assessment practices at the PK–12 and collegiate levels. Institutions of higher education have an educational responsibility to a model appropriate methodologies, pedagogy, and assessment practices preservice educators may emulate in their future

classrooms. Given that preservice music educators will potentially emulate the practices and methodologies modeled during their collegiate choral experience, it is imperative to investigate what assessment practices are being used in the collegiate ensemble rehearsal.

There exists a vast body of research addressing assessment in general education and music education at the PK–12 level. However, music education assessment research is significantly smaller for choral compared to instrumental ensembles. Concerning actual assessment practices in music higher education, the body of research is almost non-existent. Connecting the importance of assessment data (both its use in the educational process itself and its impact on PK–12 funding and program advocacy) to the influence of collegiate ensemble directors on the development of preservice music educators, it is imperative to understand the assessment practices used in collegiate music ensembles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate the assessment strategies and beliefs of collegiate choral conductors. Participants were from NASM-accredited institutions in the Southwest American Choral Directors Association (SWACDA) region, and included the following states: Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Baseline data were gathered about assessment strategies with the goal of understanding the methods used to assess students' musical achievement, the frequency of assessment strategies used, participants' beliefs regarding assessment in the collegiate choral rehearsal, and participants' perceptions of their role in shaping preservice music teacher (PMT) identity. The results may provide choral directors and music teacher educators with ideas for implementation in their rehearsal spaces and

information for determining how their own assessment practices can best meet the needs of both choristers and preservice music educators.

Research Questions

I posed three research questions regarding assessment strategies and beliefs in the collegiate choral rehearsal to guide my research.

1. What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?
    a. What specific criteria (musical and non-musical) are being used for assessment?
    b. What are the most commonly used assessment methods?
2. What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?
    a. What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?
    b. What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?
    c. What do participants perceive as challenges to assessment?
    d. What are participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?
3. What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the identity of PMTs?
    a. Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?

b. Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?

In order to gather information about current assessment practices in college choral ensembles, I sought to answer the question, "What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?" The responses to this first primary question enabled me to compare the current practices of college choral directors to the existing literature and identify trends among participants.

Researchers have shown that non-musical criteria (e.g., participation, attitude, and attendance) are commonly used as an assessment criterion (Kotora, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010; Tracy, 2002; Wuttke & St. Pierre, 2016). Researchers have also shown that assessment familiarity, training, and education are major predictors of employed assessment strategies (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002). I posed two sub-questions to address this more precisely: (1a) "What specific criteria (musical and non-musical) are being used for assessment?" and (1b) "What are the most commonly used assessment methods?" The frequency a director chooses to use an assessment tool or method could reveal the extent to which they value or have familiarity with that method. Myers (2021) stated that what "teachers choose to evaluate communicates elements of their music education philosophy to students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders" (p. 8). For example, if a director assesses a chorister's individual sight singing skills weekly compared to assigning a written theory test only once per semester, this may indicate that the director values individual sight

singing skills more than the skills assessed via a written theory test. This may also indicate that the director has more familiarity or training with assessment methods they more commonly utilized.

The second primary research question was "What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?" Four sub-questions were used to address assessment beliefs more precisely. The first sub-question was: "What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?" Researchers have found that music directors utilize a "hodgepodge" of musical, non-musical, individual, group, formal, and informal assessment criteria and practices (McMillan, 2001, 2003; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Simanton, 2000). Responses to this sub-question may indicate participants' values of specific assessment criterion and methodology. The second sub-question was: "What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?" Broomhead (2001) and Henry and Demorest (1994) revealed that group ensemble achievement is not indicative of individual musical success, indicating the value of individual assessment methods to more accurately measure student musical achievement. The third sub-question was: "What do participants perceive as challenges to assessment?" Researchers have reported assessment obstacles, commonly cited among music educators, including inadequate student contact time (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Shuler, 1996; Tracy, 2002), large class/workload (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), performance expectations (Hearn, 2021), and lack of resources (Shuler, 1996). The fourth sub-question investigated the interaction between assessment and self-efficacy: "What are participants'

perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?" Researchers have shown the impact of assessment familiarity, training, and education on assessment self-efficacy (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002).

The third primary research question targeted the role collegiate ensemble directors have in shaping the occupational identity of PMTs: "What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the identity of PMTs?" Researchers have found that collegiate ensemble directors are rated as one of the strongest influencers on PMT identity (Isbell, 2008). Additionally, the collegiate ensemble performance process is rated as the most influential experience on PMT identity (Isbell, 2008). Given this importance, I posed two sub-questions: (3a) "Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?" and (3b) "Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?"

Definitions

The following definitions were used in this study:

1. *Assessment* is the process of gathering information about student learning and the related means for doing so—measurement and evaluation. This broad definition incorporates multiple assessment components: structure (e.g., informal or formal), format (e.g., traditional or alternative), purpose (e.g., diagnostic, formative, or summative), scale (e.g., classroom, state, or national), interpretation criteria (e.g., measured against previous data or standards), and the outcome (e.g., low-stakes or high-stakes) (Armes, 2020).

2. *Measurement* is the use of assessment tools (e.g., tests, portfolios, checklists, rubrics) to gather student learning data (Parkes, 2020).
3. *Evaluation* is "what occurs as a result" of effective measurement (Parkes, 2020, p. 2). Based on collected data, this component is where educators make decisions about the mastery of educational objectives and assign student grades.
4. *Assessment beliefs* are the values educators hold about assessment. These conceptions include educators' knowledge about what assessment practices are and personal views about how assessment data should be used (Armes, 2020).
5. *Assessment practices* are the methodologies and procedures for which music educators gather information about student learning. This definition includes both assessment format (e.g., written assessment, individual performance, portfolio, self-assessment) and the purpose for the assessment (e.g., diagnostic, evaluative, formative) (Armes, 2020).
6. *Assessment literacy* is the distinction between knowing and using and "involves the understanding and appropriate use of assessment practices along with the knowledge of the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings in the measurement of students' learning" (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010, p. 420).
7. *Validity* is the "adequacy and appropriateness of both the test itself and the interpretation and use of any given results" (Russell, 2020, p. 423). In other words, the test or tool actually measures what it is indented to measure.

8. *Reliability* is the consistency of an assessment practice or tool's results. Reliability is a requirement for validity but does not by itself establish the validity of an assessment (Fautley, 2010).
9. *Fairness* is often considered a component of validity and consists of three components: cultural sensitivity, bias, and access for special populations (Russell, 2020, p. 425). Each component must be considered when developing or utilizing an assessment tool or method.
10. *Primary socialization* occurs prior to students entering the higher educational setting and is based predominantly on the values transferred via one's family of origin during childhood (Berg, 2014). It often functions as one's habitus (Bordieu, 1993) and influences the notions about appropriate actions, values, and function in society (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999).
11. *Secondary socialization* occurs during the years a person is in school prior to entering college and includes both primary and high school education (Berg, 2014).
12. *Tertiary socialization* occurs when students are serving as preservice music teachers at the undergraduate level while acquiring and developing formal occupational knowledge and skills (Berg, 2014; Froehlich, 2006).
13. The terms *conductor*, *director*, and *teacher* are used interchangeably to refer to the leader of the choral group receiving instruction.
14. The terms *student* and *chorister* are used interchangeably to refer to the person receiving instruction.

15. The terms *college* and *collegiate* are used interchangeably to refer to instruction at universities, conservatories, private colleges, community colleges, or other post-secondary institutions.

Delimitations

1. Study participants included collegiate choral conductors in the United States from institutions holding NASM certification from states in the SWACDA region: Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
2. Only faculty were included in this study. No graduate students who direct ensembles were included in this investigation.
3. Adjunct, part-time, interim, and visiting faculty were included in this study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Learning to assess the musical development of students is one of the primary responsibilities of any professional educator. In music education, researchers reported a growing acceptance of the role of assessment in the development of quality instruction, improved student motivation, and replication of student achievement (McMillan, 2001). Properly implemented, assessment has been shown to be a powerful tool for educators.

Scholars have examined assessment, assessment beliefs, and assessment practices from numerous vantage points, and the extant research in educational assessment is extremely vast. For the purposes of this investigation, I included scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and dissertations that are content area-specific to music education as well as assessment research from education in general. I also drew upon extant literature from scholarly texts and practitioner writings when appropriate for necessary background of context. Comparably few music education scholars have examined the assessment practices of in-service music teacher populations. Concerning assessment practices at the collegiate music level, there has been even less research. Additionally, there is far less assessment research in the choral setting compared to instrumental. Due to the lack of assessment research in choral music setting in general, it was necessary to draw on the body of instrumental assessment research. The body of research reviewed in this chapter was organized into three main sections according to the major research questions of this study: (a) purpose of assessment; (b) the teacher's role and assessment; and (c) assessment tools, criteria, and methods.

Purpose of Assessment

There has been an increased interest in documenting student growth and learning outcomes in all content areas over the last 35 years. In this accountability movement, music education has been no exception (Colwell, 1998; Fisher, 2008). Music has been recognized at both national and state levels as being a core curricular subject. This has brought more focus on assessment in the music classroom (Fisher, 2008). Assessment has been found to have such importance that evaluating music performance is included in the current national standards (Shuler et al., 2014). Accordingly, assessment has become a consistent component in the music education classroom (McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013). However, there has appeared to be confusion and a lack of consensus regarding the purpose and interpretation of assessment. Colwell (1998) stated that interviews with educators about their use of assessment elicited "two extremes; they perceive that they either evaluate continually or not at all" (p. 30). Partly due to the subjective nature of performance, music in education has remained a difficult content area to assess (Asmus, 1999), creating tension between educators and policymakers (Colwell, 2008).

Some of the confusion surrounding the purpose of assessment may contribute to the numerous definitions of assessment and assessment concepts. Herman and Baker stated that "although the term 'test' often connotes more traditional kinds of measures, and assessment a wider array of tasks and item types, we use the two terms interchangeably" (2009, p. 176). Similarly, Burrack and Parkes (2020) asserted that "assessment, as a process, is often confused with grading. In fact, the terms often used synonymously, which in many ways is incorrect" (p. 19). The conceptual disparity over

the purpose, aims, and goals of assessment reflected confusion in assessment structure, scale, interpretation, and effects.

It is important for educators to properly understand assessment concepts, components, and functions with a unified definition of assessment factors. Assessment in general has been characterized as a method for gathering information relevant to teachers, students, and other stakeholders about the process of teaching and learning, centered on student knowledge and skills (Parkes et al., 2015). Scholars have stated that assessment is a *process*, with the purpose to explicitly and clearly identify the expectations of student learning (Burrack & Parkes, 2020). This process includes gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine if student learning data corresponds to the expected level of achievement and uses this information to document and improve future performance and instruction (Angelo, 1995). Boud et al. (1999) claimed that "assessment is the single most powerful influence on learning in formal courses and, if not designed well, can easily undermine the positive features of an important strategy in the repertoire of teaching and learning approaches" (p. 414). Furthermore, students may view assessment as an important and powerful motivating factor, particularly when measured by grades (Colwell, 1998; McClung, 1996; Reimer, 2009).

Goolsby (1999) identified four primary purposes of assessment in the ensemble setting: placement, diagnostic, formative, and summative. Eisner (1998) also underscored the diagnostic, positioning, content evaluative, and reflective roles of assessment in the arts. Placement assessments typically occur prior to instruction and are used to ensure that the learner is properly placed within a group or ensemble. Traditionally, these

assessments include auditions and ensemble seating placements (Goolsby, 1999). Diagnostic assessments are used before instruction and typically gather baseline data about student skills and knowledge. Often called a pre-test, diagnostic testing allows educators to track progress more accurately over time as well as set achievement goals tailored specifically to a student or class (Shaw, 2018). Formative assessments are typically low-stakes and are employed throughout the instructional process. They are designed to assist in the learning process itself by providing data throughout a unit of instruction (Shaw, 2018). Summative assessments "measure the extent to which a student has achieved a learning goal" and typically occurs near or at the end of a unit (Shaw, 2018, p. 37). These assessments are typically larger and may be considered higher stakes compared to formative assessments. It is important to note that the use of an assessment, rather than its design, determines an assessment type. For example, a summative evaluation for an instructional unit may also serve as a placement assessment for the next unit. It is also important to note that assessments may also be formal or informal. Simply, formal assessments "feel like" as assessment to learners while informal assessment "take place within the context of routine instruction" (Shaw, 2018, p. 39). Placement, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments may all be formal or informal in nature.

Assessment is not an isolated component in the instructional process, but has been shown to interact with teaching, learning, and curriculum (Conway, 2015; Lehman, 2008; Burrack & Parkes, 2020). Assessment has been considered an essential component of quality instruction and necessary for improvement in teaching and learning to take place

(Eisner, 1998; Lehman, 2008). Scott (2012) echoed this notion and identified a trifold purpose of assessment: assessment *of* learning, assessment *as* learning, and assessment *for* learning. This view emphasized both the value of assessment and suggested numerous points at which assessment might occur—before instruction, after instruction, and as a part of the instructional process itself. This conceptualization placed the learner at the center of the instructional process. Assessment *of* learning referred to strategies employed to confirm what learners know or can demonstrate to show whether they have met curricular goals (Earl & Katz, 2006; Stiggins, 2002). Assessment *as* learning recognized learning as a flexible and fluid process. This focus, rooted in the concept of "reflection-as-practice," centered on the learner themselves and their process of metacognition (Earl & Katz, 2006; Scott, 2012). Assessment *for* learning occurred throughout the learning process and is designed to make student learning more evident, enabling teachers to better meet their learners' needs (Earl & Katz, 2006). This purpose embedded assessment practices into the teaching process itself rather than as a distinct, separate, or isolated component (Scott, 2012). In this trifold purpose of assessment, Scott (2012) characterized assessment *of* learning as something "done to" students, assessment *as* learning as something "done by" students, and assessment *for* learning as something "done for" students (pp. 32–33).

Beyond the benefits for students, assessments may be used to communicate program value and advocate for school music programs to those outside the field (Colwell, 1998; Reimer, 2009; Zerull, 1990). Known as evaluative assessment, this process is a means by which some aspect of a school, local authority, or other specific

part of the educational system can be evaluated (Fautley, 2010). In music, directors may use evaluative assessment procedures to show the health, growth, or viability of their entire program as a method to advocate for resources, staff, or to increase the overall standing of the program or profession. McClung (1996) found that only 18% (n = 21) of administrator participants (N = 117) perceived choir grades as having an equal educational status as core subject grades. Evaluative assessment data demonstrating music student growth would be the type of data utilized to promote music program value to stakeholders. Fisher's (2008) suggestions for quality assessment supported music program advocacy and included easily understood and consistent accountability, legitimization in the perceptions of those outside music, and protection of music instruction time. However, instructional planning for choral rehearsals have sometimes been motivated by what "needs to be accomplished in the score, not in the student" (Henry, 2015, p. 2). To address this, choral music education practices might focus more consistently on quality instruction and assessment practices designed to target the individual chorister's musical skills. Student-centered learning is based on the individual learner's outcomes and is more likely to create independent musicians, enabling "individuals to participate, whether amateur or professional, in music settings throughout life" (Garrett, 2013, p. 314).

Teachers' Role and Assessment

Music teacher identity has been shown to involve a complex interaction between previous, current, and potential future musical experiences (Duling, 2000) connected to how individuals see them themselves and perceive others to see them (Isbell, 2015).

Music teacher identity has been shown to be an interrelated balance between "musician" and "educator" sub-identities (Austin et al., 2012). Researchers have revealed the importance of previous and current music teachers on the occupational identity of PMTs (Duling, 2000), which may impact assessment philosophy and future assessment practices. Tracy (2002) stated that a teacher's personal philosophy is the most influential factor on both value of assessment and assessment practices. Music teacher identity, philosophy, and beliefs are filtered through the practical realties of the teaching profession (e.g., large class sizes, lack of assessment training, inadequate student contact time) resulting in complex and multifaceted assessment practices (Armes, 2020).

Music Teacher Identity

Occupational identity socialization is the process by which one learns to adopt, develop, and display the role behaviors and actions specific to a profession (Merton, 1957). Researchers have found that preservice music educators enter college with strong identities that reflect the influence of significant events and people from their childhood and adolescence (Beynon, 1998; Duling, 2000; L'Roy, 1983; Mark, 1998). This socialization and identity development process continues throughout the collegiate experience through interactions with collegiate ensemble directors, studio instructors, and music education faculty as well as through ensemble work, field experiences, and methods courses. The complex process of identity development has been described as an "onion" consisting of six layers: environment, teacher behavior, teacher competency, teacher beliefs, identity, and mission (Korthagen, 2004, p. 80).

The lens of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) has been used to examine music teacher identity (Austin et al., 2012; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Isbell, 2008; L'Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1991). Through this sociological lens, identity has been said to consist of a combination and interaction of how people view themselves and how people believe others view them (Isbell, 2015). Individuals assumed the role of a significant or generalized person, imagined how others perceived them, then acted accordingly (Blumer, 1969). This strand of research often examines (a) who influences music teacher identity (e.g., ensemble directors, studio instructors, parents), (b) activities that influence music teacher identity (e.g., internships, field experiences, participation in private lessons, music tours), and (c) how PMTs view themselves compared to how they believe others view them (Pellegrino, 2020). The complex process of occupational identity socialization may be categorized into three broad periods: primary, secondary, and tertiary socialization.

Primary and Secondary Socialization. Primary socialization occurs often through formative familial experiences as well as initial experiences in formal education. These experiences are often "not questioned and can be emotionally charged" (Berg, 2014, p. 266). Specifically for educators, the socialization process begins when students first enroll in school as young children. The impact of this "apprenticeship of observation" phenomenon is monumental (Lortie, 1975). Students are socialized to the patterns, practices, and procedures of teaching through years of observing teachers from their own perspective as PK–12 learners (Woodford, 2002). Secondary socialization

occurs in the years immediately preceding collegiate preservice music teacher training and is often critical to the decision to enter the music education profession (Berg, 2014).

During primary and secondary socialization, PK–12 music teachers exert significant influence on the development of occupational identity of future educators. PK–12 students internalize and adopt the roles and attitudes of significant teachers. This is particularly true for collegiate music students who may be more acculturated to professional norms through primary and secondary socialization as the influence of family and former teachers has been shown to be more powerful for them than for other education majors (Beynon, 1998; Cox, 1997; Duling, 2000; L'Roy, 1983; Roberts, 2000). In many instances, a student may have had the same music teacher for many years either at the elementary or secondary level (or both). This amount of investment across multiple years may be a contributing factor in the extreme importance of PK–12 music teachers on the development of occupational identity. Researchers have shown that many students started to identify with music teacher roles and pedagogies prior to becoming undergraduate music education majors (Beynon, 1998; Cox, 1997; Duling, 2000; L'Roy, 1983; Mark, 1998; Roberts, 1991) and that undergraduates' occupational identity was best predicted by secondary socialization experiences (Isbell, 2008). As such, preservice music teachers enter college with strong preconceived notions about the scope and requirements of teaching.

Tertiary Socialization. In the collegiate atmosphere, students are surrounded by new peoples, educators, influences, norms, and expectations. Collegiate students must learn how to reconcile their preconceived notions of the music and music education

profession with the values and belief expectations of collegiate faculty—a process known as *tertiary socialization*. Cox (1997) reported the difficulty of this process and suggested that previous socialization experiences may influence occupational identity to a greater extent than occupational identity socialization at the collegiate level. This tension often resulted in a dual occupational identity: musician identity and teacher identity. Researchers have revealed that music students often identify first as a performer (or musician) and a teacher second (Beynon, 1998; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Isbell, 2008; L'Roy, 1983; Roberts, 1991). Other researchers revealed that both roles (musician and educators) are interrelated (Austin et al., 2012). Ballantyne et al. (2012) found that PMTs had a "dynamic and shifting relationship between musician and teacher" (pp. 211). They recognized the responsibility of music faculty in assisting students in negotiating the roles of these two sub-identities.

Socialization, Identity, and Assessment. There seems to be a connection between assessment practices and occupational identity. Educators who valued assessment targeted musicianship outcomes more in their grading practices and held a "teacher" occupational identity while those who devalued assessment were more likely to target non-musical or behavioral outcomes (Austin & Russell, 2017).

Concerning the impact of primary, secondary, and tertiary music teacher identity development on assessment practices, the research is scant. Yet, inferences can be made. For instance, in an examination of assessment practices in the secondary choral setting, Hearn (2019, 2021) revealed that high school choristers, during secondary occupational socialization, reported both an understanding and acceptance of the use of musical and

non-musical assessment criteria. High school choristers reported that the primary reason for being in a choir was ensemble (group) achievement (Hearn, 2019, 2021). Notions of what the music education profession entails developed during this period of secondary socialization may carry into the collegiate atmosphere and impact continued occupational identity development. These conceptions of the choral profession may influence future assessment beliefs and practices.

Wuttke and St. Pierre (2016) found that of 28 PMT participants, 100% had been graded using a "hodgepodge" of musical and non-musical assessment criteria in their high school ensembles. When asked to create their own hypothetical grading policies, non-musical criteria (notably, attendance and participation) accounted for three of the four most cited grading criteria (Wuttke & St. Pierre, 2016). Austin and Russell (2019) revealed that PMTs ($N = 75$) who received greater assessment training valued assessments more than less-trained peers and were more confident in their assessment abilities. However, most participants reported a scant two or fewer music education class sessions devoted to assessment topics. Nevertheless, about 33% ($n = 25$) of participants still felt confident in their ability to assess their future students despite no significant training or exposure (Austin & Russell, 2019). Ryan (2018) collected information about PMTs' confidence in assessment knowledge and found that those with the least knowledge were the most confident. These results reflected a lack of awareness and naivete regarding the scope and breadth of assessment practices as well as suggested the intense role of previous occupational socialization on the attitudes (and possible future practices) concerning assessment procedures.

Attitude and Beliefs of Assessment

Assessment is a vital component of the educational process. It is essential for determining whether improvement and progress have taken place. Students, teachers, and administrators all agreed that grades and assessments are valuable to the overall musical experience and should be based on specific learning objectives (McClung, 1996). Elliot wrote, "Achieving the aims of music education depends on assessment. The primary function of assessment in music education is not to determine grades but to provide accurate feedback to students about the quality of their growing musicianship" (1995, p. 264). Music assessment is valuable for students seeking to improve their ability to create, express, and share their music with others. Assessment offers an opportunity for students and teachers to evaluate progress achieved and inform future musical and instructional processes.

A lack of agreement on music curricula and the end goals of instruction have created divisions in assessment approaches (Lehman, 2008; Reimer, 2009). This division involved a complex interaction between internal factors (e.g., prior assessment training, pedagogical beliefs, philosophy), external factors (i.e., parent, school, and district expectations), assessment beliefs, and assessment literacy balanced against the realities of the classroom setting (e.g., student discipline, class size, resources) (Armes, 2020).

Teachers' Assessment Beliefs. Researchers have found that a teacher's personal philosophy of assessment influenced their classroom practices (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017; Harris & Brown, 2009; Kancianic, 2006). A teacher's personal philosophy is the most influential factor on both value of assessment and assessment practices (Tracy,

2002). Educators' conceptualization of assessment (i.e., what assessments are, assessment purpose) and feelings of assessment (i.e., value judgements, past experiences, preferences) may directly impact their educational decision making (Deneen & Brown, 2016). Music, perhaps more than other subjects, operates in a highly unique circumstance (Asmus, 1999). On one hand, many music educators believed that assessment is an important responsibility in providing a quality education to their students (Hill, 1999). Asmus reinforced the importance of assessment, asserting that "assessment information is invaluable to the teacher, student, parents, school, and community for determining the effectiveness of the music instruction in their schools" (1999, p. 22). However, the profession values musical assessment differently. There are viable arguments that music is not suitable for formal testing, including the breadth of the musical field, the expressive nature of music, and the intrinsic value of all art forms (Wright et al., 2005). Other researchers have revealed this sentiment as well. This included the major purposes that assessment should serve, if assessments provided a trustworthy basis for making educational decisions (Olsen & Buchanan, 2019), and whether assessments were even appropriate in the music making and learning process (Denis, 2018).

Assessment in music has often been thought of as problematic, and music teacher assessment practices reflected a lack of awareness regarding principles designed to promote and document learning in an effective manner (Asmus,1999; Kotora, 2005; Schuler, 1996; Russell & Austin, 2010). This may be due, in part, to the widespread belief that musical achievement is difficult to objectively measure and evaluate. While

artistic endeavors are certainly considered subjective, the measurement of student skill acquisition and technique through a learning period is certainly possible (Barry, 2009).

A lack of knowledge and understanding about assessment formats, assessable criteria, and the measurement and evaluation process itself can contribute to this belief about musical assessment in general (Asmus,1999). Many music teachers reported having received inadequate training in assessment as part of their teacher preparation programs, resulting in gaps in their knowledge base and skill set (Schuler, 1996). While teachers were confident in assessment practices, they still widely employed non-musical criteria (Gonzales, 2017). These findings suggested an incomplete understanding of effective and equitable assessment practices. The disconnect between assessment confidence and the use of non-musical criteria may also be partly due to educators' negative experiences (both as teachers and former students) and association of assessment with high-stakes testing. Music teachers feared that assessment information may lead to a misuse of data, have unintended program or funding consequences as a result of high stakes testing, and may be unfair for some students (Graham et al., 2002).

Other educators believed that classroom-level conditions interfered with effective teaching and assessment processes. Researchers have frequently cited class-level factors that impede educators' efforts to realize new and improved assessment practices in music classes: inadequate student contact time (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Tracy, 2002), school size (Hanzlik, 2001; McCoy, 1991; Simanton, 2000), large class sizes/workload (Kancianic, 2006; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), lack of resources (Shuler, 1996), lack of

training and experience in assessment techniques by the teacher (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), and parent/student apathy regarding assessment (Kotora, 2005).

However, researchers have shown that teachers were more influenced by internal factors such as philosophy of education and class goals than by external factors such as school requirements or state standards (Kancianic, 2006; Russell & Austin, 2010). Russell and Austin (2010) reported that while teachers felt that music assessment was difficult due to untenable situations, there was little evidence to support this stating that "findings related to how such situational factors impact assessment and grading decisions…are inconclusive" (Russell & Austin, 2010, p. 40). Leong (2014) asserted that classroom assessment is not a stable entity, but a "highly variable, contested, and irreducibly situated in a specific context. The different conceptions of what classroom assessment practice entails suggest there are many, often conflicting mediating influences with which teachers need to grapple" (p. 464). Assessment beliefs are a complex and intersectional combination of educators' previous experiences with assessment, philosophical beliefs about teaching and learning, and beliefs about the purposes and use of assessment. Additionally, the influence of external factors (e.g., class size, training, resources) create an almost endless variety of diverse attitudes about musical assessment.

Additional factors influencing assessment practices included a connection between assessment perception and ease of use (Wong, 2014). Career length also played a part in assessment practices as directors with five or more years of teaching tended to value performance evaluation more than those with less than five years of teaching

experience (McCoy, 1991). Other researchers have cited the importance of autonomy and its impact on teacher beliefs about assessment (Box et al., 2015; Fulmer et al., 2014; Simanton, 2001).

Many of the above circumstances (e.g., philosophy of musical assessment, lack of training and experience in assessment, class sizes) may also be descriptive of the collegiate choral environment in higher education. These factors may interfere with the teaching and evaluative process. However, due to the lack of empirical research conducted in higher music institutions themselves (especially in large ensemble settings), much opportunity for further program and pedagogical refinement by both faculty and students remains unrealized.

Other Stakeholders' Assessment Beliefs. The influence of assessment policies and practices extends far beyond the teacher. Students also understood the necessity of musical assessment as a means to assign grades (Hearn, 2019). Furthermore, students have viewed assessment procedures as an important and powerful motivating factor, particularly when they result in summative academic grades (Colwell, 1998; McClung, 1996; Reimer, 2009). Taking into account the monumental influence educators at the PK–12 level have on the primary and secondary socialization of learners, students adopted the rationale for both musical and non-musical assessment procedures (Hearn, 2019). Similarly, administrators placed a significant value on non-musical assessment criteria (McCoy, 1991). A majority of administrators felt that common non-musical criteria were a suitable means for assessment: rehearsal attendance (70%, $N = 115$, $n = 80$), attitude (68%, $N = 116$, $n = 81$), and participation (89% $N = 116$, $n = 104$)

(McClung, 1996; 1997). Furthermore, assessment processes and grading practices may influence public perception of music education's overall value (McClung, 1996).

Assessment Education and Training

Assessment training and education greatly impact educators' practices in the classroom and rehearsal space. While circumstantial factors (e.g., class time, teacher/student ratio) certainly do impact assessment practices, research has shown that education and assessment training are far more influential factors (Tracy, 2002). As such, it is imperative that music educators receive adequate assessment training at both pre-service and in-service levels. Research has shown that educators who rated assessment strategies as the most familiar were also the top-rated employed strategies (Tracy, 2002). Educators utilized assessment strategies with which they were most familiar and had most the experience and training. This suggests that PMTs will adopt assessment strategies guided by their previous (primary and secondary socialization) and current (tertiary socialization) music teachers and directors.

Researchers have found that music teachers expressed a lack of clarity and frustration regarding assessment (Kotora, 2005). It could be deduced that this frustration stemmed from a lack of adequate assessment training at the pre-service level. Researchers have discovered that music teacher educators themselves relied heavily on non-musical assessment criteria and personal preference rather than pre-established standards (Kotora, 2001). Attendance was employed as assessment criteria by 55% (n = 11) of music teacher educators with participation and attitude used by 45% (n = 9) and 35% (n = 7) of respondents (N = 20), respectively (Kotora, 2005). The highest rated

assessment modes utilized (either musical or non-musical) by music teacher educators were only employed by 55% (n = 11) of respondents (Kotora, 2001). Schmidt (1989) reported that while evaluation and grading was addressed in the undergraduate curriculum of 94% (n = 104) of institutions (N = 111), the average amount of allotted time, in total, was for only 2.5 hours. This suggests that assessment standards based on appropriate musical criterion is not being addressed strongly enough in collegiate methods courses. Researchers have reported writing an effective test to be a difficult and time-consuming process requiring skills that must be learned and developed (Lehman, 2008). Ludwig (2013) found that in-service teachers who were confident in their assessment knowledge were more likely to have prior training in assessment and hold positive beliefs about the purpose of assessment.

Music teacher educators and music education researchers have been considering assessment for several decades. However, the depth of assessment consideration from music faculty identifying primarily as *director* or *conductor* compared to *teacher* remains unclear. Nevertheless, authors of texts utilized for secondary choral methods courses, often written by choral conductors, have certainly begun to embrace assessment strategies more commonly. For example, Boyd's 1970 *Rehearsal Guide for the Choral Director*, an early comprehensive text for the choral conductor, makes no mention of assessment whatsoever. Phillips, in his 2016 *Directing the Choral Music Program*, dedicated at least some attention to musical assessment. The author devoted approximately 20 pages to student assessment, measurement, evaluation, and standards referencing extant and scholarly music education research. The author addressed the need for authentic

assessment with a focus on musical achievement assessed primarily by musical criteria as well as musical content knowledge (e.g., music history, context). The author also addressed assessment of sight singing stills—guidelines, ensemble assessment, individual assessment, and assessment tools. In their 2008 publication *The School Choral Program*, Holt and Jordan devoted 66 pages (10% of the whole text) to topics related either directly or indirectly to assessment—curriculum development, musical aptitude, individual formal assessment, standards-based assessment, self-assessment, and Likert-type and continuous rating scale assessment. The authors also provided example rubrics and measurement tools. These instruments were based on more than just performance criteria and included composition, improvisation, and other assessment models. This content shift in choral method texts concerning assessment concepts may indicate that choral directors have more readily embraced assessment strategies in their methodology.

Concerning assessment training for in-service music educators, inadequate administrative guidance has been cited as a reason music teachers do not demonstrate stronger assessment practices (Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Russell & Austin, 2010). Researchers have shown that increased administration guidance had a significant association to less grade weight being placed on non-musical assessment criteria (e.g., student attitude, participation, attendance) (Russell & Austin, 2010). However, 92% (n = 324) of teachers (N = 352) said they had received no guidance from their administrators in assessment practices (Russell & Austin, 2010). As such, there seemed to be a disconnect between district assessment policy and actual musical assessment practices (Russell & Austin, 2010). Almost 67% (n = 16) of teachers (N = 24) stated that their best

source of sight-singing assessment training was either from professional development opportunities or self-taught (Floyd & Bradley, 2006).

Graduate coursework is a viable path for increasing music educator assessment training. However, Austin and Russell (2016) found that graduate courses specifically targeting assessment were offered at only 58% (n = 40) of institutions (N = 69). According to participants, stand-alone assessment courses were not offered because it was thought that assessment material had already been addressed in other courses, there was insufficient instructional time or limited program enrollment limiting the ability to offer an assessment-focused course, or the program philosophy did not value assessment as a major curricular component (Austin & Russell, 2016). Of institutions that offered a dedicated assessment course, 72% (n = 50) required masters students to take the course. Only 33% (n = 23) of institutions required such a course for doctoral students. Additional research revealed that some music teacher educators report learning about assessment "on the job" while serving as in-service PK–12 teachers (Parkes & Rawlings, 2019). These music education faculty reported assessment training more at the graduate level compared to their undergraduate experience as well as an overall lack of understanding coupled with a general attitude of dissatisfaction concerning assessment. There was also little evidence of pedagogical content knowledge used to teach assessment strategies.

Brookhart (1994) stated that "more training, by itself, will not cause grading practices to conform completely to recommendations" (p. 290). There appears to be a complex interaction between assessment training and educational philosophy. Armes (2020) stated:

> Many teachers appear to *know* what and how assessments should be used but are reluctant to use them in their instructional practices because of conflicting notions about *why* they should assess, *how* assessment fits into their broader philosophical beliefs, or the negative consequences of providing students, parents, administrators, or other educational stakeholders assessment information that may be disappointing. (p. 45)

There is evidence that teacher practice may be influenced by personal experiences, conceptions, and self-efficacy in executing professional judgements related to assessment and evaluation. Just the same, teacher assessment literacy appeared to moderate the decision-making process and resultant assessment practices (McMillan & Nash, 2000).

Assessment Types, Criteria, and Methods

Henry (2015) asserted that musical achievement results must be demonstrated in order for the profession to maintain its position within the educational community. She stated that quality documentation of learning is a necessity and that all choral educators have a responsibility to: identify and document the knowledge and skill level of student musicians; identify and document student growth in knowledge and skill; evaluate program and teaching effectiveness; explore various means of effective instruction (including methods and materials); improve the quality of assessment by investigating the process itself; and advocate on behalf of student musicians and the profession using evidence of student achievement (Henry, 2015).

There is a general lack of studies on assessment and evaluation in choral music education in general (Grant & Norris, 1998). However, the research indicated that music

teacher grading policies are often made up of a "hodgepodge" of musical and non-musical criteria (Kotora, 2005; McCoy, 1991; Russell & Austin, 2010). Music teachers expressed a lack of clarity and frustration with regards to assessment (Kotora, 2005). Russell and Austin (2010) reported a lack of consensus in the calculation of music grades.

Assessment Types

Assessments come in a wide variety of formats and purposes: formative and summative; individual and group; informal and formal; and indirect and direct. While informal assessment occurs within the context of the instructional process, formal assessments (e.g., quizzes, auditions, portfolio reviews, written homework) are often separated from the instructional process, "feel like an assessment," and typically yield more precise information than their informal counterpart (Shaw, 2018, p. 39). While the ensemble setting lends itself to group instruction, researchers have stressed that group assessment may be problematic (Broomhead, 2001) and that individual assessment provide the best source of data for instructional improvement (Myers, 2021).

Informal Assessment. Music educators mostly use informal and formative assessments such as "in class, down-the-line" performance assessments designed to provide checks of skill or accuracy (Hill, 1999; Kancianic, 2006; McClung, 1996; McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000). Researchers have also found that music directors use informal verbal assessment most frequently in the typical ensemble rehearsal setting (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017). This informal assessment model has been shown to be more common than formal formative or

summative assessment procedures (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017). This use of verbal feedback is integrated with conducting gesture and sung examples in a fluid instructional environment resulting in a "feedforward" approach to assessment (Emerson et al., 2019). Researchers asserted that verbal informal assessments were used most in the choral setting due to the nature of the ensemble, and most informal assessments contained both an evaluation and a directive for future improved group vocalism (Emerson et al., 2019).

Group and Individual Assessment. The choral ensemble itself is a perfect vehicle for group instruction and assessment. Elements and skills of the musical art (such as blend and balance) are dependent upon group assessment, and measuring individual contributions to the group effort in these skills may be problematic (Nichols, 2017). Due to the nature of the art, some music educators have asserted that individual assessment is unnecessary (Wright et al., 2005). However, the importance of individual assessment was expressed as early as 1899 by Sterrie Weaver, an influential music education pedagogue from the turn of the twentieth century (Spurgeon & Gerber, 2013).

Hearn (2019, 2021) revealed that group assessment in the choral setting mainly assessed psychomotor domain skills (i.e., physical and technical skills related to musical making), placing choral music closer to a club or activity rather than an academic subject. Though large group assessments may certainly provide teachers with information about student musicianship, "individualized assessments serve as the best source of data for grades and for improvement in differentiated instruction" (Myers, 2021). Note Furby's (2013) statement regarding group and individual assessment:

> In the choral ensemble, assessment is often done at the group level. Individual assessment may be limited to attendance and participation in class and performances, and evaluation of individual musical skills is often neglected. When teaching choral music for the benefit of the individual student, the educator needs a clear understanding of what is important and why it should be taught. (p. 25)

Other scholars suggested that singing accuracy may be different when choristers sing along compared to singing with others, and teachers must choose carefully whether to assess singers alone or in groups (Nichols, 2017).

While the ensembles' nature often centers around group instruction, group outcomes are not a valid indicator of individual learning. Researchers have demonstrated that group achievement is not a valid indicator of individual musical achievement (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). Broomhead's (2001) study showed that neither expressive nor technical performance in a group setting were related to individual achievement scores. Henry and Demorest (1994) revealed that for singers who were members of ensembles that consistently received highest group sight singing scores, individual sight-reading accuracy was only 66% for pitch and rhythm accuracy. This result suggests that group achievement is not indicative of individual musical skills.

Non-Musical Assessment Criteria

Assessment practices are highly influenced by educational philosophy (Tracy, 2002), assessment training (Russell & Austin, 2010), assessment familiarity (Wong, 2014), and program-specific factors (e.g., class size, administration support, etc.)

(Kancianic, 2006). As such, music educators may hold a wide variety of assessment goals, formats, and procedures. Scholars have noted a multitude of assessment approaches (McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Rohwer, 1997; Russell & Austin, 2010). Researchers have shown that music educators employ both musical and non-musical assessment criteria with a significantly disproportionate weight on non-musical assessment means (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010).

In arts education, there is a continual argument that the process is more important than the product. "It is the joy of creating, of doing, of participating that is valued" (Colwell, 1998, p. 30). However, the value of participation, a component so intrinsically valuable to the music making process, seems to have been conflated with educational assessment philosophy. This has negatively resulted in the widespread use of non-musical criteria in grading policies. Music teacher assessment practices are often made up of a hodgepodge of musical and non-musical criteria (Kotora, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010). In a study of 28 pre-service music teachers, 100% of participants had been graded using a "hodgepodge" of musical and non-musical criteria in their high school music ensembles (Wuttke & St. Pierre, 2016). Many of the common assessment practices found in music education have been identified as containing either non-musical criteria or no actual measurements (Barkley, 2006; McClung, 1996; McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000).

In the secondary ensemble setting, Tracy (2002) found that (a) effort, (b) attitude, and (c) attendance were the top three rated skills for individual assessment in the high

school choral ensemble. McCoy (1991) found that non-musical criteria (specifically, attendance, behavior, and being on time) comprised a large component of a student's final grade (42.84% of overall grade for band students and 41.09% for choral students). Simanton (2000) reported that band directors used (a) participation and attitude, (b) music performance, (c) attendance, and (d) technique and sight-reading as the primary criteria for assessing learners with 56% of grades derived from non-musical means. In McClung's (1996) investigation in the choral setting, 84% (n = 512) of students (N = 607) responded that attitude and participation comprised between half to all of their six-week grade. Attendance (46%, n = 287) was second (N = 607). Eighty-one percent (n = 95) of directors (N = 118) felt that attendance was a suitable assessment criterion. Directors (N = 120) also felt that and attitude (83%, n = 100) and participation (100%, n = 119) were suitable criteria for assessment. McClung (1996) noted that students perceived individual participation and attitude as the most frequent predictor of grades in choir. Hearn (2019) found the use of non-musical criteria (specifically participation, attendance, being on-time, and behavior) to be a "major" component of the overall grade. In this study, the teacher acknowledged the subjective nature of non-musical criteria, but employed them anyway (Hearn, 2019). In a survey investigating the use of 12 specific grading criteria, participation was used by 86% (n = 212) of respondents (N = 246), attendance by 85% (n = 209), and attitude by 74% (n = 182) (Kotora, 2001). Russell and Austin (2010) revealed that of the top five criteria employed for assessment, three were non-musical. The top five factors were (a) performance/skill, (b) knowledge, (c) attendance, (d) attitude, and (e) practice. Their study revealed that a high percentage of

directors (N = 352) relied on the following non-musical criteria: attendance (91%, n = 326), attitude (93%, n = 332), and practice (61%, n = 219) with 60% of a student's final grade based solely on non-musical criteria. In a replication study, Gonzales (2017) showed that attendance, attitude, and practicing accounted for about 50% of a student's final grade. Additionally, Gonzales (2017) revealed that attendance-related criteria were employed by a vast majority of directors (N = 125): concert attendance, 94%, (n = 118); rehearsal attendance, 79% (n = 99); and punctuality, 73% (n = 91). Gonzales (2017) revealed that criteria related to attitude were also heavily emphasized by directors (N = 151): participation, 89% (n = 134); responsible behavior, 85% (n = 128); and effort during rehearsals, 81% (n = 122).

The manner in which attendance, participation, and attitude grades have been used reinforces the idea that directors rely heavily on non-musical assessment practices. Often, the use of assessment criteria served as a form of rehearsal etiquette and attendance training rather than a means to evaluate true musical achievement (Gonzales, 2017; Russell & Austin, 2010). Of teachers who used attitude as grading criteria, Russell and Austin (2010) discovered that only 10% (n = 33) of participants (N = 332) based those measurements on completely objectively means with 90% (n = 299) using either completely subjective measures or a combination of subjective and objective measures. Of teachers who used attendance as a grading criterion (N = 326), Russell and Austin (2010) reported that 67% (n = 218) had reduced final grades by at least one letter as a result of unexcused absences suggesting that of those who use attendance as assessment criteria, a majority may be doing so punitively with the intent to moderate absenteeism

from rehearsals and major performances. While utilizing grading policies that punish absenteeism or reward attendance could indeed curb absenteeism (Marburger, 2006), deducting grades for chronic absenteeism has not been shown to improve either attendance or academic performance (Moore, 2005).

The widespread use of non-musical assessment criteria (such as attendance, participation, and attitude) in classrooms is in stark contrast with much of the research and practitioner literature advocating for assessment practices based on individual and group performance, formative and summative testing, use of assessment software, etc. However, educators continue to employ non-musical criteria as a major component of overall grades despite an awareness of its haphazard and subjective nature (Hearn, 2019). Teachers continue to assess learners contrary to recommendations even after participating in appropriate assessment training (Bonner & Chen, 2009; Campbell & Evans, 2000; Russell & Austin, 2010). Assessments employing non-music criteria have not been shown to support music learning and growth to the same extent as content-based assessments built on demonstrations of music knowledge and skills (Reimer, 2009), despite being simple to execute and often supported by administrators (McClung, 1996). Henry's (2015) words concerning the use of non-musical criteria in the choral setting are powerful:

> In the time-honored tradition of teaching as we were taught, and without better solutions readily available, it is easy to rely on familiar, noncurricular means of assessing for the purpose of assigning grades. The lack of tradition in curricularly based choral assessment leads those in the discipline to believe that it is either not

> possible or not practical, and in either circumstance not desirable, to assess choral singers' curricular achievement—primarily because it has not been done that way before. (pp. 3–4)

Russell and Austin (2010) concluded that utilizing content-based assessment practices was the most effective approach to improve student learning.

Assessment of Musical Criteria

Teachers and researchers have used content-specific rating scales, technology, peer- and self-assessments, checklists, rubrics, report cards, aptitude testing, observations, and portfolios to assess student learning and growth in the ensemble setting (Hawkins, 2018; Latukefu, 2010; Parkes et al., 2015; Rohwer, 1997; Russell & Austin, 2010; Salvador, 2011). Concerning assessment and grading procedures, researchers have found a discrepancy between choral and instrumental directors. Cranmore and Wilhelm (2017) found that instrumental directors post more grades and provide more formal assessments than their choral counterparts. Regardless of frequency, formal assessment of musical criteria has been shown to take a variety of formats with performance assessments (Russell and Austin, 2010), written assessments (Hearn, 2019), portfolios (McCall, 2007), peer- and self-assessment (Latukefu, 2010), technology for assessment (Hawkins, 2018), and sight singing assessment (Henry, 2008) listed commonly. Researchers have also examined the use of alternative grading formats—including standards-based grading (St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017) and Comprehensive Musicianship (Baccala, 2020).

Performance Assessment. An assessment of performance has been found to be one of the most common forms of assessment due to the nature of the music making process and its impact on student motivation (Colwell, 2002; Latimer et al., 2010; Reimer, 2009). However, researchers have shown group performance assessments to be subjective (Latimer et al., 2010; Reimer, 2009), often with nonmusical factors (e.g., school size, time of day, event type, school type, gender, and perceived attractiveness) as a strong predictor of large ensemble festival scores (Bergee & Westfall, 2005; Ryan & Costa-Giomi, 2004).

Rubrics, checklists, and rating scales have been developed and researched in order to reinforce assessment quality objectivity with the ultimate goal to improve student musical achievement (Bergee, 2003; Chiodo, 2001; Ciorba & Smith, 2009; Cope, 1996; Doane et al., 1990; Latimer et al., 2010; Nichols, 2017; Orzolek, 2020; Salvador, 2010; Stauffer, 1999). Rubrics utilize descriptors of performance domains (e.g., tone quality, note accuracy, rhythm) to provide a specific evaluation for each domain in a complete performance score (Christopherson, 2007) which has been shown to provide a more detailed account of student achievement (Ciorba & Smith, 2009) as well as increase consistency between students and ensembles (Chiodo, 2001). In addition to technical aspects, scholars have asserted that rubrics may also incorporate expressive performance elements (DeLuca & Bolden, 2014). A checklist is an assessment format that employs a binary metric (e.g., pass/fail, yes/no, observed/not observed, present/not present). This method provides information about present achievement and future goals but lacks any information on how to develop musical skills (Shaw, 2018). While some researchers

assert that feedback via a checklist may be more specific than for a rubric (Colwell, 2002), others assert that checklists may have validity shortcomings (Wesolowski, 2014). A rating scale has been characterized as a performance measuring tool with more gradation than a checklist (Chiodo, 2001; Wesolowski, 2014). Rating scales have been shown to shown to measure a wide variety of independent and interrelated musical skills with high inter-judge reliability (Bergee, 2003; Saunders & Holahan, 1997). Dennis (2018) suggested that a balance must be met between using a rating scale wide enough to provide useful feedback but one small enough to maintain pacing efficiency in the classroom. Salvador (2010) stressed that in designing a rating scale for use in the classroom, teachers must ensure that the scale is valid for the measurement, that the measurement has acceptable reliability, that the criteria are clear, that the scale is incorporated into the classroom environment as authentically as possible, and that the scale provides enough diagnostic information to inform future instruction.

Concerning the use of performance assessment in the classroom, researchers have shown that 87% (n = 214) of ensemble directors (N = 246) used concert performance as an assessment criterion, and 68% (n = 167) of directors employed individual performance criteria (Kotora, 2001, 2005). Other studies have shown that performance-based assessments were a mixture of individual solo, small group/ensemble, and full ensemble assessments (Hearn, 2019) with singing tests employed by up to 77% (n = 189) of ensemble directors (Kotora, 2001, 2005). Russell and Austin (2010) reported that music teachers (N = 327) commonly used performance-based assessment formats: live in-class, ensemble concert performance, sectional performances in-class, and auditions—

employed by 82% (*n* = 268), 52% (*n* = 170), 48% (*n* = 157), and 34% (*n* = 111) of ensemble directors, respectively. In a 2017 replication study, Gonzales's findings supported previous research. For 176 of teachers, live in-class performance assessments were employed by 80% (*n* = 141) of director respondents with ensemble concert performance and in-class sectional performance employed by 66% (*n* = 116) and 56% (*n* = 99) of respondents. Other researchers have shown that in-class performance assessments are employed by up to 95% (*n* = 92) of ensemble directors (*N* = 97) (Wong, 2014). Individual out of class performance exams were utilized as an assessment format by 23% (*n* = 75) of directors (*N* = 327) (Russell & Austin, 2010) and 30% (*n* = 53) of directors (*N* = 176) (Gonzales, 2017).

The most common performance assessment objective was an assessment of technique. Russell and Austin (2010) found that for 327 teachers, technique was a performance assessment objective for 67% (*n* = 219) of participants. Similarly, Gonzales (2017) found that technique was a performance assessment objective for 69% (*n* = 121) of participants (*N* = 176). Wong (2014) found that technique was a performance assessment objective for 94% (*n* = 91) of director participants (*N* = 97). Russell and Austin (2010) found that the most common performance assessment objectives used by participants (*N* = 327) included: prepared excerpts from large ensemble repertoire (64%, *n* = 209), prepared solo and small ensemble repertoire (46%, *n* = 150), and sightreading (33%, *n* = 108). Similarly, Gonzales (2017) found that the most common performance assessment objectives used by participants (*N* = 176) also included: prepared excerpts

from large ensemble repertoire (72%, *n* = 127), prepared solo and small ensemble repertoire (53%, *n* = 93), and sightreading (46%, *n* = 81).

Written Assessment Modes. Researchers have found that directors utilize written projects and other "paper and pencil" modes to assess musical skills (Gonzales, 2017; Hearn, 2019; Kotora, 2001, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014). Often, written assessments target musical theory skills (Hearn, 2021). Kotora (2001, 2005) reported that 74% (*n* = 182) of directors (*N* = 246) used written tests and 51% (*n* = 125) used independent study/written projects to assess student musical knowledge. For music teachers (*N* = 295), the most commonly used written assessment formats were: quizzes (74%, *n* = 218), worksheets (68%, *n* = 201), and exams (41%, *n* = 121) (Russell & Austin, 2010). The most common activities on written assessments targeted: musical terms (97%, *n* = 286), analysis of performances (71%, *n* = 209), identification of musical elements by ear and sight (62%, *n* = 183), and music theory (50%, *n* = 148) (Russell & Austin, 2010). Other assessment formats included homework assignments, projects/presentations, and journals/notebooks (Russell & Austin, 2010). Other objectives included knowledge of music history, performance, and compositional techniques (Russell & Austin, 2010). In a replication study, Gonzales (2017) examined the assessment practices of 136 music educators. The most common written assessment formats were: quizzes (77%, *n* = 105), worksheets (68%, *n* = 92), and journals (39%, *n* = 53. The most common activities on written assessments targeted: musical terms (89%, *n* = 121), analysis of performances (79%, *n* = 107), and identification of musical elements (60%, *n* = 82).

Portfolios. Practitioners have advocated for the use of portfolios in the musical setting asserting that portfolios can "document student skills, abilities, growth, achievement, and attitudes" (Silveira, 2013, p. 15). A portfolio, as an assessment tool, has been posed as an authentic alternative to traditional written tests (Goolsby, 1995) as well as for summative and formative assessment (Wesolowski, 2014) because it "transform[s] the assessment of student work from a subjective, performance-oriented task to one which is based upon judgement and guided by criteria" (Dirth, 2000, p. 2). The use of portfolios in the musical setting have been increasing (Lehman, 2008; Parkes et al., 2015). Portfolios are a collection of artifacts that demonstrate student effort, progress, and achievement over a period of time and may contain a wide range and number of documentation types (e.g., performance recordings, videos, written work, journal entries, concert reviews, rubrics, self-assessments, compositions) (Asmus, 1999; Parkes et al., 2015; Silveira, 2013; Zerull, 1990). The use of portfolios as an assessment tool has been shown to increase student learning and improve classroom practices and pedagogy (Dirth, 2000). Portfolios have also been shown to increase both confidence in student singing assessment and ability to communicate musical preference (McCall, 2007). Choristers have also been shown to express a greater sense of belonging and increased emotional regulation, presumably through the process of portfolio documentation and assessment (McCall, 2007). However, researchers have shown that portfolios are utilized less than other assessment formats (Kotora, 2001, 2005; Wong, 2014). Researchers have noted the significant amount of structure and planning necessary for successful portfolio implementation (Dirth, 2000). Time is noted as the single greatest barrier to portfolio use

(Dirth, 2000), and it has been suggested that portfolios may lead to increased work for practitioners (Colwell, 2002).

Self- and Peer-Assessment. Self- and peer-assessments (a category of indirect assessments) provide supportive evidence of learning but are not hard evidence themselves (Burrack & Payne, 2020). Indirect assessments require music educators to infer student ability, knowledge, values, or skills rather than observe direct evidence (Skidmore College, 2019). Rooted in metacognition, the field of cognitive science concerned with understanding how the learner thinks about their own learning (Benton, 2013), scholars have stated that self- and peer-assessments are "mutually beneficial for both students and teachers, as [they establish] a cultural practice in the classroom with the aim of advancing the quality of instruction and performance for every member of that community" (Moreno, 2020, p. 13). Researchers have shown that self- and peer-assessments have been employed at all age levels—elementary (Valle et al., 2016) through college (Blom & Poole, 2004). Self-assessments may increase student awareness of the learning process and reveal insight into learning gaps (Burrack & Payne, 2020). Similarly, scholars assert that peer-assessment (i.e., an assessment of the performance of another individual or larger group of peers) may increase sensitivity of listening skills and improve analytical skills (Burrack & Payne, 2020). Researchers found that the use of peer-assessments fostered participants' ability to take ownership of their own learning as well as help develop a level of "sophistication about the way they were listening and critically assessing what they heard" (Latukefu, 2010, p. 71). Participants also reported that the peer-assessment process helped them reflect on their own practice by making the

effort to interact with the given criteria in order to effectively assess a peer (Latukefu, 2010). However, despite their benefits, researchers have shown that music teachers use self- and peer-assessments significantly less than other methods (Kotora, 2005) with self-assessments being utilized the least (Wong, 2014).

Technology-Assisted Assessment. Researchers have also addressed the use of technology for assessment in the ensemble setting. Music teachers seem to have utilized technology for regular classroom instruction more often than for assessment (Nielsen, 2011). Choral music educators used technology-assisted assessment tools infrequently compared with their colleagues in other discipline with a large percentage of choir teachers reporting that they never use technology for many areas of choral student assessment (Hawkins, 2018). Choir directors' comfort level with technology-assisted assessment tools was also shown to be a predictor of both frequency and variety (Hawkins, 2018). Time and resources are additional factors that impact teachers' decisions regarding the use of technology for assessment in the musical setting (Nielsen, 2011). Kotora (2001, 2005) found that 68% (n = 167) of directors (N = 246) utilized audio recordings and 59% (n = 145) of directors utilized video recordings of their ensembles as tools for assessment. Full-ensemble audio recording was also utilized as an assessment method by 32% (n = 105) of participants (N = 327) (Russell & Austin, 2010) and 34% (n = 60) of participants (N = 176) with 29% (n = 51) utilizing video recording (Gonzales, 2017). Other studies have revealed ensemble directors' innovative use of technology to assess learners. In Hearn's 2019 study, choristers used their personal cell

phones to record their singing during full ensemble rehearsal. In this setting, choristers were able to have the benefit of individual assessment in an authentic group setting.

Sight Singing. In the choral setting, successful sight singing achievement is a long-range goal with maximum success after a longer duration of instruction and assessment (Henry, 2004). Norris (2004) revealed that sight singing was not widely used as a part of group festival scores. In a nation-wide survey, only 14 states incorporated sight singing as a component factor in overall large-ensemble high school festival scores. Furthermore, only 13 states had sight singing proficiency levels. This may lead to an undervaluing of sight singing skills and assessment because it was not assessed at festival contests (Norris, 2004). However, researchers have revealed that group sight singing success did not indicate successful individual sight singing achievement (Henry & Demorest, 1994), suggesting the need for individual sight singing assessment. Killian and Henry (2005) found that successful sight singers had regular sight singing assessments and that individual testing itself was a tool for successful skill transfer. They found that regular assessments created more testwise singers as well as facilitated a method to transfer group instruction to individual performance skills. Choristers whose sight singing skills were assessed individually scored higher than those who received only group assessment (Demorest, 1998). Floyd and Bradley (2006) report that 79% of high school choral directors assess sight singing skills individually. Researchers have shown that directors must also teach the assessment procedure itself. Henry (2008) found that students who learned appropriate and productive practices for successful sight singing did better than those who did not—successful sight singers had a system and process for the

assessment. High achieving sight singers practiced, used hand signs, sang out loud, physically kept the beat, and isolated problem areas during preparation times (Killian & Henry, 2005).

Alternative Grading

In a study of 353 music educators, Russell and Austin (2010) found that the vast majority (95%, *n* = 335) of participants awarded traditional grades alone (A–F scale). In this system, it was shown that for 75% (*n* = 265) of music teachers, the "vast majority" of their students received an A as a final course grade (Russell & Austin, 2010). Traditional letter grades are not the only options—with pass/fail, standards-based, and non-graded formats being employed by 2% (*n* =7), 2% (*n* =2), and 1% (*n* =4) of districts, respectively (Russell & Austin, 2010).

In a study of 96 music teachers, 52% (*n* = 50) indicated that they were not familiar with standards-based grading. Despite their use at smaller scale, researchers have reported the benefits of both a standards-based approach (Christopherson, 2007; McVeigh, 2013; Twesme, 2016, St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017) as well as Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance (CMP) (Baccala, 2020). Comprehensive Musicianship (CM) is the interdisciplinary study of music describing the interconnectedness of music learning, combining skill development, musical knowledge, and musical understanding (Sindberg, 2006). The CMP framework itself may be represented by five key points—selection, analysis, outcomes, strategies, and assessment (O'Toole, 2003). The CMP model requires effective assessment. Baccala (2020) asserted that "assessment is the vehicle in which the students show…outcomes learned" (p. 33).

Concerning the use of this model, Baccala (2020) showed that most choral directors were not familiar with CMP and that class length impacted how often directors assessed key elements of comprehensive musicianship.

Related to CMP, standards-based grading is a "way to provide students and parents with growth-producing feedback about classroom achievement in a reliable and valid way" (St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017, p. 32). Standards-based grading allows for the evaluation of students based on their classroom performance compared to curriculum standards or specific learning targets. Lehman (2000) asserted that:

> Standards do more than make assessment possible. They make it necessary. Standards have brought assessment to the center of the stage and have made it a high-priority, high-visibility issue. Standards and assessment inescapably go hand in hand. We cannot have standards without assessment. (pp. 413–414)

McVeigh (2003) revealed that teachers who used a standards-based approach in a CM format were more likely to use formal assessments to determine student achievement and assessed students both formally and informally on a regular basis. In standards-based settings, student awareness of learning targets increased (Twesme, 2016). Students were less reliant on teacher feedback for determining success but reported valuing teacher feedback at a higher level (McVeigh, 2003).

In the choral ensemble setting, researchers have revealed that through the development of deliberate standards-based approach in music, teachers were able to identify both successful and unsuccessful methodologies as well as more deliberately consider effective assessment strategies (Christopherson, 2007; Twesme, 2016). This

clearer understanding of what students do and do not know resulted in clearer communication to students regarding their achievement with a focus on musical criteria (Twesme, 2016). Myers (2021) asserted that districts must require assessment documentation from secondary music teachers to ensure that students have formative experiences in all musical domains from the 2014 *National Core Arts Standards* (i.e., performing, creating, and responding).

It is important to frame assessment training in a holistic and individual standards-based approach to best meet the needs of music students (Myers, 2021). St. Pierre and Wuttke (2017) found that teachers most cited a lack of knowledge and training as the reason why they did not use standards-based grading. Teachers reported that it was difficult and time-consuming to create valid and reliable rubrics that aligned to specific learning standards as well as a challenge reporting grades (Twesme, 2016). In a participant pool of 353 music teachers, researchers found that despite the adoption of a standards-based approach, 70% (n = 247) reported that this change had little or no impact on their assessment practices at all (Russell & Austin, 2010). The most prevalent rationale for the implementation of standards-based grading was that teachers were required to adopt it as an assessment model (St. Pierre & Wuttke, 2017).

Summary

Assessment and accountability are inherent to music education. Assessment allows educators to improve the process of teaching and learning (Lehman, 2008), increase motivation (Colwell, 1998), and advocate for the profession (Reimer, 2009). For PMTs, researchers have recognized the important role of previous and current music

teachers and ensemble directors on the development of occupational identity (Duling, 2000). This may impact assessment philosophy and future assessment practices. A teacher's personal philosophy is the single most important influence on assessment practices (Tracy, 2002). Additionally, music educators have commonly cited classroom-level obstacles to effective assessment implementation: inadequate student contact time (Kancianic, 2006), school size (Simanton, 2000), large class sizes (Kancianic, 2006), lack of resources (Shuler, 1996), and parent/student apathy regarding assessment (Kotora, 2005). Also reported was a lack of training and experience in assessment techniques (Kancianic, 2006; Russell & Austin, 2010; Tracy, 2002). Supporting this notion, Ludwig (2013) found that in-service teachers who were confident in their assessment knowledge were more likely to have prior training in assessment and hold positive beliefs about the purpose of assessment. However, teachers were more influenced by internal factors such as philosophy of education and class goals than by external factors like assessment training (Kancianic, 2006).

Researchers have found that music educators use both musical and non-musical assessment criteria with a significantly disproportionate weight on non-musical assessment criteria (e.g., participation, attendance, attitude) (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010). Concerning musical assessment, researchers have shown that teachers use a wide variety of content-specific methods and tools: rating scales, technology, peer- and self-assessments, checklists, rubrics, report cards, aptitude testing, observations, and portfolios to assess student learning and growth in the ensemble setting (Hawkins, 2018; Latukefu, 2010; Parkes et al., 2015; Rohwer,

1997; Russell & Austin, 2010; Salvador, 2011). McMillan and Nash (2000) proposed a conceptual model that may help teachers resolve tensions arising from the complex interaction of assessment beliefs, assessment literacy, external pressures (e.g., performance, program viability, local/state standards), and classroom realities, and which of those factors may influence assessment practices. Given the importance of assessment training/familiarity, literacy, philosophy, and beliefs—all shaped during occupational identity development and influenced by previous and current music educators, teachers, and directors—a baseline investigation of the employed assessment practices of collegiate choral directors seemed warranted.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the assessment strategies and beliefs of collegiate choral conductors. To guide this investigation, I designed and conducted a survey of current collegiate choral directors in states from the SWACDA region from institutions holding NASM certification. I sought to answer the following three research questions:

1. What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?
    a. What specific criteria (musical and non-musical) are being used for assessment?
    b. What are the most commonly used assessment methods?
2. What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?
    a. What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?
    b. What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?
    c. What do participants perceive as challenges to assessment?
    d. What are participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?
3. What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the identity of PMTs?

c. Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?

d. Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?

Because much of the existing research regarding assessment is in the PK–12 setting, an investigation of current assessment practices in the collegiate choral setting seemed merited. Considering the research indicating the important role collegiate choral ensemble directors play in the development of PMT's teacher identity and their possible influence on future rehearsal process (Isbell, 2008), it is important to understand exactly how assessment practices are being modeled and employed in the collegiate choral setting. The findings of this study may inform collegiate choral assessment by providing a baseline for future research in higher education musical assessment.

Research Design

Through a self-administered questionnaire for data collection, a large number of choral directors in a variety of higher education settings were surveyed to gain a broad understanding of their assessment practices across the population. To effectively capture the perceptions of respondents across such a wide geographical area, I utilized a cross-sectional survey design—a highly effective method of measurement in social and behavioral science research (Ruel et al., 2016; Stockemer, 2019). An online questionnaire survey format offered the advantage of efficiency in terms of time, cost, and convenience of data availability and has emerged as the primary vehicle for data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fowler, 2014; Ruel et al., 2016).

Participants

The target population for this study was collegiate choral directors in higher education institutions in states from the SWACDA region holding NASM certification during the 2021–2022 academic year. I determined that this sample of collegiate choral directors would be sufficient in order to generalize to a larger population (Sudman, 1983). The seven states in the Southwest region are a preexisting group established by the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)—a group suitable for inquiry. Respondents must have directed at least one university-sponsored choral ensemble to be eligible for participation in this study. At time of the study, the NASM website listed 118 accredited institutions from states in the SWACDA region (National Association of Schools of Music, n.d.). This investigation included both 4-year and 2-year institutions.

I created the list of potential respondents by systematically investigating individual institution music department websites. All potential choral ensemble directors from each institution were added to the list based on listed job title, biography, and additional website information. No graduate students who direct ensembles were included in this study. However, adjunct, part-time, and visiting faculty were included in this investigation. I recorded the faculty member's name, institution, and email address on an electronic database for ease of sending the survey via email. If the department website did not list faculty titles or positions, I sent an email or called the appropriate administrative assistant to locate the information. When no email address was listed for an instructor, I attempted to locate it either by sending an email message to a different faculty member from the same institution, or by sending a message to the music

department administrative assistant. For the 118 institutions that qualified for inclusion in this study, an investigation of department websites for participants yielded a potential participant list of 200 to whom I distributed the online survey. Fourteen potential participants were excluded from the study due to ineligibility, failed email contact, or other similar rationale.

One week after the initial invitation was distributed, I sent a reminder message to notify participants of the deadline. I sent a reminder message to all potential participants because the online survey was anonymous and did not show individual survey responses. The survey closed one week after the reminder email was sent. For a participant pool of 186 participants, the survey yielded 50 usable responses resulting in an overall response rate of 26.88%.

I determined the response rate to be acceptable based on the relatively even distribution of responses representing the seven states. The distribution of choral conductor respondents among the seven states was generally proportional to both the number of NASM-accredited institutions and number of emails sent for each state. Overall, there seemed to be sufficient data to analyze to provide a picture of the current assessment practices of college choral directors included in the participant pool. Table 3.1 contains the number of NASM-accredited institutions, number of sent emails, response frequency, and response percentage for each participating state.

Table 3.1

NASM-Accredited Institutions, Sent Emails, and Responses by State

	NASM Institutions	Emails Sent	Response Frequency	%
Texas	43	63	17	34.0
Missouri	21	36	12	24.0
Oklahoma	15	23	10	20.0
Arkansas	11	21	4	8.0
Colorado	11	15	3	6.0
Kansas	14	25	3	6.0
New Mexico	3	3	0	0.0
Not Reported	N/A	N/A	1	2.0

N = 50.

Survey Instrument

The development of the survey began with an extensive search and review of related literature regarding the assessment practices of music educators in both the PK–12 and higher education settings. Due to the lack of quantitative research specific to assessment practices in the collegiate choral ensemble, it was necessary to reference and review survey instruments used to document the assessment and grading practices in PK–12 music education. The existing assessment survey literature used to guide this research was grouped by topic: secondary performance ensembles (Gonzales, 2017; Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014), secondary choral (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McClung, 1996; Tracy, 2002), secondary instrumental (Hanzlik, 2001; Hill, 1999; Keddy, 2013; LaCognata, 2010, 2013; Wright, 2008), and elementary/general music (Hepworth-Osiowy, 2004). Additional topic-based assessment survey instruments provided further insight on sight reading assessment (Goss, 2010), use of technology for assessment (Hawkins, 2018; Nielsen, 2011), and assessment literacy and beliefs (Armes, 2020). I

also used instruments from research in higher education music settings to inform my survey in the areas of applied studio assessment (Dunford, 2015), PMTs' attitude toward grading practices (St. Pierre, 2017), and sight-singing instruction in collegiate choral ensembles (Myers, 2008). Consulting such a wide variety of previous assessment surveys allowed for greater construct and content validity of the survey used in this study.

A preliminary pool of survey items was derived with three main considerations in mind: (a) adhering to the research questions, (b) maximizing the content validity of items adapted from other studies to fit the context of the collegiate choral ensemble, and (c) improving response time to increase response rate while minimizing response errors (Sheatsley, 1983). I designed the survey instrument based on: (a) discussions of effective assessment strategies from existing professional literature, (b) recommendations from professional choral conductors who participated in the pilot survey, (c) studies of similar scope and purpose, and (d) my own twelve years of experience as a music educator and choral conductor.

I collected data via Qualtrics, an online survey software accessed through the University of Oklahoma. The survey consisted of 91 questions in four sections (see Appendix C). I designed multiple choice, closed-ended dichotomous, and open-ended short answer questions along with Likert-type rating scales and checklists.

Demographic Information

I designed the first section of the survey to collect demographic and general data regarding the institution and assessment experience of the director. Due to the variety of NASM accredited institutions in the SWACDA region, I asked participants to identify the

state and type of institution where they were teaching (i.e., public institution, private institution, conservatory, community college, or other). Because of the differences in performance and educational experiences required to teach at each type of institution, I asked participants to provide information regarding their highest degree level (i.e., bachelor's, master's, partial doctoral work, doctoral degree, or other), specialization in music (e.g., choral conducting, vocal performance, music education), current position title (e.g., full professor, assistant professor, adjunct instructor, interim), and years of teaching experience at both the collegiate and PK–12 levels. I also asked participants to indicate their self-described sex and race. Data from these questions enabled me to adequately describe the sample.

I asked participants to indicate if their institution offered a degree leading to music teacher certification, the number and type of ensembles they conducted (e.g., large SATB, chamber choir, jazz choir, opera chorus), and number of choristers under their direction. These questions enabled me to better understand the scope of the participants' position and teaching load. Additionally, I asked participants to describe their composite grading system (i.e., traditional letter grades, pass/fail, standards-based, no formal grades, or other), percentage of choristers who receive an A in their classes, and self-reported training in grading and assessment methodology.

Assessment Strategies

I designed section two of the survey to address research question 1: "What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?" Two sub-questions were also posed to investigate topic more precisely: (1a) "What specific

criteria, musical and non-musical, are being used for assessment?" and (1b) "What are the most commonly used assessment methods?" With the overall intention to increase student learning and improve performance, assessment methods can provide a way of determining how choral conductors are monitoring chorister progress and learning (Asmus, 1999). I asked participants to indicate how often they employed specific assessment methods or activities in their teaching as the frequency of use may reveal the literacy, familiarity, or level of training with a specific assessment technique (Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014). The degree to which a conductor used an assessment tool may be an indication of beliefs or personal philosophy concerning assessment (Tracy, 2002). Scholars have noted a multitude of assessment approaches (McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Rohwer, 1997; Russell & Austin, 2010). I grouped assessment strategies into four categories based on the literature: conductor created, traditional, chorister-based, and technology-based (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McClung, 1996; Nielsen, 2011; Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014). Participants selected the frequency they used each assessment strategy from the following options: daily/every rehearsal, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semester, or never.

I compiled a list of prompts of conductor created strategies to show the use and frequency of individual, small group, and full group performance assessment (e.g., sight singing skills, singing accuracy on ensemble concert repertoire) in addition to the use and frequency of formal formative and summative testing. I asked participants to indicate how often they used each of the following conductor created assessment tools/methods:

- checklists, rating scales, and/or rubrics

- whole-group in-rehearsal verbal correction from the conductor
- class discussions
- individual sight singing tests
- small group sight singing tests
- full ensemble sight singing tests
- individual singing tests on choral repertoire
- small group/sectional singing tests (e.g., quartet tests) on choral repertoire
- ensemble concerts/performances

I designed a list of prompts related to traditional assessment to show the use and frequency of written assessment methods. I asked participants to indicate how often they used each of the following traditional assessment tools/methods:

- written tests/quizzes
- concert critiques
- essays/reports
- compositions
- other projects
- written classwork/homework
- surveys/questionnaires
- listening logs
- individual practice logs

Chorister-based assessments included the use of non-musical criteria (e.g., participation, attendance, and attitude) cited in the literature as commonly and widely used (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010). I added additional prompts due to their frequent inclusion in assessment literature: self-reflection (Cohen, 2012), self- and peer-assessment (Latukefu, 2010), and portfolios (McCall, 2007). I asked participants to indicate how often they used each of the following chorister-based assessment tools/methods:

- participation during rehearsal
- attendance of rehearsal
- attendance of performances
- attitude/preparation during rehearsal
- self-assessments
- journals/self-reflections
- peer-assessment
- student portfolios
- one-on-one meetings with choristers

Technology-based tools have been frequently cited in the literature (Nielsen, 2011). I asked participants to indicate how often they used each of the following technology-based assessment tools/methods:

- Audio/video (A/V) recording of whole ensemble during rehearsal
- A/V recording of whole ensemble during performance

- A/V recording of individuals during rehearsal
- A/V recording of small group during rehearsal
- A/V recording of individuals outside of rehearsal
- A/V recording of small group outside of rehearsal
- photographs
- SmartMusic or similar software

Participants were also given the opportunity via an open-ended response to provide and describe any other assessment, grading strategy, or activity that was not listed previously.

Concerning diagnostic assessment, I asked participants if they assessed choristers at the beginning of the year or term via a traditional choral audition, screening, or placement process. If so, participants were asked to select the components they included in their diagnostic assessment from the following list (Fenton, 1981; Mowrer, 1996; Pazitka-Munroe, 2002):

- sing solo repertoire
- range check
- sight sing single melodic line
- sight sing their voice part in a choral texture
- sing tonal memory examples
- personal interview
- recommendation from students or faculty

Participants were also given the option to list and describe any components not already provided as a part of their audition assessments as well as indicate that they do not require a screening or audition.

Assessment Beliefs and Attitudes

I designed a portion of the third section of the survey to address research question 2: "What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?" Participants were asked to respond to the level in which they agreed with each Likert-type prompt on a 4-point scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*). Items in this section of the survey were constructed according to themes from the extant body of research: music assessment in general (McMillan, 2001, 2003; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Simanton, 2000), assessment type suitability (McClung, 1996), individual vs. group assessment (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994), perceived assessment obstacles (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), and assessment literacy as an influence on assessment self-efficacy (Armes, 2020; Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002).

Concerning the purposes and value of assessment, music teachers may hold different perceptions and opinions from the general teaching population due to the specialized and unique nature of music education (Russell & Austin, 2010). Researchers have found that music teachers may hold contradictory beliefs, perceiving assessment as both necessary for instructional feedback and also irrelevant to their instructional process (Austin & Russell, 2017, 2019; Opre, 2015).

To address music assessment beliefs in general, I asked participants to respond to the following Likert-type prompts:

- Assessing choristers' musical progress is a primary role of the collegiate choral director.
- Formal assessment is an important part of my collegiate choral program.
- I most commonly use informal verbal feedback for assessment during the rehearsal process.
- Assessment interferes with teaching.
- The way collegiate choral ensembles are assessed should be different than the way choirs are assessed at the PK–12 level.

Researchers have also shown that directors hold unique views concerning the suitability of assessing non-musical criteria (Kotora, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010). To address this, I posed the first sub-question: "What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?" Participants were asked to respond to the following prompts related to assessment suitability:

- Tests and written projects are suitable formats for assessing a chorister.
- Rehearsal participation is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.
- Performance tests (e.g., sight-reading, on-the-music tests) are suitable formats for assessing a chorister.
- Preparation (e.g., being on time, having music, pencil) a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.

- Class attendance is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.
- Attitude is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.
- Concert participation is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.

The existing literature suggests divergent views from music directors concerning the value of individual vs. group assessment (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). To address this, I asked the second sub-question: "What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?" Participants responded to the following Likert-type prompts:

- A choir class should concentrate on group learning assessment and not on individual learning assessment.
- Choral music is a subject where individual assessment is not critical.
- It is unrealistic to believe that a student's musical learning and progress in choir can be assessed individually and reliably.
- Assessing a choristers' individual musical progress is an important function in the role of a collegiate choral conductor.
- Choral music students' skills are best assessed on an individual basis.
- Choral music students' skills are best assessed in small groups (e.g., quartets, sections).
- Choral music students' skills are best assessed in large groups (e.g., entire ensemble).

- If my ensembles are achieving at a high level, then the individual choristers are learning appropriately.

The literature reveals that directors commonly cite challenges and obstacles for assessing students, notably time (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Shuler, 1996; Tracy, 2002), training/education (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000), lack of resources (Shuler, 1996), and large numbers of students (Hearn, 2021; Kancianic, 2006; Nightingale-Abell, 1994; Shuler, 1996; Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002). To address this, I asked the third sub-question: "What do participants perceive as challenges to assessment?" Participants responded to the following Likert-type prompts:

- I lack the rehearsal time to formally assess choristers effectively.
- Large numbers of singers prevent me from assessing choristers effectively.
- I lack adequate training/education to formally assess choristers effectively.
- I lack the resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, materials) to assess choristers effectively.
- I feel that my formal education appropriately properly trained me to assess my choristers musically.

Music educators' assessment self-efficacy and perception of assessment type suitability are often tied to experience, training, and personal music education philosophy (Russell & Austin, 2010; Tracy, 2002). To address assessment self-efficacy and confidence, I asked the fourth sub-question: "What are participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?" Participants responded to the following Likert-type prompts:

- I feel that my current assessment practices are effective and suitable for my ensembles.
- I feel there is room to improve the assessment practices I use with my choir.
- I feel confident that my assessment practices are well developed and meet the needs of my students and overall choral program.
- My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by other college choir directors.

Participants were also given the opportunity via an open-ended response to provide and describe any other response related to assessment beliefs.

Perception of Impact on PMT Occupational Identity

Researchers have found that collegiate ensemble directors are rated as one of the strongest influencers on PMT occupational identity (Isbell, 2008). Additionally, the collegiate ensemble performance process is rated as the most influential experience on PMT identity (Isbell, 2008). This influence may extend into PMT's future assessment practices. Wuttke and St. Pierre (2016) found that of 28 PMT participants, 100% had been graded using a "hodgepodge" of musical and non-musical assessment criteria in their high school ensembles. When asked to create their own hypothetical grading policies, non-musical criteria (notably, attendance and participation) accounted for three of the four most cited grading criteria (Wuttke & St. Pierre, 2016). Researchers have found that educators who expressed high levels of assessment value assessed musical goals more in their grading practices and held a "teacher" occupational identity while those who devalued assessment were more likely to target non-musical or behavioral

outcomes (Austin & Russell, 2017). For PMTs, previous experience with assessment as a chorister seems to influence future assessment practices.

I designed a portion of the third section of the survey instrument to address research question 3: "What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the occupational identity of PMTs?" To more specifically address the impact collegiate choral directors have on PMT occupational identity, I posed two sub-questions: (3a) "Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?" and (3b) "Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?" Participants were asked to respond to the following Likert-type prompts concerning their impact on PMT occupational identity development:

- My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by the music education students in my choirs.
- The preservice music teachers in my choirs should adopt my assessment strategies.
- The assessment practices I use in my college choirs impacts the future assessment practices of the music education students in my choirs.
- I develop my choral assessment strategies specifically as a model for the preservice music teachers in my choirs.

Participants were also given the opportunity via an open-ended response to provide and describe any other response related to their role in shaping PMT occupational identity development.

Pilot Testing

I used pilot testing to establish and reinforce the face validity of the survey instrument. Face validity is an informal way of evaluating whether a measure appears appropriate to assess a construct (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). This process allowed me to refine item language, increase clarity and ease of use, and gauge the user experience (e.g., the time required to complete the survey, distribution of sections, prompt grouping). I received input from 14 music teacher educator colleagues and music education faculty knowledgeable in both survey design and accessibility of the instrument. Based upon their feedback, I modified the wording, length, and organization of several questions to increase ease of use and clarity. Content validity of the survey instrument was established in two ways: (a) information reported in the research literature pertaining to effective assessment strategies in large ensemble musical settings provided a basis for the questionnaire items; and (b) pilot study participants who provided feedback were professionals with expertise and experience in musical instruction and educational methodology.

Procedures

Prior to implementing the main study and gathering data, I completed the IRB procedures for all human subject research under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma. Before distributing the survey, I submitted the participant recruitment email, online consent, and the survey instrument to the university's Internal Review Board (IRB) for approval. In both the recruitment email and the online consent prompt (the survey's initial question), participants were assured that all data and potentially

identifiable data would remain confidential. I was granted IRB approval to conduct the study on March 28, 2022 (see Appendix A).

An invitation to participate in the study was sent to each potential participant via an email message. In the message, I included the purpose of the study, minimal risks involved, protection of their personal and institutional information, and URL link to the online survey. A copy of the invitation and recruitment email can be found in Appendix B. To maximize the response rate, I used a mail merge function in the Qualtrics system to send individual messages. Upon clicking to begin the survey, respondents confirmed their informed consent to participate in the study or were directed to the end of the survey. The initial email invitation to participate was sent on April 5, 2022. On April 12, 2022, one week after the initial invitation was sent, I sent a reminder message to notify participants of the deadline. See Appendix B for initial and reminder email messages. I sent a reminder message to all potential participants because the online survey was anonymous and did not show individual survey responses. The survey closed one week after the reminder email was sent on April 20, 2022. At that point, the survey instrument was closed, and data files were downloaded from Qualtrics.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 28.0 for Mac). Once collected, the data were entered into SPSS, labeled, and then descriptively analyzed. The SPSS file contained demographic information, the assessment type and frequency matrices, and the Likert-type music assessment belief items. I then utilized the exploratory data analysis procedures as outlined by Morgan et

al. (2013). This process consisted of analyzing data for outliers, non-normal distributions, missing values, and errors from data input through the use of histograms, frequency tables, boxplots, and descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, minimum and maximum values). The analysis of demographic information allowed me to better understand the population. For Likert-type, assessment and frequency matrices, and other closed responses questions, I used descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarize the collected data. Tables were constructed for many survey items in order to clearly communicate the information collected (American Psychological Association, 2020).

In addition to closed responses, respondents were given open-ended response prompts as well as the opportunity to specify additional information when selecting "other" in the closed-item questions. These text responses were categorized in order to present meaningful data. Responses to the open-ended question were analyzed by emergent coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018) or provided in their original context due to their variety and unique perspective (Sims & Cassidy, 2019). I used keyword coding to determine the categories that emerged from the participant responses. I found elements of the written responses that could be matched to the research questions. Once I had identified the keyword codes, I grouped the codes into larger categories for data presentation. I included interpretations of and quotations from participant responses in the presentation of the data in order to provide relevant narratives.

For reliability purposes, a music education professor reviewed the open-ended responses. This person was given the responses with a list of codes that had emerged

based on my analysis. They assigned codes to the data using the provided list. We discussed coding differences until we reached an agreement level of 100%.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment strategies and beliefs of collegiate choral conductors. Specifically, I examined (a) the methods used to assess students' musical achievement in the collegiate choral ensemble, (b) the frequency of assessment strategies used, (c) participants' beliefs regarding assessment in the collegiate choral rehearsal, and (d) participants' perceptions of their role in shaping preservice music teacher identity.

During April 2022, I distributed the survey instrument via email to 200 potential participants who identified as a potential choral conductor in a NASM-accredited institution in the Southwestern Division of ACDA. Of those 200 email invitations, eight emails failed and were returned. Two potential participants replied and asked to be removed from the database. Of the remaining 190 email invitations, 65 people began the survey. Four respondents were excluded from consideration after failing to meet the criteria of currently conducting a collegiate choral ensemble. Four additional respondents declined to participate in the study. Of the 186 eligible responses received, data from an additional ten respondents were excluded from this study because they were incomplete. Ultimately, a total of 50 viable responses were received, yielding a response rate of 26.88%. On average, respondents completed the survey in 12.62 minutes (SD = 5.04). The minimum completion time was 5.77 minutes. The maximum completion time was 28.6 minutes. Data obtained from the viable participant responses (N = 50) were analyzed using SPSS (Version 28.0 for Mac). After importing the dataset from Qualtrics, I engaged

in exploratory data analysis procedures to examine the data for missing or incomplete values and psychometric properties (Morgan et al., 2013).

Basic descriptive analyses were presented in the next section of this chapter, with results arranged by major variables and their organization within the survey instrument. Demographic information (sex, race/ethnicity, highest level education, highest degree type, position title, years of PK–12 teaching experience, years of collegiate conducting experience) was presented as well as institution characteristics (institution type, if the institution offers a degree leading to music teacher certification, and state). Data regarding collegiate conductor experience (number of ensembles conducted, types of ensembles conducted, number of choristers under participants' direction), overall grading practices (composite grading system and percentage of choristers who receive an A), and assessment training follow.

The next section includes descriptive data about the frequency of assessment strategies used by respondents. Strategies are divided into like categories: conductor created, chorister-based, traditional, technology-based, and non-musical assessment criteria. The most commonly used strategies/methodologies and criteria are presented as well as the qualitative responses to open-ended prompts regarding respondents' additional assessment strategies.

The third section contains respondents' self-reported assessment attitudes and beliefs. Descriptive data are divided into themes according to the existing literature: general assessment beliefs, assessment type suitability, individual vs. group assessment, assessment obstacles, and assessment self-efficacy along with open-ended responses.

The final section addresses respondents' reactions to their influence on the occupational identity of preservice music teachers (PMTs) as it relates to assessment practices. Data are presented descriptively. Additional open-ended responses are organized by emergent themes.

Demographics

Participant Demographics

Sex and Race/Ethnicity. The majority of respondents identified as male (74.0%, $n = 37$). Twelve respondents identified as female (24.0%) with one choosing not to answer. The percentage of males and females who responded were representative of the national population of collegiate choral conductors (Baughman, 2021). Respondents were majority white or Caucasian (88.0%, $n = 44$) with other participant races/ethnicities as follows: Hispanic/Latino (6.0%, $n = 3$) and Black/African American (4.0%, $n = 2$) with one respondent declining to answer. Demographic information can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographic Information	Frequency	%
Sex		
Male	37	74.0
Female	12	24.0
Prefer not to answer	1	2.0
Race/Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	44	88.0
Hispanic/Latino	3	6.0
Black/African American	2	4.0
Prefer not to answer	1	2.0

Education Level, Degree Type, and Title. Most respondents held a doctoral degree (88.0%, *n* = 44). Fewer had completed a master's degree (8.0%, *n* = 4) or reported partial doctoral studies (including ABD) (2.0%, *n* = 1). One participant (2.0%) selected "other" and indicated that they held two master's degrees. The majority of respondents stated that their highest degree type was choral conducting (62.0%, *n* = 31). Respondents also reported their highest degree type as choral music education (20.0%, *n* = 10) and vocal performance (6.0%, *n* = 3). An additional six respondents (12.0%) selected "other." The open-ended responses indicated additional education types. Participants listed: sacred/church music (4.0%, *n* = 2), music theory (2.0%, *n* = 1), composition (2.0%, *n* = 1), and vocal pedagogy (2.0%, *n* = 1). One participant (2.0%) indicated that they held multiple high-level degrees—vocal performance and choral music education. The majority of respondents reported their position title as full professor (48.0%, *n* = 24), with both assistant and associate professor positions selected by an additional 22.0% each (*n* = 11). Non-tenure track professor (e.g., instructor, lecturer) and adjunct instructor were both selected by an additional 4.0% of respondents (*n* = 2). Respondents' level of education, highest degree type, and position title is reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Respondents' Level of Education, Degree Type, and Title

	Frequency	%
Level of Education		
Doctorate	44	88.0
Partial Doctoral Work (including ABD)	1	2.0
Master	4	8.0
Other	1	2.0
Degree Type		
Choral Conducting	31	62.0
Choral Music Education	10	20.0
Other	6	12.0
Vocal Performance	3	6.0
Position Title		
Full Professor	24	48.0
Associate Professor	11	22.0
Assistant Professor	11	22.0
Non-Tenure Track Professor	2	4.0
Adjunct Instructor	2	4.0

Institution Characteristics

Institution Type and Music Education Degree. The majority of respondents (58.0%, *n* = 29) taught at public institutions and 18 (36.0%) respondents taught at private schools. Respondents also taught at community colleges (4.0%, *n* = 2) and conservatories (2.0%, *n* = 1). Most respondents' institutions (94.0%, *n* = 47) offered a degree leading to music teacher certification while 6.0% (*n* = 3) did not. Respondents' institution type and offering a music education degree are reported in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Respondents' Institution Type and Music Education Degree

	Frequency	%
Institution Type		
Public	29	58.0
Private	18	36.0
Community College	2	4.0
Conservatory	1	2.0
Music Education Degree		
Yes	47	94.0
No	3	6.0

Responses by State. Collegiate choral conductors from institutions in the seven states of the Southwest Division of ACDA completed the survey instrument. There was a wide range of response frequencies between the highest number from Texas (n = 17) and the lowest number from New Mexico, which had zero respondents. However, the response frequency is somewhat proportionate compared to the relative numbers of both NASM-accredited institutions and sent email survey invitations in each state. The number of NASM-accredited institutions, sent email invitations, response frequencies, and percentages by state are reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Number of NASM-Accredited Institutions, Sent Emails, and Responses by State

State	NASM Institutions	Emails Sent	Response Frequency	%
Texas	43	63	17	34.0
Missouri	21	36	12	24.0
Oklahoma	15	23	10	20.0
Arkansas	11	21	4	8.0
Colorado	11	15	3	6.0
Kansas	14	25	3	6.0
New Mexico	3	3	0	0.0
Not Reported	N/A	N/A	1	2.0

Participant Experience

Years of Teaching Experience. At the collegiate level, 11 respondents (22.0%) had 30 or more years of teaching experience. Four respondents (8.0%) taught between 25–29 years, and two respondents (4.0%) had 20–24 years of collegiate experience. Nine respondents (18.0%) reported between 15–19 years and 10–14 years of experience each. Ten respondents (20%) had 5–9 years of experience, while five respondents (10.0%) had 1–4 years. Respondents were instructed to count the current teaching year as one.

At the PK–12 level, two respondents (4.0%) reported 20 or more years of teaching experience. Three respondents (6.0%) had 15–19 years of experience. Five respondents (10.0%) had 10–14 years, 14 respondents (28.0%) had 5–9 years, and 16 respondents (32.0%) had 1–4 years of PK–12 teaching experience. Ten respondents (20.0%) stated that they had no teaching experience at the PK–12 level. Respondents' years of teaching experience are reported in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Respondents' Years of Teaching Experience

	Frequency	%
Collegiate Teaching Experience		
1–4 years	5	10.0
5–9 years	10	20.0
10–14 years	9	18.0
15–19 years	9	18.0
20–24 years	2	4.0
25–29 years	4	8.0
30+ years	11	22.0
PK–12 Teaching Experience		
0 years	10	20.0
1–4 years	16	32.0
5–9 years	14	28.0
10–14 years	5	10.0
15–19 years	3	6.0
20+ years	2	4.0

Number and Types of Conducted Choirs. The majority of respondents (44.0%, $n = 22$) conducted two choral ensembles at the collegiate level. Ten respondents (20.0%) conducted one ensemble. An additional ten respondents (20.0%) conducted three choral ensembles. Three respondents (6.0%) conducted four ensembles, while two respondents (4.0%) conducted five ensembles. No respondents conducted six or more ensembles. Three respondents did not answer this question. The number of choral ensembles conducted by respondents is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Number of Ensembles Conducted by Respondents

	Frequency	%
One	10	20.0
Two	22	44.0
Three	10	20.0
Four	3	6.0
Five	2	4.0
Six or more	0	0.0
Not Reported	3	6.0

The ensemble types most commonly conducted by respondents were a top-tier SATB (66.0%, *n* = 33), an introductory SATB (42.0%, *n* = 21), and a chamber choir (34.0%, *n* = 17). Single voiced choirs were also reported—with women's/treble choir and men's/tenor and bass choir conducted by 22.0% (*n* = 11) and 16.0% (*n* = 8) of respondents, respectively. Respondents also conducted an opera chorus (12.0%, *n* = 6), worship/praise choir (10.0%, *n* = 5), jazz choir (8.0%, *n* = 4), student and community choir (8.0%, *n* = 4), madrigal choir (6.0%, *n* = 3), pop/show choir (4.0%, *n* = 2), and gospel choir (2.0%, *n* = 1). The open-ended response yielded an additional ensemble type—symphony chorus, conducted by one respondent (2.0%). The types of choral ensembles conducted by respondents is reported in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Type of Ensembles Conducted by Respondents

Ensemble Types	Frequency	%
Top Level SATB	33	66.0
Introductory SATB	21	42.0
Chamber Choir	17	34.0
Women's/Treble Voice Choir	11	22.0
Men's Glee/Tenor and Bass Voice Choir	8	16.0
Opera Chorus	6	12.0
Worship/Praise Choir	5	10.0
Jazz Choir	4	8.0
Student/Community Non-Audition Choir	4	8.0
Madrigal Choir	3	6.0
Pop/Show Choir	2	4.0
Gospel Choir	1	2.0
Symphony Chorus	1	2.0

Note: $N = 50$. Total percentages equal greater than 100% due to respondents reporting that they conducted multiple choral ensembles.

Number of Choristers. The greatest number of directors (40.0%, $n = 20$) conducted between 40 to 59 choristers. Ten respondents (20.0%) each conducted 40–49 and 50–59 choristers. Seven respondents (14.0%) conducted between 100–149 choristers. An additional six respondents (12.0%) conducted 60–69 choristers. Four respondents (8.0%) each conducted between 30–39, 70–79, and 80–89 choristers. Two respondents (4.0%) conducted 10–19 choristers, while one respondent (2.0%) each conducted 20–29, 90–99, and 150–200 choristers. No respondents conducted less than 10 choristers. The number of choristers conducted by respondents is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Number of Choristers Under Individual Respondents' Direction

Number of Choristers	Frequency	%
0–9	0	0.0
10–19	2	4.0
20–29	1	2.0
30–39	4	8.0
40–49	10	20.0
50–59	10	20.0
60–69	6	12.0
70–79	4	8.0
80–89	4	8.0
90–99	1	2.0
100–149	7	14.0
150–200	1	2.0

Grading Practices and Assessment Training

Grading System and Percentage of Students Receiving an A. Most respondents (94.0%, *n* = 47) employed a traditional (i.e., A, B, C, D, F) grading scale. Two respondents (4.0%, *n* = 2) used a pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory system while one respondent (2.0%) used standards-based grading.

The majority of respondents (42.0%, *n* = 21) stated that 90–94% of choristers received an A in choir. Two respondents (4.0%) stated that 100% of their choristers received an A as their final choral ensemble grade. Nine respondents (18.0%) reported between 95–99% of choristers received an A in choir. A majority of directors (64.0%, *n* = 32) state that between 90%–100% of their choristers receive an A as their overall grade in their choral ensemble class. Six respondents (12.0%) reported between 85–89%, five respondents (10.0%) reported between 80–84%, two respondents (4.0%) reported

between 75–79%, two respondents (4.0%) reported between 70–74%, one respondent (2.0%) reported between 60–64%, and one respondent (2.0%) reported that between 50–54% of choristers received an A in choir. Respondents' composite grading system and percentage of students who received an A as their overall choral ensemble grade are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Composite Grading System and Percentage of Choristers who Receive an A

	Frequency	%
Composite Grading System		
Traditional Letter Grades	47	94.0
Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory	2	4.0
Standards-Based Grading	1	2.0
Percentage of Choristers Who Receive an A		
100%	2	4.0
95–99%	9	18.0
90–94%	21	42.0
85–89%	6	12.0
80–84%	5	10.0
75–79%	2	4.0
70–74%	2	4.0
65–69%	0	0.0
60–64%	1	2.0
55–59%	0	0.0
50–54%	1	2.0
Not Reported	1	2.0

Diagnostic Testing/Auditions. The majority of respondents (90.0%, $n = 45$) incorporate a vocal range check as a part of their audition procedure. Other commonly-included components included a personal interview (74.0%, $n = 37$), singing tonal memory examples (70.0%, $n = 35$), sight singing a single melodic line (68.0%, $n = 34$),

and singing prepared accompanied solo repertoire (66.0%, *n* = 33). Respondents also require choristers to sight sing their vocal part in a choral texture (36.0%, *n* = 18) and take recommendations from students or faculty (20.0%, *n* = 10). Five respondents (10.0%) reported that they do not require a voice screening/audition. Respondents' audition/diagnostic assessment requirements are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Respondents' Audition/Diagnostic Assessment Requirements

Audition Components	Frequency	%
Vocal range check	45	90.0
Personal interview	37	74.0
Singing tonal memory examples	35	70.0
Sight sing single melodic line	34	68.0
Sing solo repertoire	33	66.0
Sight sing their voice part in a choral texture	18	36.0
Recommendations from students or faculty	10	20.0
Does not require a screening/audition	5	10.0
Other (please describe)	5	10.0

Note: *N* = 50. Total percentages equal greater than 100% due to some respondents reporting multiple audition/diagnostic assessment requirements.

An additional five respondents (10.0%) selected "other" and provided their additional requirements. Qualitative responses are provided in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Respondents' Additional Audition/Diagnostic Assessment Requirements

Qualitative Response	Frequency	%
Prepare their voice part in an assigned choral piece	1	2.0
Perform graded rhythmic exercises	1	2.0
Participation in all-state chorus	1	2.0
Learn new song by ear/rote	1	2.0
Perform melodic pattern with different combinations of dynamics and articulations.	1	2.0

Assessment Training. The most commonly reported source of assessment training was as a component of another music course and at a conference, workshop, or professional development event—each reported by 21 (42.0%) respondents. Other sources of assessment training included self-study (30.0%, $n = 15$), more than one course based solely on musical assessment (22.0%, $n = 11$), included as a component of another non-music course (22.0%, $n = 11$), and one course based solely on musical assessment (14.0%, $n = 7$). Eight respondents (16.0%) report having no formal training in assessment. Respondents' sources of assessment training are shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Respondents' Sources of Assessment Training

Type of Training	Frequency	%
Included as a component of another music course	21	42.0
Conference, workshop, or PD on assessment	21	42.0
Self-study	15	30.0
More than one course based solely on musical assessment	11	22.0
Included as a component of another non-music course	11	22.0
No training in assessment	8	16.0
One course based solely on musical assessment	7	14.0

Note: Percentages represent the number of respondents ($N = 50$) who indicated they received specific types of training. Total percentages equal greater than 100% due to some respondents reporting multiple sources of training.

Employed Assessment Methods and Strategies

In response to research question one ("What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?"), I asked respondents to indicate the use and frequency of specific assessment strategies. These strategies were grouped by type: conductor created, chorister-based, traditional, technology-based, and non-musical criteria. The grouping allowed me to answer two sub-questions: (1a) "What specific criteria (musical and non-musical) are being used for assessment?" and (1b) "What are the most commonly used assessment methods?" Respondents were to indicate the frequency of use for each specific strategy or method on a 0–5 scale: 0 (*never*), 1 (*semester*), 2 (*quarterly*), 3 (*monthly*), 4 (*weekly*), and 5 (*daily/every rehearsal*). Due to

the exhaustive nature of the assessment options list, respondents were told that there was no expectation that they were to employ all assessment strategies.

For this question, it was important to understand which assessment methods and criteria were being used, regardless of their frequency. To better understand the use of each assessment strategy, method, or criteria, I recoded the frequency data into two categories: respondents who report using the strategy and those who do not use the strategy. I grouped the respondents who reported using each strategy (who reported a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on the survey instrument) into a single variable. Unanswered prompts and participants who reported 0 (*never*) were also grouped into another single variable. The percentage of respondents who use each assessment strategy is shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Percentage of Respondents Who Use Each Assessment Strategy, Method, or Criteria

Assessment Strategies/Methods	Frequency	%
Conductor Created Assessments		
Ensemble concerts/performances	46	92.0
Group verbal corrections	45	90.0
Class discussions	42	84.0
Small group/sectional singing tests on choral repertoire	34	68.0
Checklists, rubrics, scales	33	66.0
Individual singing tests on choral repertoire	28	56.0
Individual sight singing tests	20	40.0
Small group sight singing tests	15	30.0
Full ensemble sight singing tests	13	26.0
Chorister-Based Assessments		
Self-assessments	25	50.0
One-on-one meetings	25	50.0
Peer-assessment	13	26.0
Journal/self-reflections	7	14.0
Portfolios	1	2.0

Assessment Strategies/Methods	Frequency	%
Traditional Assessments		
Concert critiques	23	46.0
Surveys/questionnaires	18	36.0
Other projects	16	32.0
Written classwork/homework	11	22.0
Listening logs	5	10.0
Essays/reports	4	8.0
Written tests/quizzes	2	4.0
Compositions	1	2.0
Individual practice logs	1	2.0
Technology-Based Assessments		
A/V record whole ensemble in performance	39	78.0
A/V record whole ensemble in rehearsal	36	72.0
Photographs	22	44.0
A/V record individual outside of rehearsal	18	36.0
A/V record individuals in rehearsal	9	18.0
A/V small groups in rehearsal	9	18.0
A/V record small groups outside of rehearsal	5	10.0
SmartMusic or other similar software	4	8.0
Non-Musical Assessment Criteria		
Rehearsal attendance	49	98.0
Performance attendance	48	96.0
Rehearsal participation	47	94.0

In order to understand the frequency use of each assessment strategy, I used descriptive statistics. Within each assessment category, I reported the usage frequency counts of each strategy, method, or criteria. The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for each assessment strategy is reported in Table 4.14. Responses are listed from highest to lowest mean value within their assessment type category.

Table 4.14

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Assessment Strategies

Assessment Types	*n*	5 (%) Daily	4 (%) Weekly	3 (%) Monthly	2 (%) Quarterly	1 (%) Semester	0 (%) Never	*M* (*SD*)
Conductor Created Assessments								
Group verbal corrections	49	42 (84.0)	3 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.0)	4.53 (1.39)
Class discussions	48	20 (40.0)	13 (26.0)	6 (12.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	3.62 (1.71)
Small group/sectional singing tests	47	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	18 (36.0)	5 (10.0)	3 (6.0)	13 (26.0)	2.15 (1.57)
Checklists, rating scales, and/or rubrics	49	3 (6.0)	10 (20.0)	8 (16.0)	2 (4.0)	10 (20.0)	16 (32.0)	1.90 (1.76)
Ensemble concerts/performances	50	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (18.0)	21 (42.0)	16 (32.0)	4 (8.0)	1.70 (0.86)
Individual singing tests on choral repertoire	48	1 (2.0)	7 (14.0)	8 (16.0)	5 (10.0)	7 (14.0)	20 (40.0)	1.54 (1.61)
Full ensemble sight singing tests	47	4 (8.0)	3 (6.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.0)	34 (68.0)	0.85 (1.67)
Small group sight singing tests	47	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.0)	4 (8.0)	4 (8.0)	32 (64.0)	0.79 (1.37)
Individual sight singing tests	49	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	2 (4.0)	12 (24.0)	29 (58.0)	0.73 (1.13)
Chorister-Based Assessments								
Self-assessments	47	4 (8.0)	4 (8.0)	5 (10.0)	2 (4.0)	10 (20.0)	22 (44.0)	1.38 (1.73)
One-on-one meetings with choristers	49	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	3 (6.0)	6 (12.0)	13 (26.0)	24 (48.0)	0.96 (1.26)
Peer-assessments	48	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	5 (10.0)	1 (2.0)	4 (8.0)	35 (70.0)	0.69 (1.29)
Journals and self-reflections	48	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	41 (82.0)	0.33 (0.95)
Student portfolios	47	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	46 (92.0)	0.02 (0.15)

Assessment Types	*n*	5 (%) Daily	4 (%) Weekly	3 (%) Monthly	2 (%) Quarterly	1 (%) Semester	0 (%) Never	*M* (*SD*)
Traditional Assessments								
Other projects	47	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	6 (12.0)	1 (2.0)	8 (16.0)	31 (62.0)	0.68 (1.14)
Concert critiques	49	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	15 (30.0)	26 (52.0)	0.67 (0.85)
Written classwork/homework	48	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)	37 (74.0)	0.58 (1.18)
Surveys/questionnaires	48	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	14 (28.0)	30 (60.0)	0.52 (0.90)
Essays/reports	47	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	43 (86.0)	0.19 (0.80)
Listening logs	47	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	42 (84.0)	0.17 (0.56)
Written tests/quizzes	48	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	46 (92.0)	0.10 (0.52)
Individual practice log	47	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	46 (92.0)	0.06 (0.44)
Compositions	48	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	47 (94.0)	0.02 (0.14)
Technology-Based Assessments								
A/V record whole ensemble in rehearsal	49	1 (2.0)	5 (10.0)	12 (24.0)	8 (16.0)	10 (20.0)	13 (26.0)	1.78 (1.45)
A/V record whole ensemble in performance	49	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (24.0)	14 (28.0)	11 (22.0)	10 (20.0)	1.73 (1.27)
A/V individuals outside of rehearsal	49	0 (0.0)	6 (12.0)	6 (12.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	31 (62.0)	1.02 (1.52)
Photographs	49	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.0)	3 (6.0)	15 (30.0)	27 (54.0)	0.67 (0.92)
A/V record small group in rehearsal	48	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	4 (8.0)	1 (2.0)	39 (78.0)	0.46 (1.03)
A/V record individuals in rehearsal	48	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	4 (8.0)	1 (2.0)	39 (78.0)	0.46 (1.03)
A/V record small group outside of rehearsal	48	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	43 (86.0)	0.27 (0.87)
SmartMusic or other similar software	48	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	44 (88.0)	0.23 (0.93)
Non-Musical Assessment Criteria								
Attendance of rehearsals	50	49 (98.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	4.90 (0.71)
Participation during rehearsal	50	45 (90.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	4.60 (1.31)
Attitude/preparation during rehearsal	50	37 (74.0)	5 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	4.14 (1.75)
Attendance of performance	50	33 (66.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	9 (18.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)	3.92 (1.63)

Note: Responses measured on a 0–5 scale: 5 (*daily/every rehearsal*), 4 (*weekly*), 3 (*monthly*), 2 (*quarterly*), 1 (*semester*), 0 (*never*).

Conductor Created Assessments

Respondents used informal group verbal feedback ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.39$) and class discussions ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.71$) to assess their choristers most regularly. The majority of respondents (84.0%, $n = 42$) reported that they used informal group verbal feedback daily/during every rehearsal while 33 participants (66.0%) used class discussion either daily/every rehearsal or weekly. Just over half of participants (52.0%, $n = 26$) used small group/sectional singing tests ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.57$) at least monthly. Checklists, rating scales, and/or rubrics ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 1.76$) were utilized by directors more evenly with 13 directors (26.0%) using them daily/every rehearsal or weekly, 10 directors (20.0%) using them monthly or quarterly, 10 directors (20.0%) using them on a semester basis, and 16 directors (32.0%) never using them.

Less frequently utilized assessment types included ensemble concerts/performances ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.86$) and individual singing tests on choral repertoire ($M = 1.54$, $SD = 1.61$). The majority of directors (74.0%, $n = 37$) used concerts/performances for assessment quarterly or per semester. The use of choral repertoire singing tests was more evenly distributed with 8 directors (16.0%) using them daily/every rehearsal or weekly, 13 directors (26.0%) using them monthly or quarterly, 7 directors (14.0%) using them on a semester basis, and 20 directors (40.0%) never using them.

The least utilized assessment types in this category all included sight singing—full ensemble sight singing tests ($M = 0.85$, $SD = 1.67$), small group sight singing tests ($M = 0.79$, $SD = 1.37$), and individual sight singing tests ($M = 0.73$, $SD = 1.13$). The

majority of directors reported that they never utilized full ensemble sight singing tests (68.0%, *n* = 43), small group sight singing tests (64.0%, *n* = 32), nor individual sight singing tests (58.0%, *n* = 29). Respondents' frequency usage of conductor created assessments is shown in Table 4.14.

Chorister-Based Assessments

Chorister-based assessment methods were utilized much less frequently than conductor created assessments: self-assessments (*M* = 1.38, *SD* = 1.73); one-on-one meetings with choristers (*M* = 0.96, *SD* = 1.26); peer-assessments (*M* = 0.69, *SD* = 1.29); journals/self-reflections (*M* = 0.33, *SD* = 0.95); and portfolios (*M* = 0.02, *SD* = 0.15). Self-assessments were used rarely with 10 participants (20.0%) using them only on a semester basis and 22 (44.0%) never using them. Individual meetings with choristers were used on a semester basis by 13 directors (26.0%) with almost half (48.0%, *n* = 24) never using them. The majority of participants never used peer-assessments (70.0%, *n* = 35), journals and self-reflections (82.0%, *n* = 41), nor student portfolios (92.0%, *n* = 46). Respondents' frequency usage of chorister-based assessments is shown in Table 4.14.

Traditional Assessments

Similar to chorister-based assessments, traditional assessment methods were used less frequently than conductor created assessments: other projects (*M* = 0.68, *SD* = 1.14), concert critiques (*M* = 0.97, *SD* = 0.85), written classwork/homework (*M* = 0.58, *SD* = 1.18); surveys/questionnaires (*M* = 0.52, *SD* = 0.90); essays/reports (*M* = 0.19, *SD* = 0.80), listening logs (*M* = 0.17, *SD* = 0.56), written tests/quizzes (*M* = 0.10, *SD* = 0.52), individual practice logs (*M* = 0.06, *SD* = 0.44), and compositions (*M* = 0.02, *SD* = 0.14).

The majority of respondents reported that they never used other projects (62.0%, *n* = 31), concert critiques (52.0%, *n* = 26), written classwork/homework (74.0%, *n* = 37), surveys/questionnaires (60.0%, *n* = 30), essays/reports (86.0%, *n* = 43), listening logs (84.0%, *n* = 42), written tests/quizzes (92.0%, *n* = 46), nor compositions (94.0%, *n* = 47) as assessment tools. Concert critiques were used by 15 directors (30.0%) monthly and an additional 6 directors (12.0%) quarterly. Respondents' frequency usage of traditional assessments is reported in Table 4.14.

Technology-Based Assessments

Audio/video (A/V) recording the whole ensemble during rehearsal (*M* = 1.78, *SD* = 1.45) and performance (*M* = 1.73, *SD* = 1.27) were the most frequently used technology-based assessment methods. A/V recording during rehearsal was utilized by 6 directors (12.0%) daily/every rehearsal or weekly, 20 directors (40.0%) monthly or quarterly, 10 directors (20.0%) on a semester basis, and never by 13 directors (26.0%). A/V recording during performance was utilized by 12 directors (24.0%) monthly, 14 directors (28.0%) quarterly, 11 directors (22.0%) on a semester basis, and never by 10 directors (20.0%).

Respondents reported the infrequent use of A/V recording individuals outside of rehearsal (*M* = 1.02, *SD* = 1.52), photographs (*M* = 0.67, *SD* = 0.92), A/V recording small groups in rehearsal (*M* = 0.46, *SD* = 1.03), A/V recording individuals during rehearsal (*M* = 0.46, *SD* = 1.03), A/V recording small groups outside of rehearsal (*M* = 0.27, *SD* = 0.87), and the use of assessment software (e.g., SmartMusic) (*M* = 0.23, *SD* = 0.93). The majority of respondents reported that they never used A/V recording individuals outside

of rehearsal (62.0%, *n* = 31), photographs (54.0%, *n* = 27), A/V recording small groups in rehearsal (78.0%, *n* = 39), A/V recording individuals during rehearsal (78.0%, *n* = 39), A/V recording small groups outside of rehearsal (86.0%, *n* = 43), nor assessment software (e.g., SmartMusic) (88.0%, *n* = 44). Respondents' frequency usage of technology-based assessments is reported in Table 4.14.

Non-Musical Assessment Criteria

All non-musical criteria prompts were used for assessment frequently by a large majority of respondents. Rehearsal attendance (*M* = 4.90, *SD* = 0.71) was utilized the most frequently with almost all directors (98.0%, *n* = 49) using it as an assessment criterion daily/every rehearsal. Rehearsal attendance (*M* = 4.60, *SD* = 1.31) was also widely utilized with 90.0% of directors (*n* = 45) reporting its daily/every rehearsal use. Attitude/rehearsal preparation (*M* = 4.14, *SD* = 1.75) was reported as being used daily/every rehearsal by 74.0% of directors (*n* = 37) and attendance of performances (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = 1.63) was used daily/every rehearsal by 66.0% (*n* = 33) of participants. All 50 respondents reported the use of all four non-musical assessment criteria prompts. Respondents' frequency usage of non-musical assessment criteria is reported in Table 4.14.

Most Frequently Used Assessment Methods/Criteria

Respondents were to indicate the frequency of use for each specific strategy, method, or criteria on a 0–5 scale: 0 (*never*), 1 (*semester*), 2 (*quarterly*), 3 (*monthly*), 4 (*weekly*), and 5 (*daily/every rehearsal*). The most frequently used assessment methods, strategies, and criteria are listed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Most Frequently Used Assessment Strategies/Criteria

Assessment Types	*n*	5 (%) Daily	4 (%) Weekly	3 (%) Monthly	2 (%) Quarterly	1 (%) Semester	0 (%) Never	*M* (*SD*)
Attendance of rehearsals	50	49 (98.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	4.90 (0.71)
Participation during rehearsal	50	45 (90.0)	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	4.60 (1.31)
Group verbal corrections	49	42 (84.0)	3 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.0)	4.53 (1.39)
Attitude/preparation during rehearsal	50	37 (74.0)	5 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	4.14 (1.75)
Attendance of performance	50	33 (66.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	9 (18.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)	3.92 (1.63)
Class discussions	48	20 (40.0)	13 (26.0)	6 (12.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	3.62 (1.71)
Small group/sectional singing tests	47	2 (4.0)	6 (12.0)	18 (36.0)	5 (10.0)	3 (6.0)	13 (26.0)	2.15 (1.57)

Note: Responses measured on a 0–5 scale: 5 (*daily/every rehearsal*), 4 (*weekly*), 3 (*monthly*), 2 (*quarterly*), 1 (*semester*), 0 (*never*).

All four non-musical criteria prompts were utilized most frequently by respondents as was informal group feedback, class discussions, and small group/sectional singing tests. A large percentage of participants utilized the following strategies, methods, or criteria daily/every rehearsal: rehearsal attendance (98.0%, *n* =49), rehearsal participation (90.0%, *n* =45), informal group verbal feedback (84.0%, *n* = 42), rehearsal attitude/preparation (74.0%, *n* =37), and attendance of performances (66.0%, *n* =33). Class discussions were used by 66.0% of directors (*n* = 33) either daily/every rehearsal or weekly. Small group/sectional singing tests on choral repertoire (e.g., quartet tests) were utilized by directors more evenly with 8 directors (16.0%) using them daily/every rehearsal or weekly, 18 directors (36.0%) using them monthly, 8 directors (16.0%) using them quarterly or on a semester basis, and 13 directors (26.0%) never using them.

Additional Assessment Strategies

In addition to provided assessment prompts, respondents were also asked to provide their own additional assessment strategies or methods not mentioned in the survey instrument. Seven respondents (14.0%) provided their own additional assessment strategy responses. The majority of these additional strategies involved the use of technology as an assessment tool. Responses included: providing choristers with recordings of choral repertoire, submitting score exam videos recorded outside of class, and requiring choristers to formally evaluate the ensemble's previous rehearsal recording via a rubric. Three directors noted requiring their choristers to record themselves during rehearsal in an individual yet contextual performance environment. One respondent

reported using a spiritual/emotional wellness assessment. Complete responses are displayed in Appendix D.

Assessment Beliefs and Attitudes

In response to research question two ("What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?"), I asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements targeting assessment suitability, group vs. individual assessment, assessment challenges, and assessment self-efficacy. These prompts allowed me to answer four sub-questions: (2a) "What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?" (2b) "What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?" (2c) "What do participants perceive as challenges to assessment?" and (2d) "What are participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?" Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each prompt on a 4-point Likert-type scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*agree*), and 4 (*strongly agree*).

General Assessment Beliefs

Respondents agreed that they most commonly used informal verbal feedback during the rehearsal process ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.79$) and that assessing a chorister's musical progress is their primary role ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.94$). Respondents also agreed that choral ensembles at the collegiate level should be assessed differently than those at the PK–12 level ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.82$). Respondents disagreed with the notion that assessment interferes with teaching ($M = 1.53$, $SD = 0.71$). The numbers of responses,

frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for general assessment beliefs are reported in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of General Assessment Beliefs

General Assessment Beliefs	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
I most commonly use informal verbal feedback for assessment during the rehearsal process.	49	30 (60.0)	14 (28.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)	3.47 (0.79)
Assessing choristers' musical progress is a primary role of the collegiate choral director.	48	20 (40.0)	18 (36.0)	6 (12.0)	4 (8.0)	3.12 (0.94)
The way collegiate choral ensembles are assessed should be different than how choirs are assessed at the PK–12 level.	50	15 (30.0)	23 (46.0)	10 (20.0)	2 (4.0)	3.02 (0.82)
Formal assessment is an important part of my collegiate choral program.	49	9 (18.0)	22 (44.0)	16 (32.0)	2 (4.0)	2.78 (0.80)
Assessment interferes with teaching.	49	0 (0.0)	6 (12.0)	14 (28.0)	29 (58.0)	1.53 (0.71)

Note: Responses measured on a 1–4 scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Assessment Criteria Suitability

Respondents were asked to select their level of agreement with specific criteria or methods as a suitable means to assess a student in a collegiate choral ensemble. Participants agreed that the following non-musical assessment criteria were suitable for assessing a chorister: concert participation ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.58$), class attendance ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.67$), preparation ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.65$), rehearsal participation ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.76$), and attitude ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.88$). Respondents also reported that musical performance tests ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.70$) were also suitable assessment formats. However, respondents generally disagreed that written tests and projects ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.81$) were a suitable format to assess choristers in an ensemble setting. The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for assessment suitability beliefs are reported in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Assessment Criteria Suitability

Assessment Criteria Suitability	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
Concert participation	50	43 (86.0)	3 (6.0)	4 (8.0)	0 (0.0)	3.78 (0.58)
Class attendance	50	35 (70.0)	10 (20.0)	5 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	3.60 (0.67)
Preparation (e.g., being on time, having music, pencil)	50	31 (62.0)	15 (30.0)	4 (8.0)	0 (0.0)	3.54 (0.65)
Rehearsal participation	50	27 (54.0)	17 (34.0)	5 (10.0)	1 (2.0)	3.40 (0.76)
Attitude	50	29 (58.0)	12 (24.0)	7 (14.0)	2 (4.0)	3.36 (0.88)
Performance tests (e.g., sight singing, on-the-music tests)	50	19 (38.0)	28 (56.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	3.28 (0.70)
Written tests and projects	50	1 (2.0)	11 (22.0)	20 (40.0)	18 (36.0)	1.90 (0.81)

Note: Responses measured on a 1–4 scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Individual and Group Assessment

It was generally agreed that assessing a chorister's individual progress is an important function of the collegiate choral conductor ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.71$) and that if their ensembles are achieving at a high level, then individual students are learning appropriately ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.79$). It was also agreed that student skills are best assessed on an individual basis ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.71$). Contradictorily, respondents also generally agreed that student skills are best assessed in small groups ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.64$) and in large groups ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.73$). Respondents generally disagreed with the statements that choral music is a subject where individual assessment is not critical ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.74$) and that it is unrealistic to assess individual student progress reliably ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 0.75$). The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for beliefs concerning individual and group assessments are reported in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Individual and Group Assessment Beliefs

Individual and Group Assessment	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
Assessing a chorister's individual musical progress is an important function of a collegiate choral conductor.	50	14 (28.0)	28 (56.0)	7 (14.0)	1 (2.0)	3.10 (0.71)
If my ensembles are achieving at a high level, then the individual choristers are learning appropriately.	50	11 (22.0)	28 (56.0)	8 (16.0)	3 (6.0)	2.94 (0.79)
Choral music students' skills are best assessed in small groups (e.g., quartets, sections).	49	5 (10.0)	31 (62.0)	12 (24.0)	1 (2.0)	2.82 (0.64)
A choral music student's skills are best assessed on an individual basis.	50	6 (12.0)	29 (58.0)	13 (26.0)	2 (4.0)	2.78 (0.71)
Choral music students' skills are best assessed in large groups (e.g., entire ensemble).	49	6 (12.0)	26 (52.0)	15 (30.0)	2 (4.0)	2.73 (0.73)
A choir class should concentrate on group learning assessment and not on individual learning assessment.	50	3 (6.0)	20 (40.0)	22 (44.0)	5 (10.0)	2.42 (0.76)
Choral music is a subject where individual assessment is not critical.	50	0 (0.0)	9 (18.0)	21 (42.0)	20 (40.0)	1.78 (0.74)
It is unrealistic to believe that a student's progress in choir can be assessed individually and reliably.	50	1 (2.0)	6 (12.0)	22 (44.0)	21 (42.0)	1.74 (0.75)

Note: Responses measured on a 1–4 scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Perceived Assessment Obstacles

Respondents agreed that their formal education trained them appropriately to assess their choristers ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.82$) and disagreed that they lacked the resources ($M = 1.92$, $SD = 0.83$) and training/education ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.65$) to formally assess their choristers. The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for beliefs concerning perceived assessment obstacles are reported in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Perceived Assessment Obstacles

Perceived Assessment Obstacles	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
I feel that my formal education properly trained me to assess my choristers musically.	50	21 (42.0)	21 (42.0)	6 (12.0)	2 (4.0)	3.22 (0.82)
I lack the rehearsal time to formally assess choristers effectively.	50	11 (22.0)	22 (44.0)	8 (16.0)	9 (18.0)	2.70 (1.02)
Large numbers of singers prevent me from assessing choristers effectively.	50	8 (16.0)	15 (30.0)	17 (34.0)	10 (20.0)	2.42 (0.99)
I lack the resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, materials) to assess choristers effectively.	50	1 (2.0)	12 (24.0)	19 (38.0)	18 (36.0)	1.92 (0.83)
I lack adequate training/education to formally assess choristers effectively.	50	0 (0.0)	4 (8.0)	16 (32.0)	30 (60.0)	1.48 (0.65)

Note: Responses measured on a 1–4 scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Assessment Self-Efficacy

Respondents felt that their current assessment practices were effective and suitable for their ensembles ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.70$) and that their assessment practices were well developed to meet student and program needs ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.61$). They also agreed that their assessment practices were worthy of being modeled by other collegiate choral conductors ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.64$). Despite this high level of assessment self-efficacy, respondents still agreed that there was room to improve their assessment practices ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.63$). The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for assessment self-efficacy are reported in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

Frequencies, Percentages, Numbers of Responses, Means, and Standard Deviations of Assessment Self-Efficacy

Assessment Self-Efficacy	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
I feel there is room to improve the assessment practices I use with my choir.	50	22 (44.0)	24 (48.0)	4 (8.0)	0 (0.0)	3.36 (0.63)
I feel that my current assessment practices are effective and suitable for my ensembles.	50	15 (30.0)	28 (56.0)	6 (12.0)	1 (2.0)	3.14 (0.70)
I feel confident that my assessment practices are well developed and meet the needs of my students and overall choral program.	50	10 (20.0)	32 (64.0)	8 (16.0)	0 (0.0)	3.04 (0.61)
My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by other college choir directors.	49	6 (12.0)	28 (56.0)	15 (30.0)	0 (0.0)	2.82 (0.64)

Note: Responses measured on a 1–4 scale: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*somewhat agree*), 2 (*somewhat disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Open-Ended Assessment Beliefs and Self-Efficacy Responses

Respondents were given an open-ended prompt and asked to provide any additional reactions concerning their assessment beliefs and self-efficacy. Three participants (6.0%) provided responses which are displayed in Appendix E.

One respondent asserted that the differences in assessment goals by ensemble level (PK–12 and collegiate choral ensemble) should reflect "differences in preferred outcomes." They stated that collegiate groups containing future music educators "should leave those ensembles with additional knowledge and skills." Another respondent described a specific teaching situation during their PK–12 career and the struggle to balance the "easy A" mentality they assert exists in school choral groups with a student's natural musical ability (or lack thereof). Their response identified assessment as a form of behavior and participation training rather than focusing on musical achievement criteria and reflected the multi-faceted and interconnected nature of assessment with other practical considerations of the teaching profession.

Another respondent indicated the impact of institutional restraints and limitations as well as community demographics, culture, and economic considerations. They asserted that the low economic status of many of their choristers often leads to interference in program recruitment, retention, and performance. This respondent also stated that at a community college, there is significant singer turnover, generating additional difficulties.

Role of Collegiate Choral Conductor on PMT Occupational Identity

In response to research question three ("What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the identity of PMTs?"), I asked respondents to

indicate their level of agreement with statements targeting their perceptions of their influence on the occupational identity of preservice music teachers in their ensembles. These prompts allowed me to answer two sub-questions: (3a) "Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?" and (3b) "Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?" Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each prompt on a 4-point Likert-type scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*agree*), and 4 (*strongly agree*).

Impact on PMT Occupational Identity

Respondents seemed aware of their influence on the occupational identity and subsequent methods of preservice music teachers. Respondents agreed that their own practices impact the future assessment practices of PMTs in their choirs ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.71$) and that their assessment practices were worthy of being modeled by future PK–12 choral educators ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.78$). Respondents generally agreed, though not as strongly, that PMTs should adopt the assessment practices modeled for them by the respondents ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.57$). Respondents generally disagreed that they developed choral assessment strategies specifically as a model for the PMTs in their choirs ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.82$). The numbers of responses, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations for perceptions of influence are reported in Table 4.21. Responses are listed from highest to lowest mean value.

Table 4.21

Respondents' Perceptions of Influence on PMT Occupational Identity and Assessment

Perceptions of Influence	*n*	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)	*M* (*SD*)
The assessment practices I use in my college choirs impacts the future assessment practices of the music education students in my choirs.	46	15 (30.0)	25 (50.0)	5 (10.0)	1 (2.0)	3.17 (0.71)
My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by the music education students in my choirs.	47	17 (34.0)	21 (42.0)	8 (16.0)	1 (2.0)	3.15 (0.78)
The preservice music teachers in my choirs should adopt my assessment strategies.	45	2 (4.0)	31 (62.0)	11 (22.0)	1 (2.0)	2.76 (0.57)
I develop my choral assessment strategies specifically as a model for the preservice music teachers in my choirs.	45	2 (4.0)	15 (30.0)	19 (38.0)	9 (18.0)	2.22 (0.82)

Note: Mean scores reflect level of agreement: 4 (*strongly agree*), 3 (*agree*), 2 (*disagree*), and 1 (*strongly disagree*).

Open-Ended Responses Concerning the Impact on Occupational Identity

Respondents were asked to provide any additional reactions on the perceptions of their impact on the occupational identity of PMTs. Three participants (6.0%) provided responses which are shown in Appendix F.

One respondent stated that transfers might be made between the assessment practices modeled by collegiate choral conductors and the future assessment practices of the PMTs in their ensembles. This respondent also asserted that any possible transfer of assessment pedagogy may not necessarily be a direct or perfect one due to the difference in specific content and level of education stating that "knowledge of vocal pedagogy, teaching effectiveness and the like, would not necessarily be useful in a PK–12 ensemble." This assertion supports the prompt that collegiate and PK–12 choral ensembles should be assessed differently.

Another respondent echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that differences in age, variety of school, teaching settings, and assessment strategies modeled by the collegiate choral director "may not be appropriate or even possible" in the PK–12 setting. However, this respondent stressed their hope the assessment practices they modeled would instill a "desire to find performance-based practices for assessment" in the future teaching environments of the PMTs in their choirs.

A third respondent highlighted the interconnected and multi-faceted nature of assessment in the practical choral setting—an environment containing students with a wide variety of musical skills and abilities. This respondent also addressed the "continual

learning" aspect of the profession, noting that they learned new assessment strategies from a variety of sources, including their own collegiate students.

Additional Open-Ended Responses

Respondents were asked to provide any additional reactions they may have about assessment in the collegiate choral setting in general. Ten participants (20.0%) provided responses. Because each response was a valid and unique perspective in itself, I felt it would be most meaningful to share these responses in their original context (Baughman, 2021; Sims & Cassidy, 2019). Additional responses are displayed in Appendix G.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Assessing student and ensemble skill development and achievement is one of the most important components in the educational process. Assessment in general has been studied within the field of music education by numerous researchers. However, there has been little investigation of assessment practices in the collegiate choral setting regarding the use of specific methodologies, tools, strategies, and criteria. Since PMTs may emulate the educational practices of their collegiate choral directors through the process of occupational identity development (Isbell, 2008), it is important to understand what assessment strategies are being modeled as well as the assessment beliefs of ensemble directors.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the assessment practices of collegiate choral directors. I sought to understand what assessment practices were used and how frequently they were employed in the collegiate choral setting. More specifically, I examined the use of specific strategies grouped into broader categories: (a) conductor created assessments (e.g., informal group assessment, group sight singing exams, individual sight singing exams, repertoire singing exams), (b) traditional assessments (e.g., written tests, essays, projects), (c) chorister-based assessments (e.g., journals, portfolios, self- and peer-assessments), and (d) technology-based assessments (e.g., A/V recording in rehearsal, out of rehearsal, musical software). I also investigated the use of non-musical assessment criteria (e.g., participation, attendance, attitude).

A secondary purpose was to examine the assessment beliefs and views of college choral directors. Researchers have shown that educational philosophy has a strong impact

on a director's rehearsal practices (Tracy, 2002). Specifically, I examined (a) general assessment beliefs, (b) self-reported suitability of specific common assessment types, (c) individual and group assessment beliefs, (d) perceived assessment obstacles (e.g., lack of training, lack of resources, large workload), and (e) perceived assessment self-efficacy. A component of the assessment beliefs portion of this study targeted participants' perception of their role in the occupational identity development of the PMTs in their choirs.

Summary of Major Findings

Data were collected from collegiate choral directors within seven states belonging to the Southwest Division of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) during Spring 2022 ($N = 50$). Respondents completed an assessment practices and beliefs survey which included both preexisting and researcher-generated prompts regarding (a) demographic information, (b) assessment strategy/type frequency use, (c) assessment views and beliefs, and (d) open-ended prompts. Basic descriptive analyses were presented, with results arranged by research question and their organization within the survey instrument. I used descriptive statistics for quantitative data and emergent coding to analyze the qualitative responses when necessary. In this study, I provided a current picture of the assessment practices and beliefs of collegiate choral directors. In this chapter, I organized discussion points by research question and concluded by presenting implications, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Assessment Strategies of Collegiate Choral Directors

Collegiate choral directors are tasked not only with the achievement of the ensemble, but also with the musical development of individual choristers. As such, it is important to understand what strategies and methods are being utilized to assess musical growth. The first research question was, "What methods of assessment do collegiate choral directors use and to what extent?" Two sub-questions provided additional clarification: (1a) "What specific criteria (musical and non-musical) are being used for assessment?" and (1b) "What are the most commonly used assessment methods?"

Most Utilized Assessment Strategies. Results revealed that informal verbal group feedback was the most utilized assessment strategy. Researchers have asserted that informal verbal assessments have been used most frequently in the choral setting due to the nature of the ensemble (Emerson et al., 2019) and found that music directors use informal verbal assessment most frequently in the typical ensemble rehearsal setting (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017). In the current study, I also found a heavy reliance on informal verbal group assessment. This result was expected and seemed logical based on the nature of the choral rehearsal process itself. A majority of the participants (88.0%, n = 44) somewhat or strongly agreed that informal verbal feedback was the assessment type they most commonly used. While a conductor's verbal feedback is an important component of the rehearsal process (Emerson et al., 2019), the exclusive use of this assessment model does little for the individual chorister's systematic skill development (Broomhead, 2001). Individual assessment has been shown to provide the best source of data for instructional improvement (Myers, 2021).

Collegiate directors stated that class discussions were also utilized commonly in their rehearsals—66.0% (n = 33) of participants reported their use either weekly or daily/every rehearsal. It must be noted that a class discussion itself is not strictly an assessment strategy but rather a classroom activity. However, classroom discussions could serve as an assessment strategy under the right conditions and instructional setting. In this study, I did not delineate this distinction in the survey instrument itself. As such, it must be assumed that the use of classroom discussions could take the form of both a classroom activity as well as a mode of assessment.

Performance assessment have been found to be one of the most common assessment types due to the nature of the music making process and its impact on student motivation (Colwell, 2002; Latimer et al., 2010; Reimer, 2009) and have been utilized for large group, small group, and individual assessment (Hearn, 2019; Kotora, 2001, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014). In this investigation, small group and sectional singing tests were identified as one of the more commonly used assessment methods, and the greatest number of respondents (36.0%, n = 18) used this activity to assess choristers monthly. Furthermore, over half the participants in the current study (56.0%, n = 28) reported the use of individual singing tests on choral repertoire during the semester. Ensemble concerts were used as an assessment by 74.0% (n = 37) of directors either quarterly or per semester. This result seems logical as it aligns with a semester consisting of a small number of large-scale public performances. The results of the current study were similar to other studies showing that performance-based assessments were a mixture of individual, small group/ensemble, and full ensemble assessments (Hearn, 2019).

Rubrics, checklists, and rating scales have been developed and researched in order to reinforce assessment quality and objectivity with the ultimate goal to improve student musical achievement (Bergee, 2003; Chiodo, 2001; Ciorba & Smith, 2009; Cope, 1996; Doane et al., 1990; Latimer et al., 2010; Nichols, 2017; Orzolek, 2020; Salvador, 2010; Stauffer, 1999). The current study showed that the majority of directors (66.0%, $n = 33$) used a rubric, checklist, or rating scale during the semester. While the content, construction quality, and specific context of this assessment method is beyond the scope of my study, it is encouraging that they are being used by a majority of participants.

Music teachers seem to have utilized technology for regular classroom instruction more often than for assessment (Nielsen, 2011). Choral music educators used technology-assisted assessment tools (i.e., assessment software) infrequently compared with their colleagues in other disciplines, with a large percentage of choir teachers reporting that they never use technology for many areas of choral student assessment (Hawkins, 2018). In the current study, 60.0% of collegiate choral directors ($n = 30$) report audio or video recording the whole ensemble during rehearsal monthly, quarterly, or per semester while 74.0% ($n = 37$) use audio or video recording in performance as an assessment tool monthly, quarterly, or per semester. This result aligns with previous research concerning the use of A/V recording full ensembles in rehearsal and performance as a means of assessment (Gonzales, 2017; Kotora, 2001, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010). Similar to Hearn (2019), two participants required choristers to use their personal cell phones to record their individual singing during full ensemble rehearsal. In this setting, choristers were able to have the benefit of individual assessment in an authentic ensemble context.

See Appendix D for additional self-described assessment methods, most utilizing technology. Other forms of technology-based assessment (e.g., individual recording outside of rehearsal, small group recording in rehearsal) were never used by the majority of directors. Researchers have found that choir directors' comfort level with technology-assisted assessment tools was a predictor of both frequency and variety (Hawkins, 2018). Time and resources have been identified as additional factors that impact teachers' decisions regarding the use of technology for assessment in the musical setting (Nielsen, 2011).

Of the seven most commonly utilized assessment methods/strategies (see Table 4.15), four are based on non-musical criteria (rehearsal attendance, rehearsal participation, rehearsal attitude/preparation, and performance attendance). Researchers have found that music educators continue to employ non-musical criteria as a major component of overall grades despite an awareness of its haphazard and subjective nature (Hearn, 2019). Assessments employing non-musical criteria have not been shown to support music learning and growth to the same extent as content-based assessments built on demonstrations of music knowledge and skills (Reimer, 2009), despite being simple to execute and often supported by administrators (McClung, 1996). Depending on their use, class discussions may be classified as either a classroom activity or an assessment method, with the content and scope of the assessment dependent on the nature of its use. A class discussion may be used to assess an individual student's musical understanding (e.g., aesthetic, theoretical, analytical) similar to a written test, despite being facilitated in

a group setting. However, it is not strictly a performance test and cannot serve as an assessment of musical production or technique in action.

Only two of the most commonly used assessment methods in this study (informal group feedback and small group/sectional singing tests on choral repertoire) are based on musical performance/technique achievement. Researchers have shown that performance-based assessments were a mixture of individual solo, small group/ensemble, and full ensemble assessments (Hearn, 2019) with singing tests employed by a majority of ensemble directors (Kotora, 2001, 2005). Similar to the results of the current study, Russell and Austin (2010) found that the most common performance assessment objectives used by participants included prepared excerpts from large ensemble repertoire. While the ensembles' nature often centers on group instruction (i.e., group feedback), group outcomes are not a valid indicator of individual learning (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). In the choral ensemble rehearsal, Furby (2013) asserted that assessment is often at the group level, that individual assessment may be limited to attendance and participation in class and performances, and that evaluation of individual musical skills is often neglected. Of the two musical-based performance assessment methods (informal group feedback and small group/sectional singing tests on choral repertoire), both are in a group format. Verbal feedback is an informal group assessment and a small group singing test is a formal group assessment. Of the seven assessment strategies and criteria most commonly found in the current study, none meet all three conditions of best practice (musically-based criteria, formal, individual) for assessing musical technique achievement. Researchers have suggested that formal assessments of

individual student's musical skills are the best indicator of student achievement (Myers, 2021). The results of the current study reveal that the most commonly used assessment methods do not meet this best-practice criteria.

Least Utilized Assessment Strategies. The findings of this study revealed the infrequent use of written assessment methods (e.g., journals, essays, traditional tests), music software (e.g., SmartMusic), and portfolios. Researchers have found that directors at the PK–12 level often utilize written projects and other "paper and pencil" modes to assess musical skills (Gonzales, 2017; Hearn, 2019; Kotora, 2001, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010; Wong, 2014). Kotora (2001, 2005) reported that the majority of directors used written tests, and just over half used independent study/written projects to assess student musical knowledge. For music teachers, the most commonly used written assessment formats were quizzes, worksheets, and exams (Russell & Austin, 2010). Gonzales (2017) examined the assessment practices of 136 music educators and found that the most common written assessment formats were quizzes, worksheets, and journals. While the current study showed the use of written assessments, respondents employed these methods much less frequently than the participants in previous studies. Written classwork/homework was only used by 11 respondents (22.0%). Journals and other self-reflections were used by only seven respondents (14.0%). Essays/reports were only used by 8.0% (n = 4) with written tests and quizzes only used by 4.0% (n = 2) of directors.

Assessment software (e.g., SmartMusic) has been shown to provide student musicians with immediate feedback and increase student interest in their own learning

(Flanigan, 2008; Lee 2007). Colwell (2002) noted that computer-based assessment technology holds considerable potential if the music educator is willing to devote the necessary time and resources to the process. Participants in this study rarely used assessment software (8.0%, $n = 4$).

The use of portfolios as an assessment tool has been shown to increase student learning and improve classroom practices and pedagogy (Dirth, 2000). Their use has also been shown to increase both confidence in student singing assessment and ability to communicate musical preference (McCall, 2007). Only one participant (2.0%) used portfolio assessments in my investigation. This result aligns with previous research and shows that portfolios are utilized much less than other assessment formats (Kotora, 2001, 2005; Wong, 2014) despite their benefits.

In the choral setting, successful sight singing achievement is a long-range goal with maximum success after a longer duration of instruction and assessment (Henry, 2004). In the collegiate setting, Myers (2008) showed that 93.4% of directors indicated that they believe sight singing instruction should be a part of the collegiate choral rehearsal, yet only 64.5% currently address this with their ensembles. The results of the current study support this. The majority of respondents indicated that they never assess full ensemble (68.0%, $n = 34$) or small group (64.0%, $n = 32$) sight singing skills. Researchers have revealed that group sight singing success does not indicate successful individual sight singing achievement (Henry & Demorest, 1994) suggesting the need for individual sight singing assessment. Killian and Henry (2005) found that successful sight singers had regular assessments and that individual testing itself was a tool for successful

skill transfer. Choristers whose sight singing skills were assessed individually scored higher than those who received only group assessment (Demorest, 1998). Floyd and Bradley (2006) report that 79% of high school choral directors assess sight singing skills individually. My results supported this and indicated that 58.0% of collegiate choral directors (n = 29) never assess sight singing individually. There appears to be a discrepancy between the need for sight singing assessment in the collegiate choral rehearsal and the frequency of sight singing assessment practices. This disparity may be attributed to limited rehearsal time or a lack of sight singing assessment method training (Myers, 2008).

Non-Musical Assessment Criteria. Non-musical criteria (e.g., effort, attitude, attendance, behavior, participation) have been found to be widely used for assessments (McClung, 1996; McCoy, 1991; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simaton, 2000; Tracy, 2002) and often comprise the majority of a student's overall grade (Hearn 2019; McClung, 1996; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000). Researchers have shown that music educators employed both musical and non-musical assessment criteria with a significantly disproportionate weight on non-musical assessments (Kotora, 2001, 2005; McCoy, 1991; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Russell & Austin, 2010). Many of the common assessment practices found in music education contained either non-musical criteria or no actual measurements (Barkley, 2006; McClung, 1996; McQuarrie & Sherwin, 2013; Russell & Austin, 2010; Simanton, 2000). In a survey investigating the use of 12 specific grading criteria, participation was used by 86% (n = 212) of respondents (N = 246), attendance by 85% (n = 209), and attitude by 74% (n = 182) (Kotora, 2001).

I found that the use of non-musical assessment criteria was robust and evident. Almost all collegiate choral directors (98.0%, $n = 49$) reported using attendance of rehearsals as an assessment criterion daily/every rehearsal. The majority of participants also reported using rehearsal participation (90.0%, $n = 45$) and attitude/preparation during rehearsal (74.0%, $n = 37$) as a daily/every rehearsal assessment criterion—aligning with previous research. Interestingly, attendance of performances was also reported to be used as an assessment criteria daily/every rehearsal by 66.0% of participants ($n = 33$). Practically, this cannot be accurate as performances occur much less frequently throughout a semester. Nevertheless, this strong response could be an indicator of the value directors place on the attendance of the performative elements of the choral experience as an extension of rehearsal attendance.

Assessment Beliefs and Attitudes of Collegiate Choral Directors

Assessment attitude, self-efficacy, beliefs, and philosophy are major influencers on employed classroom practices. This influence may extend beyond rehearsal techniques and methodology to impact employed assessment practices. As such, it is important to understand collegiate choral directors' assessment beliefs and attitudes. To investigate this, I posed a second research question, "What are collegiate choral directors' beliefs and attitudes toward assessment?" Four sub-questions provided additional clarification: (2a) "What assessment criteria do participants perceive to be most suitable for a choral setting?" (2b) "What are participants' beliefs concerning the value of group vs. individual assessment?" (2c) "What do participants perceive as challenges to

assessment?" and (2d) "What are participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy regarding assessment?"

Researchers have found that a teacher's personal philosophy of assessment influenced their classroom practices (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017; Harris & Brown, 2009; Kancianic, 2006). A teacher's personal philosophy has been shown to be the most influential factor on both assessment value and assessment practices (Tracy, 2002). Educators' conceptualization of assessment (i.e., what assessments are, assessment purpose) and feelings of assessment (i.e., value judgements, past experiences, preferences) may directly impact their educational decision making (Deneen & Brown, 2016). In the current study, the majority of participants (76.0%, $n = 38$) somewhat or strongly agreed that assessment of choristers' music progress was their primary role. A majority (62.0%, $n = 31$) also somewhat or strongly agreed that formal assessments were an important part of their collegiate choral program. A vast majority of participants (86.0%, $n = 43$) somewhat or strongly disagreed that assessment interferes with quality teaching. This result suggests that collegiate choir directors recognize, at some level, the role assessment has in the educational process in general.

Assessment Suitability. There appeared to be a connection between respondents' most commonly used assessment strategies and the strategies or methods reported as most suitable for assessment. Similar to (McClung, 1996), these results indicated that directors most commonly used non-musical criteria for assessment and found it to be the most suited for assessment. A vast majority of participants agreed that non-musical criteria were suitable for assessment: concert participation (92.0%, $n = 46$), rehearsal

attendance (90.0%, *n* = 45), rehearsal preparation (92.0%, *n* = 46), rehearsal participation (88.0%, *n* = 44), and attitude (82.0%, *n* = 41). The same was true for performance tests—directors found them to be both highly suitable and employed it most frequently. A majority of participants also agreed that performance tests (e.g., sight singing, on-the-music-tests) were suitable for assessing their choristers (94.0%, *n* = 47). Conversely, when asked if written tests and projects were suitable assessment formats, the majority of participants disagreed (76.0%, *n* = 38). Written tests were also shown to be infrequently used by participants, similar to the findings of McClung (1996).

Individual and Group Assessment. The choral ensemble itself is a seemingly perfect vehicle for group instruction and group assessment. Though large group assessments may certainly provide teachers with information about student musicianship, "individualized assessments serve as the best source of data for grades and for improvement in differentiated instruction" (Myers, 2021). Concerning respondents' self-reported assessment beliefs, a vast majority (84.0%, *n* = 42) believed that assessing their choristers' individual musical progress was an important function of the collegiate choral director. Similarly, the majority of respondents disagreed with the statements that choral music was a subject where individual assessment was not critical (82.0%, *n* = 41) and that it was unrealistic to believe that a student's choral progress could be assessed individually and reliably (86.0%, *n* = 43). These results demonstrated, on some level, respondents' value of individual musical assessment.

Certain elements and skills of the musical art (such as blend and balance) are dependent upon group assessment, and measuring individual contributions to the group

effort in these skill areas may be problematic (Nichols, 2017). Singing accuracy may be different when choristers sing along compared to singing with others, and directors must choose carefully whether to assess singers alone or in groups (Nichols, 2017). Concerning the most appropriate method to assess students' skills in the choral setting, the results were not as conclusive. When asked to rate their level of agreement with the best manner in which to assess musical skills, the majority of respondents agreed with all three prompts: individual basis (70.0%, $n = 35$), small groups/sections (72.0%, $n = 36$), and large groups/entire ensemble (64.0%, $n = 32$). Upon reflection, these three prompts could have been presented as a ranking option in the survey instrument rather than as a Likert-type prompt. This format would have potentially provided a more nuanced and clear result. Nevertheless, this lack of well-defined result could indicate the problematic nature of assessing individual musical contributions in the large group context (Nichols, 2017). Similarly, when asked to respond to "a choir class should concentrate on group learning assessment and not on individual learning assessment," the results were varied with 46.0% ($n = 23$) of respondents agreeing and 54.0% ($n = 27$) disagreeing. Upon further reflection, this prompt was "double-barreled" rendering the data questionable.

While the ensembles' nature often centers around group instruction, researchers have demonstrated that group achievement is not a valid indicator of individual musical achievement (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). However, the majority of participants in the current study (78.0%, $n = 39$) somewhat or strongly agreed that if their ensembles, as a whole, were achieving at a high level, then individual choristers would be learning appropriately. There seems to be a discrepancy between perceptions of the

effectiveness of group assessment in the current study compared to the extant research in which scholars have shown individual assessments to be best practice. Participants in the current study reported valuing individual assessment methods yet agree with the notion that group success is indicative of individual achievement—concepts that run contradictory to one another.

Assessment Challenges. Researchers have frequently cited factors that impede educators' efforts to realize new and improved assessment practices in the music classroom: inadequate student contact time (Kancianic, 2006; Tracy, 2002), school size (Hanzlik, 2001;), large class sizes/workload (Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002), lack of resources (Shuler, 1996), and parent/student apathy regarding assessment (Kotora, 2005). Similar to the findings of Kancianic (2006) and Tracy (2002), 66.0% of the participants in the current study (n = 33) somewhat or strongly agreed that they lacked sufficient rehearsal time/student contact time to formally and effectively assess their choristers. Concerning large class sizes/workload, just under half of participants (46.0%, n = 23) somewhat or strongly agreed that their large workload interfered with quality assessment. This assessment challenge was not reported as strongly as in previous research (Simanton, 2000; Tracy, 2002). This may be due in part to the nature of the profession. PK–12 educators, generally, teach classes in quick succession with multiple classes in a row. Music directors at the collegiate level may not carry such a tight instructional schedule. Contrary to Shuler (1996), a majority of participants (74.0%, n = 37) disagreed that they lacked the resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, materials) to assess choristers

effectively. However, Shuler's (1996) investigation was at the PK–12 level where educators' classroom pressures and access to resources may be considerably different.

Researchers have shown a lack of assessment training and experience to be a commonly cited assessment obstacle (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010). Previous studies have shown education and assessment training to be far more influential factors than classroom-level obstacles as music educators who rated assessment strategies as the most familiar were also the top-rated employed strategies (Tracy, 2002). Contrary to the findings of Kancianic (2006), Kotora (2005), and Russell and Austin (2010) who reported that a lack of training and experience impeded quality assessment, a majority of participants in the current study (84.0%, $n = 42$) somewhat or strongly agreed that their formal education appropriately trained them to assess their choristers. Similarly, a vast majority (92.0%, $n = 46$) somewhat or strongly disagreed that they lacked adequate assessment training/education to assess their choristers formally and effectively.

Assessment Self-Efficacy. The majority of respondents (86.0%, $n = 43$) somewhat or strongly agreed that their current assessment practices were effective and suitable for their ensembles. The majority (84.0%, $n = 42$) also felt confident that their assessment practices were well developed to meet the needs of their students and overall choral program, while 68.0% ($n = 34$) felt that their assessment strategies were worthy of being modeled by other college choir directors. These results suggested a high level of assessment confidence and self-efficacy.

A vast majority of participants (92.0%, $n = 46$) felt there was room to improve the assessment practices they utilized with their choirs. Additional qualitative responses supported this notion and demonstrated select participants' willingness to continue to learn and develop effective assessment strategies. One director stated, "I am always willing to learn more and implement different assessment strategies in my collegiate choral ensembles as I explore, learn, adapt, and grow as a music educator." Another response reiterated this idea:

> I'm constantly learning new strategies—sometimes from my students after they have returned from a workshop or conference. There is no one perfect way when you are dealing with a wide range of abilities and working to make them a cohesive group. This [aspect of] continual learning is part of what I love about what I do.

These two responses revealed a level of professional confidence and self-efficacy that is critical to the profession. Responses can be seen in Appendix F.

Similar to Gonzales (2017), respondents were confident in assessment practices yet still widely employed non-musical criteria. These findings suggested an incomplete understanding of effective and equitable assessment practices or incomplete assessment education/literacy (Armes, 2020). The disconnect between assessment confidence and the use of non-musical criteria may also be partly due to educators' negative assessment experiences (both as educators and former students), assessment philosophy, assessment

apathy, or additional classroom- or institution-level factors. Nevertheless, participants in the current study expressed a high level of assessment confidence and self-efficacy.

Directors' Perception of Occupational Identity Impact

Collegiate choral directors have been shown to influence the occupational identity of preservice music teachers (Isbell, 2008). This influence may impact PMT educational philosophy, classroom methodology, and assessment practices. As such, it is important to understand collegiate choral directors' perceptions of this influence as well as the extent this awareness impacts their modeled assessment practices in the choral ensemble experience. To investigate this, I posed a third research question, "What are collegiate choral directors' perceptions of their role in shaping the identity of PMTs?" Two sub-questions provided additional clarification: (3a) "Do collegiate choral directors acknowledge their role in shaping PMT identity?" and (3b) "Do participants consider PMT identity development when designing their assessment practices?"

The majority of directors (80%, $n = 40$) indicated that they somewhat or strongly agreed that their assessment practices impact the future assessment practices of the PMTs in their ensembles. Only six participants (12.0%) somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement. Additionally, the majority of directors (76%, $n = 38$) indicated that they somewhat or strongly agreed their assessment strategies were worthy of being modeled by the music education students in their choirs. Nine participants (18.0%) indicated they somewhat or strongly disagreed with this statement. When asked if the PMTs in their choirs should adopt their assessment strategies, the majority of respondents (66.0%, $n = 33$) somewhat or strongly agreed. These results indicate participants seemed to

understand, on some level, that students emulate the assessment practices they see modeled in the collegiate choral ensemble. This also suggests directors held their assessment practices, on the whole, in high regard, further demonstrating a high level of assessment self-efficacy. When asked whether directors developed their assessment strategies specifically as a model for the PMTs in their choirs, the response was divided with 17 directors (34.0%) somewhat or strongly agreeing and 28 directors (56.0%) somewhat or strongly disagreeing. While this prompt by itself does not provide sufficient information concerning the construct of occupational identity development or its impact on assessment practices, it may be an indication of the diminished value of assessment in general.

Additional qualitative responses concerning the impact of collegiate directors' assessment practices on the identity development, and possible subsequent practices, of PMTs revealed a variety of beliefs. While these responses reflect respondents' personal beliefs and are not generalizable, they do suggest a wide variety of opinions concerning their role in shaping the assessment philosophies and practices for future teachers at the PK–12 level. The majority of participants (76.0%, $n = 38$) somewhat or strongly agreed that the way collegiate choral ensembles are assessed should be different than the way choirs are assessed at the PK–12 level. Several participants providing qualitative responses echoed this result. Participants stated that assessment practices at the collegiate level "would not necessarily be useful in a PK–12 ensemble" or "may not be appropriate or even possible in some [public school districts]." One participant stated that there is a "vast difference" in the methods and procedures used to assess collegiate students and

PK–12 students. Other qualitative responses revealed a more malleable philosophy that accounted for the setting, context, musical goals, and leaners. One participant was unsure if assessment and grading was different between the PK–12 and collegiate level. One respondent asserted that "assessment in a non-major choir is very different than assessment in a choir comprised primarily of music majors" suggesting that assessment practices must account for the educational setting, purpose, and individual learners. An additional response echoed this notion. "The effectiveness and necessity of various assessment tools can, and should, change with the context and desired outcomes of the ensemble. Effective assessment is necessary at all levels, but the specific assessments will change based on the outcomes desired."

Concerning the perception of influence on occupational identity development, it appears generally that participants recognized their impact, believed in the quality of their current assessment practice, yet did not intentionally develop assessment practices with PMTs in mind. This may be due to a lack of effective training, assessment philosophy, or a latent belief that assessment practices between the PK–12 and collegiate level are fundamentally different.

Disconnect Between Beliefs and Practices

Ryan (2018) collected information about PMTs' confidence in assessment knowledge and found that those with the least knowledge were the most confident and held high levels of self-efficacy. The results of the current study seem to have reflected this as well. Respondents reported high levels of both assessment self-efficacy and assessment training yet still reported a heavy emphasis on non-musical assessment

criteria and informal verbal group feedback. Austin and Russell (2017) showed that educators who valued assessment targeted musicianship outcomes more in their grading practices and held a "teacher" occupational identity while those who devalued assessment were more likely to target non-musical or behavioral outcomes.

Other individual performance-based assessment strategies (e.g., sight singing tests, on-the-music tests) were utilized by respondents, but to a much smaller extent than less effective assessment methods (i.e., informal group feedback, non-musical criteria). Similar to the results of Hearn (2019), it seemed that, at some level, participants had an awareness of proper assessment strategies. However, this was not reflected in their actual employed strategies. Similar to Bonner and Chen (2009), Campbell and Evans (2000), and Russell and Austin (2010), directors continued to assess learners contrary to recommended best practices even after reporting appropriate and adequate assessment training. This bifurcation between assessment attitudes and actual employed assessment strategies may be indicative of the nature of the profession (Hearn, 2019), the practical realities of the classroom (Armes, 2020), a lack of awareness of quality assessment training, or even participant apathy regarding musical assessment and best practice procedures.

There seemed to have been a divide between assessment attitudes, self-efficacy, awareness of occupational identity development, and actual employed assessment strategies. This may be attributed to assessment naiveté, lack of proper assessment education, or even indifference regarding the implementation of the most effective assessment strategies. Contrary to other research, participants in this study did not report

a lack of assessment training/experience (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005; Russell & Austin, 2010) or a lack of resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, materials) (Shuler, 1996) as obstacles for effective assessment. This may also be attributed to the practical limits of the profession (e.g., time constraints, frequent performance obligations, large numbers of choristers). This could be an indicator of the need for additional assessment education, location of assessment resources, or of a philosophical devaluing of proper assessment based on individual musical assessment criteria.

Implications

Given the findings of this study, I believe there are important implications for music teacher educators and collegiate choral directors.

Music Teacher Preparation Programs and Music Teacher Educators

An understanding of what specific assessment strategies are being modeled and utilized in the collegiate setting may help music teacher educators. I encourage music teacher educators to incorporate additional assessment training into the undergraduate music education curriculum, potentially informing PMTs' future assessment practices. This may include formal changes to program course requirements, like the addition of a music-specific assessment course, or be embedded into current curricular requirements, such a methods courses or practicum experiences. Such assessment experiences should provide PMTs an opportunity to design, implement, and reflect on methods they use in their preservice training to be more prepared to assess their future students.

The findings of this study revealed the infrequent use of portfolios, music software (e.g., SmartMusic), and specific written assessment methods (e.g., journals,

essays, traditional tests). If these assessment methods are rarely used in the collegiate choral setting, PMTs likely do not have the opportunity to see them modeled during their occupational role development as a collegiate chorister. This may perpetuate a continued lack of such assessment strategies once the PMT transitions to in-service status. Music teacher educators have the opportunity to target and train PMTs in the successful implementation of the strategies less-commonly utilized in the collegiate choral setting. This additional training may be beneficial for teaching at the PK–12 level.

In this study, I found a heavy reliance on informal group assessment. While a conductor's verbal feedback is an important component of the rehearsal process (Emerson et al., 2019), the exclusive use of this assessment model does little for the individual chorister's systematic skill development. Researchers have shown that ensemble achievement is not indicative of individual music success (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). As such, it is important that music teacher educators instill in PMTs a value for more formal individual assessment strategies that may not be modeled in the collegiate choral rehearsal. It is also important that music teacher educators guide PMTs in best practices when developing formal and individual assessments, including effective checklist, scoresheet, and rubric design.

Assessment instruction should also include discussions concerning frequently cited assessment obstacles. Music teachers have cited a variety of logistical limitations to assessments: inadequate student contact time (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora, 2005), school size (Hanzlik, 2001; Simanton, 2000), large class sizes/workload (Kancianic, 2006; Tracy, 2002), lack of resources (Shuler, 1996), lack of training (Kancianic, 2006; Kotora,

2005; Russell & Austin, 2010), and parent/student apathy regarding assessment (Kotora, 2005). Music teacher educators should deliberately include such topics into assessment training discussions. It is important for PMTs to understand how to locate quality assessment resources and additional assessment training. It is also important for PMTs to understand how to develop assessment procedures that accommodate for large numbers of choristers and frequent performance obligations. Such discussions about how to balance individual formal assessment strategies with the practical limitation of the classroom may empower PMTs to better utilize such assessment practices in their future classrooms.

In this study, I found a heavy dependance and frequent use of non-musical assessment criteria (e.g., participation, attitude, attendance). It is important that music teacher educators address this topic during PMT preparation with a keen understanding of the assessment practices required of them once they are in the field as practicing teachers. In a PK–12 teaching environment that has become more data-driven and results-oriented, music teacher educators can help guide PMTs to a clearer understanding of the importance of assessments based on musical rather than non-musical criteria. Honest and open discussions about the nature, purpose, and goals of assessment may help PMTs better understand the need for assessment based on musical achievement criteria. Such class discussions should be augmented with strategies PMTs may implement in their future PK–12 ensembles designed to develop appropriate dispositional characteristics (e.g., positive attitude, timely participation, preparation) without the need to incorporate it into a student's course grade. Music teacher educators can help break the assessment

cycle based primarily on informal group methods and non-musical achievement criteria by systematically identifying and addressing the disconnect between the practices utilized during PMT secondary and tertiary occupational identity development during their own high school and collegiate choral experience.

Collegiate Choral Directors

An understanding of what specific assessment strategies are being most utilized or underutilized in the collegiate setting may prompt directors to deliberately incorporate a greater variety of assessment practices. College choir directors should seek opportunities to incorporate diverse assessment practices into their rehearsals and instructional plans which may include formal changes to ensemble course requirements or be embedded into the choral experience itself. These formal assessment opportunities should provide choristers a way to demonstrate measurable and objective musical achievement based on individual musical criteria.

Due to the heavy reliance on non-musical assessment criteria reported in this study, collegiate choral directors should reconsider their use of such assessment criteria in light of what is best for the musical achievement of individual choristers. College choral directors may consider decreasing their emphasis on non-musical assessment criteria (e.g., attendance, attitude, participation) and increase their use of individual and formal performance-based musical assessments (e.g., sight singing tests, on-the-music tests, quartet tests). A more deliberate use of assessment practices has been revealed to increase chorister motivation as well as lead to addition increased skill development

(Garrett, 2013). I encourage directors to consider this in order to best meet the needs of their students.

When designing concert programs and selecting repertoire, I encourage directors to consider the musical skills necessary to effectively perform the repertoire itself as well as the most appropriate methods and processes to assess the development of those musical skills. Directors should clearly state their musical goals over the course of a unit, semester, or year and then backwards design a clear instructional path to achieving those goals. The planning process should include imbedded assessment along the way as well as the specific practices and methods directors will use to assess their ensembles throughout the learning process. Methods could include more than performance-based assessments depending on the director's goals for the choristers and their personal assessment philosophy. Collegiate choral directors must think critically and creatively about the best ways to measure and evaluate their choristers based on explicitly stated goals based on the selection of the choral repertoire.

Collegiate choral directors should also consider the extent to which their personal assessment attitude, belief, and philosophy impacts their practices in the choral setting. Researchers have found that a teacher's personal philosophy of assessment influenced their classroom practices (Cranmore & Wilhelm, 2017; Harris & Brown, 2009; Kancianic, 2006). A director's personal philosophy is the most influential factor on both assessment value and assessment practices (Tracy, 2002). By closely examining their employed assessment practices, choral directors may be able to discover more fully their personal philosophy for choral music, their position in the balance between individual

and group achievement, and their acceptance of the use of non-musical criteria and its impact on program advocacy and the choral art in general. Collegiate choral directors may be able to uncover the root of their music philosophy through the lens of assessment.

Collegiate choral directors should adopt an assessment philosophy that places the development of the individual chorister's musical skills above all else. Group achievement does not indicate individual success (Broomhead, 2001; Henry & Demorest, 1994). This means there must be an intentional effort to identify strategies that assess individual musical growth that are still contextual and authentic to the nature of choral music. Informal verbal group feedback was one of the most utilized assessment methods, supporting Henry's (2015, p. 2) notion that "more often than not, instructional planning in the choral classroom is driven by what needs to be accomplished in the score, not in the student." However, by emphasizing individual student outcomes, Garrett (2013) asserted that student-centered learning, based on individual student outcomes, was more likely to create independent musicians with increased critical thinking skills. A more deliberate use of assessment practices has been revealed to increase chorister motivation as well as lead to addition increased skill development (Garrett, 2013). By intentionally, systematically, and formally assessing a chorister's individual musical skills rather than employing haphazard or informal verbal group feedback, college choral directors will foster quicker and more efficient musical growth in their individual choristers, thus allowing the ensemble, as a whole, to progress and achieve more in a shorter amount of time.

I also encourage collegiate directors to be mindful of their impact on the occupational identity development of PMTs. Ensemble directors, music teacher educators, and studio teachers are among the most influential people on PMT identity development at the collegiate level (Isbell, 2008). Because of this, ensemble directors have a significant responsibility to model effective choral methods for the PMTs in their choral ensembles—including assessment. They should consider this impact during the entire process of selecting repertoire, audition/diagnostic placement, instruction, rehearsal, assessment, and performance. Directors must be keenly aware that PMTs are looking to them, whether consciously or unconsciously, and adopting their practices, methods, and procedures. Ensemble directors have a responsibility to model the highest quality instruction, rehearsal, and assessment practices possible in order to continue to elevate the music education profession and the choral art in general.

Music Teacher Educators and Collegiate Choral Director Collaboration

Music teacher educators and collegiate choral directors should consider collaborating more closely to effectively meet the needs of both choristers as well as PMTs. Each faculty member may bring additional strengths and skills that may prove useful for the mutual benefit of all collegiate choral students, not just for PMTs. The following suggestions for choral music education faculty could aid collegiate choral directors concerning assessment practices.

- Help design and provide additional assessment training for collegiate ensemble directors based on best practices.

- Increase awareness of the positive impact quality assessment practices may have on their own collegiate ensembles.
- Assist collegiate choral directors in locating quality assessment resources.
- Assist collegiate choral directors in developing and implementing appropriate assessment tools (e.g., rubrics, technology-based assessments, sight singing assessments, portfolios).
- Increase awareness of the significant role collegiate ensemble directors play on the occupational identity development of PMTs.

Similarly, collegiate choral directors should consider the following suggestions that may be beneficial to music teacher educators in designing course curriculum in assessment practices.

- Help communicate the realities of the practical assessment obstacles (e.g., large class sizes, resources, performance obligations) PMTs may face in their future PK–12 ensembles with firsthand experience.
- Provide PMTs an opportunity to assist in the development and implementation of assessment practices in their collegiate choral ensembles.
- Design an assessment process utilizing PMTs as student leaders that would help connect music education coursework immediately in a contextually appropriate setting. This could serve as a model PMTs could emulate in their future classrooms while simultaneously reducing the workload of the collegiate choral director.

It is imperative that collegiate choral directors and music teacher educators work collaboratively for the benefit of all choristers.

The Collegiate Choral Director as Music Teacher Educator

While the target population for this study was collegiate choral directors, it is quite possible that participants held simultaneous music faculty roles and served as both music teacher educator and choral conductor. Participants who serve in both capacities are in a unique position to live out in practice the appropriate methodologies and strategies they are simultaneously instilling in their choral music education students. This opportunity to practice and demonstrate rehearsal, pedagogical, and assessment skills from the perspective of both the choral director and music teacher educator is a powerful tool for the holistic educational experience of both choristers and preservice music teachers. Faculty members in such a position must consider the significance of their pedagogical assessment practices and use their position to educate PMTs appropriately.

Participants who serve as both music teacher educator and choral ensemble director may experience their own role confusion when balancing their performance obligations and responsibilities as a choral director with the need to model appropriate choral techniques and assessment practices for the PMTs in their ensembles. Recognizing the tension between educational philosophy and the practical realities of the instructional setting (Ames, 2020) and drawing attention to is as a learning tool for PMTs should be a normal and natural part of the educational experience. Since PMTs may face these types of conflicting variables regarding assessment in their future classrooms and programs, it seems only natural that higher education faculty purposefully address it in a manner that

would be beneficial for students. This complex interaction further indicated the multifaceted and overlapping role of education, setting, and philosophy concerning assessment practices in the collegiate choral setting (Armes, 2020).

Limitations

The relatively low response rate (26.88%) may partially be attributed to the manner in which the initial potential participant database was compiled. The population of this study was selected from a smaller segment of the United States (states in the Southwest ACDA region), so results cannot be generalized. Since a complete standardized and compiled database of collegiate choral directors is not readily available through such organizations as the American Choral Directors Association or the National Association for Music Education, I chose to compile the potential participant list manually through a systematic examination of music department websites. Potential participants were added based on department descriptions and ensemble listings. Due to the wide variety and quality of institutional websites (e.g., updated ensemble information, updated faculty rosters, differing website formats), inaccuracies seemed inevitable.

Furthermore, in an attempt to maximize survey distribution, I added participants who qualified through job title. Some job titles (e.g., choral conductor in residence, choral music education) were not a clear indicator if that person conducted an ensemble or not. However, they were included in the initial potential participant list. This "wide net" approach to the initial list allowed for additional participants to be included resulting in a larger, but potentially less accurate, initial list. Future researchers might consider a

more representative sample from more substantial portions of the United States via direct contact or specific professional organization email databases.

When assessing perceptions, there is always a risk of participant acquiescence—a response bias in which respondents tend to agree more positively. This bias could be a limitation when asking items regarding assessment confidence and self-efficacy. In the future, creating more negative-scored prompts could be introduced. I did not measure the degree of effectiveness of utilized assessment techniques as there would need to be direct observations of interactions between collegiate choral directors and the choristers in their ensembles—an element beyond the scope of this study.

The population for this study was collegiate choral directors. However, this study has implications for both choral directors as well as choral music education faculty. It may be possible that in some instances, the role of collegiate choral director and choral music teacher educator may be partially or completely intertwined. In this study, participants were not asked if they also taught music education or methods courses in addition to their ensemble conducting duties. As such, I was unable to determine if participants served in multiple capacities. It is not clear as to how best to interpret this study's results in light of the fact that respondents may hold multiple overlapping roles, responsibilities, and identities within their respective music departments.

Suggestions for Future Research

I investigated the usage frequency of assessment types and criteria in the collegiate choral setting. This descriptive baseline data may be utilized as a launching point for future investigations into the assessment practices of collegiate ensembles. As a

whole, assessment is a complex process connected to teacher training, assessment literacy, self-efficacy, and personal philosophy filtered through the practical realities of the learning environment (e.g., resources, time constraints, performance obligations) (Armes, 2020). Future researchers could consider the specific interaction between any number of these components in the collegiate choral setting.

In my data collection, I did not account for the depth, quality, or impact of specific assessment strategies or practices in the collegiate choral setting. Future researchers investigating collegiate choral assessment practices and beliefs could target how specific assessment strategies are utilized beyond frequency. Such an investigation could include how specific assessment criteria and measurement tools (e.g., rubrics, checklists) are implemented and how they impact a chorister's overall unit/semester grade. Such studies could investigate if self-reported assessment implementation matches the realities of the specific choral teaching environment.

Future researchers may also consider replicating this study at the national level rather than limiting it to states in the SWACDA region. This would provide more insight into the assessment practices in choral music at the collegiate level. Such a study could include an analysis of employed assessment practices or beliefs sorted by specific participant or institution demographic indicators (e.g., experience level, institutional setting, participant degree type, number of choristers). It could be beneficial to investigate if assessment practices or beliefs differ significantly between populations based on such demographic variables. Additional replication research at the national level would allow for a comparison of assessment practices and beliefs based on geography or

region. It could be beneficial to the profession to understand how assessment practices are being utilized in collegiate ensembles based on location. National collegiate choral assessment data could be analyzed against preexisting economic, population density, sociopolitical, and educational quality data. A correlational examination of these variables could prove useful to the music education profession.

The impact of explicit preparation and assessment training of collegiate choral directors on their employed practices should be studied further. Additional research into the assessment training of collegiate choral directors may be useful to music department programs and NASM in determining appropriate required coursework for graduate and terminal degrees in music education and choral conducting. If current collegiate choral directors report specific obstacles related to assessment training or education, then specific interventions and curricular alterations may be addressed in programs offering terminal degrees in choral conducting and choral music education.

By investigating choral conductors' perceived assessment obstacles, collegiate music department administrators can more effectively meet the needs of their ensemble directors. Additional assessment training and professional development may be added for collegiate choral directors. Furthermore, administrators may be able to locate and provide resources (e.g., equipment, funding, support staff) to help colligate choral directors overcome obstacles in implementing and maintaining effective assessment practices.

My third research question addressed participants' perception of their impact on the occupational identity and possibly the future pedagogical practices of PMTs. While music teacher occupational identity is an extensive vein of research, there seems to be

little research from the perspective of the source of the occupational influence (e.g., music education faculty, studio instructors, ensemble directors). Additional occupational identity research from this point of view may prove useful to understanding the perception collegiate music faculty have on their role in shaping the identities, philosophies, and practices of preservice music teachers. Considering the influence of occupational identity on assessment practices, future researchers could consider the interaction of perceived occupational identity (i.e., music educator vs. conductor) on assessment perceptions, beliefs, or pedagogical choices in higher education musical ensemble settings.

Conclusion

Schopp (1992) asserted that the choral ensemble should be a place where a music performance is conceptualized as an outgrowth of teaching and learning, not a culminating activity. Assessment is a vital component of this process. Assessment practices and beliefs are a complex and intersectional combination of educators' previous experiences, assessment literacy, philosophies of teaching and learning, self-efficacy, and notions about the purposes and use of assessment (McMillan & Nash, 2000). The influence of external factors (e.g., class size, training, resources) create an almost endless variety of diverse attitudes about musical assessment. In this study, I found a considerable reliance on informal verbal group feedback and non-musical assessment criteria. Interestingly, respondents also demonstrated high levels of self-reported assessment value, training, and self-efficacy. It appears that collegiate choral directors have an awareness of the appropriate use of assessment practices, yet do not consistently

employ them. Armes (2020) stated that many music teachers appear to know what and how assessments should be used but are reluctant to use them in their instructional practices due to conflicting notions about why they should assess, how assessment fits within broader philosophical beliefs, or how to navigate potential consequences of providing disappointing assessment results.

There is concern that teachers often teach the way they were taught (McCoy, 1991). In this study, collegiate choral directors, on some level, recognized their influence on the occupational identity development, and potential future classroom practices, of the PMTs in their ensembles. It is imperative that collegiate choral directors more consistently employ assessment best practices based on individual musical criteria to both meet the needs of their choristers as well as model appropriate assessment methodology for future music educators.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Documentation

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: March 28, 2022 **IRB#:** 14435

Principal Investigator: Joshua G Chism

Approval Date: 03/28/2022

Exempt Category: 2

Study Title: An Investigation of Collegiate Choral Director's Assessment Practices and Beliefs

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Aimee Franklin, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B: Survey Invitation and Follow-Up Message

Main Survey Invitation
Send Date: April 5, 2022
Subject Line: Collegiate Directors' Assessment Beliefs–A Short Survey

Dear Collegiate Choral Director,

I am Joshua Chism, a doctoral candidate from the University of Oklahoma. This email serves as your official invitation to participate in my dissertation research project. The purpose of this research is to examine the assessment practices and beliefs of collegiate choral ensemble directors.

This research is being conducted online. I am inviting all those who identify as a collegiate choral director from institutions in the SWACDA region. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. If you agree to be in this research, you will complete an online survey, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

The University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board has approved this research. If you wish to participate, please click the link below to enter the survey, or copy and paste the URL into your web browser.

Follow this link to the Survey:
Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Jz74pWXYYWaaaO?Q_CHL=email

The first page of the survey serves as your informed consent.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary; you may choose to withdraw at any time. If you have any questions pertaining to this research project, you may contact Joshua Chism (joshua.g.chism-1@ou.edu, 405-325-2081) or the OU-NC IRB (irb@ou.edu, 405-325-8110) at any time. Thank you in advance for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Joshua Chism
Ph.D. Candidate in Music Education
University of Oklahoma
joshua.g.chism-1@ou.edu

Follow-Up Message
Send Date: April 12, 2022
Subject Line: Reminder–Short Survey/Choral Directors' Assessment Beliefs

Dear Choral Director,

Last week, you were invited to participate in my dissertation survey on the assessment beliefs and practices of collegiate choral directors. If you have already completed the questionnaire, thank you very much! **If not, the survey link is provided below**. This short survey will only take 10 minutes to complete.

Follow this link to the Survey:
Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_6Jz74pWXYYWaaaO?Q_CHL=preview

Please complete the survey questionnaire by April 20, 2022.

I appreciate your time and thank you in advance for sharing your experiences on this topic.

Sincerely,
Joshua Chism
Ph.D. Candidate in Music Education
University of Oklahoma
joshua.g.chism-1@ou.edu

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Online Consent to Participate in Research
Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Joshua Chism from the University of Oklahoma School of Music and I invite you to participate in my research project investigating the assessment practices and beliefs of collegiate choral directors. This research is being conducted online. You were selected as a possible participant because you are directing a choral ensemble at the collegiate level in the SWACDA region (Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE agreeing to take part in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to examine the assessment practices and beliefs of collegiate choral directors.
How many participants will be in this research? This survey will be distributed online to all choral directors in higher education institutions from SWACDA states. This will involve approximately 200 choral directors.
What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will complete an online survey, which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
How long will this take? Your participation will take approximately 10 minutes.
What are the risks and/or benefits if I participate? There are no risks and no benefits from being in this research.
Will I be compensated for participating? You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this research.
Who will see my information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely, and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records. Data are collected via an online survey system that has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. Please note no assurance can be made as to the use of the data you provide for purposes other than this research.
What will happen to my data in the future? We will not share your data or use it in future research projects.
Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.
Who do I contact with questions, concerns or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me, Joshua Chism, at joshua.g.chism-1@ou.edu. You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

Please print this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research. This research has been approved by the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus IRB.

IRB Number: 14435 Approval date: March 28, 2022

- ❍ I agree to participate
- ❍ I do not want to participate

Skip To: End of Survey If "I do not want to participate" is selected.

Block 1–Demographic Information

1. Are you currently conducting or directing a choral ensemble at a university or higher educational institution?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Skip To: End of Survey If "No" is selected.

2. With what sex do you identify?

- ❍ Woman
- ❍ Man
- ❍ Non-binary
- ❍ Prefer to self-describe _____
- ❍ Prefer not to say

3. With what ethnicity do you identify?

- ❍ Caucasian
- ❍ Black/African American
- ❍ Hispanic/Latino
- ❍ American Indian/Native American
- ❍ Asian
- ❍ Biracial/multi-racial
- ❍ Prefer to self-describe _____
- ❍ Prefer not to say

4. Which best describes your current institution?

- ❍ Public Institution
- ❍ Private Institution
- ❍ Conservatory
- ❍ Community College
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____

5. In which state does your institution reside?
- ❍ Arkansas
- ❍ Colorado
- ❍ Kansas
- ❍ Missouri
- ❍ New Mexico
- ❍ Oklahoma
- ❍ Texas

6. Which best describes your current position title?
- ❍ Full professor
- ❍ Associate professor
- ❍ Assistant professor
- ❍ Non-tenure track professor (e.g., Instructor/Lecturer)
- ❍ Adjunct instructor
- ❍ Visiting Assistant Professor
- ❍ Interim Position
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____

7. What is your highest level of education?
- ❍ Bachelor's degree
- ❍ Master's degree
- ❍ Partial doctoral work (including ABD)
- ❍ Doctoral degree
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____

8. What best describes your highest degree type?
- ❍ Choral Conducting
- ❍ Conducting (general or non-choral)
- ❍ Choral Music Education
- ❍ Vocal Performance
- ❍ Music Education (General)
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____

9. How many years have you conducted choirs at the collegiate level (including this year)?

	0 5 10 15 20 25 30+
Years	

10. If any, how many years have you taught music at the K–12 level?

	0 5 10 15 20+
Years	

11. Does your institution offer a bachelor in music education degree?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

12. How many choral ensembles do currently conduct?

	1 2 3 4 5 6
Number of Ensembles	

13. What types of choral ensembles do YOU conduct? Check all that apply. Do not include ensembles conducted by other faculty or graduate students.
- ❑ Top-Level SATB
- ❑ Introductory SATB
- ❑ Men's Glee/Tenor Bass Choir
- ❑ Women's Choir/Treble Voice Choir
- ❑ Chamber Choir
- ❑ Madrigal Choir
- ❑ Gospel Choir
- ❑ Opera Chorus
- ❑ Jazz Choir
- ❑ Pop/Show Choir
- ❑ Worship/Praise Choir
- ❑ Other (please indicate) _____

14. Approximately how many choristers (in all ensembles) are under your direction?

_____

15. Which best describes your composite grading system?
- ❍ Traditional letter grades (A, B, C, D, F)
- ❍ Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
- ❍ Standards-based grading
- ❍ No formal grading
- ❍ Other (Please specify) _____

16. Approximately what percentage of choristers receive A's in your ensembles?

	0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percentage	

17. What training, if any, did you have regarding grading and assessment? Check all that apply.

- ❑ One course based solely on musical assessment
- ❑ More than one course based solely on musical assessment
- ❑ Included as a component of another MUSIC course
- ❑ Included as a component of another NON–MUSIC course
- ❑ Conference, workshop, or PD on assessment
- ❑ Self-study
- ❑ No training in assessment
- ❑ Other (Please specify) _____

18. What components are a part of the screening/audition process to be placed into your ensembles? Please check all that apply.

- ❑ Sing solo repertoire
- ❑ Range check
- ❑ Sight sing single melodic line
- ❑ Sight sing their voice part in choral texture
- ❑ Sing tonal memory examples
- ❑ Personal interview
- ❑ Recommendation from students or faculty
- ❑ Other (Please describe) _____
- ❑ I do not require a screening/audition.

Block 2–Assessment Strategies/Activities

For the following strategies/activities list, select how often you use each as an assessment tool with your choristers throughout a typical semester. **It is not expected that you will use all listed strategies.**

1 of 4–Conductor Created Assessments

	Daily/Every Rehearsal	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semester	Never
Checklists, rating scales, and/or rubrics	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Group verbal corrections	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Class discussions	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Individual sight singing tests	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Small group sight singing tests	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Full ensemble sight singing tests	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Individual singing tests on choral repertoire	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Small group/ sectional singing tests (e.g., quartet tests) on choral repertoire	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ensemble concerts/ performances	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

2 of 4–Traditional Assessments

	Daily/Every Rehearsal	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semester	Never
Written tests/quizzes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Concert critiques	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Essays/reports	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Compositions	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other projects	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Written classwork/ homework	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Surveys/ questionnaires	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Listening logs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Individual practice log	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

3 of 4–Chorister-Based Assessments

	Daily/Every Rehearsal	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semester	Never
Participation during rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attendance of rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attendance of performances	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attitude/ preparation during rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Self-assessments	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Journals/ self-reflections	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Peer-assessment	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Student portfolios	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
One-on-one meetings with choristers	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

4 of 4–Technology-Based Assessments

	Daily/Every Rehearsal	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Semester	Never
Audio/Video (A/V) record whole ensemble in rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A/V record whole ensemble in performance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A/V record individuals in rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A/V record small group in rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A/V record individuals outside of rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A/V record small group outside of rehearsal	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Photographs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
SmartMusic or other similar software	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please describe any assessment strategies or activities you use that weren't mentioned.

_____

_____

Block 3–Assessment Views/Beliefs

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement listed below.

1 of 5–General Assessment Beliefs

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Assessing choristers' musical progress is a primary role of the collegiate choral director.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Formal assessment is an important part of my collegiate choral program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I most commonly use informal verbal feedback for assessment during the rehearsal process.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assessment interferes with teaching.	❍	❍	❍	❍
The way collegiate choral ensembles are assessed should be different than the way choirs are assessed at the PK–12 level.	❍	❍	❍	❍

2 of 5–Assessment Suitability

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Tests and written projects are suitable formats for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Rehearsal participation is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Performance tests (e.g., sight-reading, on-the-music tests) are suitable formats for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Preparation (e.g., being on time, having music, pencil) is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Class attendance is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Attitude is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Concert participation is a suitable criterion for assessing a chorister.	❍	❍	❍	❍

3 of 5–Individual and Group Assessment

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
A choir class should concentrate on group learning assessment and not on individual learning assessment.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Choral music is a subject where individual assessment is not critical.	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is unrealistic to believe that a student's progress in choir can be assessed individually and reliably.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assessing a choristers' individual musical progress is an important function of a collegiate choral conductor.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Choral music students' skills are best assessed on an individual basis.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Choral music students' skills are best assessed in small groups (e.g., quartets, sections).	❍	❍	❍	❍
Choral music students' skills are best assessed in large groups (e.g., entire ensemble).	❍	❍	❍	❍
If my ensembles are achieving at a high level, then the individual choristers are learning appropriately.	❍	❍	❍	❍

4 of 5–Assessment Obstacles

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I lack the rehearsal time to formally assess choristers effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍
Large numbers of singers prevent me from assessing choristers effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I lack adequate training/education to formally assess choristers effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I lack the resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, materials) to assess choristers effectively.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that my formal education properly trained me to assess my choristers musically.	❍	❍	❍	❍

5 of 5–Assessment Self-Efficacy

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my current assessment practices are effective and suitable for my ensembles.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel there is room to improve the assessment practices I use with my choir.	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel confident that my assessment practices are well developed and meet the needs of my students and overall choral program.	❍	❍	❍	❍
My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by other college choir directors.	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please describe any other responses or thoughts you may have related to assessment beliefs and self-efficacy.

_____

_____

Impact on PMT Occupational Identity

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement below.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
My assessment strategies are worthy of being modeled by the music education students in my choirs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The preservice music teachers in my choirs should adopt my assessment strategies.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The assessment practices I use in my college choirs impacts the future assessment practices of the music education students in my choirs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I develop my choral assessment strategies specifically as a model for the preservice music teachers in my choirs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please describe any other responses or thoughts you may have related to your influence on preservice music teachers' future assessment practices and beliefs.

_____

_____

Final Question: Please share anything else regarding assessment in the collegiate choral rehearsal you feel is important for others to know.

_____

_____

Appendix D: Additional Assessment Strategies

Prompt: Please describe any assessment strategies or activities you use that weren't mentioned.

1. Video and audio [recordings] of previous performances are available to students 24/7.
2. [I use] score exam videos where students upload pre-assigned "cuts" of repertoire. Assignments may vary depending on what stage of musical preparation the ensemble is in. Some [part singing] assignments will be with solfege or neutral syllable while other assignments are with text, specific tempo requirements, etc.
3. Three to four weeks before a concert, we begin recording our rehearsals. In the next class, we listen to assess our performance using the Texas UIL rubric. Students are usually able to make the necessary corrections once they hear/identify the problem (e.g., tuning, balance, diction). This method also helps [choristers] take ownership of their work.
4. For [individual] part testing, I have carried over from "COVID times" having students use their phone to record themselves on a specific section in rehearsal so I can hear what they would do naturally within the choir. This takes some stress off from coming in by themselves or in a small group, and I feel gives me a truer picture of what they are really doing/singing.

5. My students record mainly during rehearsal. Each one holds a recorder or a phone while we sing together, and I listen and assess their individual recordings for a weekly grade. They do have to record outside of class as well.
6. The technology that has become standard after the pandemic has made it much easier to assess students individually. I can require them to record themselves singing their part and upload it. I can then evaluate their work without losing rehearsal time. One good outcome from the pandemic!
7. [I use an] informal spiritual/emotional assessment and weekly debriefing.

Appendix E: Additional Assessment Beliefs Responses

Prompt: Please describe any other responses or thoughts you may have related to assessment beliefs and self-efficacy.

1. Differences in assessment between PK-12 and university ensembles should reflect differences in preferred outcomes. University ensembles, made up of future music professionals, should leave those ensembles experiences with additional knowledge and skills than a singer in a PK–12 program.
2. When I was teaching middle/high school choirs, I had to deal with very non-supportive administrations, who sent special education and "poorly performing" students into choirs, as an "easy A." I did need to work with students who could not (and would not) sing, because they could not match pitch, but they could move so I included them in any type of show choir dance. I made a deal with such students: if they learned to lip-sync, and they learned the choreography (to the point in which they didn't stand out), I would give them an A in this course. The students always complied and were very grateful that I did not grade them on the basis of their musicality. I believe that many PK–12 instructors are faced with the same issue.
3. There are many factors that impact the performance of my students, and I think is related to the area where I live. Rent is very expensive, there is not a decent public transportation system, and, generally speaking, students in this college come from precarious economic situations. This might sound like a common situation in

community colleges, but the culture (and economy) is based on blue collar jobs, so many students quit school to find jobs. Also, as a 2-year institution, achieving a mature choral sound is somewhat impossible as the personnel changes constantly.

Appendix F: Impact on Occupational Identity

Prompt: Please describe any other responses or thoughts you may have related to your influence on preservice music teachers' future assessment practices and beliefs.

1. Assessment strategies that are relevant to preservice music teachers' assessment needs can be adopted. However, university assessments that are designed to measure leadership, conducting, knowledge of vocal pedagogy, teaching effectiveness and the like, would not necessarily be useful in a PK–12 ensemble.
2. Because my preservice teachers end up taking positions in a large variety of schools and many begin their teaching at the middle school level, the assessment strategies that we use in chorale may not be appropriate or even possible in some [public school districts]. I do hope that our practice instills a desire to find performance-based practices for assessment.
3. I have everything from students who have had no formal training and those who are quite gifted. I'm constantly learning new strategies—sometimes from my students after they have returned from a workshop or conference. There is no one perfect way when you are dealing with a wide range of abilities and working to make them a cohesive group. This [aspect of] continual learning is part of what I love about what I do.

Appendix G: General Additional Responses

Prompt: Please share anything else regarding assessment in the collegiate choral rehearsal you feel is important for others to know.

1. I do wonder if the fundamental ideas of grades are different from the PK–12 teachers than college teachers.
2. Assessment in a non-major choir is very different than assessment in a choir comprised primarily of music majors.
3. There is a vast difference in the methods, procedures, etc., in assessing collegiate students and PK–12 students.
4. The effectiveness and necessity of various assessment tools can, and should, change with the context and desired outcomes of the ensemble. Effective assessment is necessary at all levels, but the specific assessments will change based on the outcomes desired.
5. It seems that attendance and attitude are becoming harder to require. Between the pandemic and the damaging effects of social media, there has been a huge influx of emotional/mental problems with college students. Not sure how that will affect my assessment/grading procedures in the future.
6. Since I began using online assessments five years ago, the musical growth and progress of [my collegiate choir] has been continuous and exponential. We are

learning music faster and more deeply than ever before. Strategic planning and assessments have made all the difference.

7. I am a firm believer that choral directors should not introduce assessments as a form of punishment or abuse for singers; rather, it is a way to see progress and to make sure that all singers properly excelling. Individual or small group assessments can be frightening, but if presented in a fun and playful manner, this can help students to overcome various issues such as balancing with other vocal parts, active listening, and clarity of tone.
8. I am always willing to learn more and implement different assessment strategies in my collegiate choral ensembles as I explore, learn, adapt, and grow as a music educator.
9. It is not only important to assess musical progress, it is of utmost importance to assess technical progress and team spirit progress.
10. Community building is extremely important to me in building a strong choral group. We only sing as good as we care for each other.