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## Preparation of K–12 Preservice Music Teacher Educators Using Assessment Strategies

Frederica Doctor  
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# Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Frederica Doctor

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2024

Abstract

Preparation of K–12 Preservice Music Teacher Educators Using Assessment Strategies

by

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PhD, Walden University, 2018

ME, Lesley University, 2006

BA, Charleston Southern University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

November 2024

## Abstract

Recent studies suggest that preservice music teacher educators (MTEs) had more experience in assessment preparation at the graduate level than during their undergraduate experience. Although music standards and assessments emphasize providing information about student learning, research investigating what assessment strategies music faculty are using and teaching to prepare preservice MTEs is limited. The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. The study is grounded in the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE) instructional design model framework. Semistructured, open-ended interviews were conducted with 10 music faculty that use or teach assessment strategies. The five themes that emerged from open coding and thematic analysis are (a) assessment strategies in music education, (b) technology as a tool for engagement and assessment, (c) course design and curriculum development, (d) professional development and collaboration, and (e) 2014 National Core Music Education Standards and Frameworks in Music Education. The themes illustrate a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities involved in equipping preservice MTEs with effective assessment practices, contributing to the evolving discourse on best practices, relevance, and innovation in music education. By equipping preservice MTEs with strategic assessment practices, the study promotes positive social change, bridging the gap between preparation and practice to cultivate meaningful educational experiences for future MTEs in K-12 settings.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to future music teacher educators, hoping that this labor of love will play an essential role in providing children with a holistic educational experience through music education.

## Acknowledgments

I am immensely grateful to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength and grace to achieve another significant academic accomplishment. I also want to thank Dr. John Flohr and Dr. Billie Andersson for their resourcefulness, expertise, and encouragement as part of my committee. In addition to my committee, I was fortunate to receive invaluable guidance from the faculty and staff associated with Walden's Richard W. Riley College of Education & Human Sciences and the Student Academic Success Mentor group. Furthermore, I am thankful to the wonderful participants who shared their experiences and passion for music education, greatly contributing to this study. Finally, I would like to acknowledge all those who supported and prayed for me during this academic milestone.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The continued assessment and reporting of music by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that keeps pace with student learning will be eliminated from the Nation's Report Card for 2025 assessments (National Assessment Governing Board, 2020). This latest development will impact many states and districts nationwide from accessing data on arts assessment strategies, professional development, and technology in arts assessments. Furthermore, one of the major assessment challenges for music teacher educators (MTEs) is using assessment in their programs to inform their teaching and how it benefits their students (National Association for Music Education [NAFME], 2022).

States' school districts have voluntarily adopted music standards as a source for developing curricula, learning outcomes, and assessments (Mellizo, 2020). Most curriculum frameworks require music educators to be able to define and measure learning outcomes (Mellizo, 2020). However, previous studies have indicated that MTEs had more experience learning assessment strategies in the field of K–12 music education at the graduate level with varied state and institutional requirements (Parkes & Rawlings, 2019; Payne et al., 2019; Pellegrino et al., 2018; Prichard, 2018). Given the importance of assessing student learning according to the music standards and frameworks, it is essential to understand the assessment strategies used by higher education music faculty in universities and colleges. This knowledge may have implications for positive social change, especially in terms of what preservice music teachers are taught. Faculty's recommendations about how assessment strategies can be used effectively to improve

student learning can foster the value of music assessment among state and district stakeholders.

In Chapter 1, I share an overview of the study, including background information, the problem and purpose statements, and the research question. Additionally, I provide definitions of key terms and concepts based on the conceptual framework. The nature of the study, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and significance are also discussed in the chapter. The final section is a summary that includes a transition to the literature review in Chapter 2.

### **Background**

The NAEP's decision to eliminate the reporting of music assessment from the Nation's Report Card of nonacademic subjects like the arts to administrators, teachers, and state and local stakeholders is evidence that academic subjects are given more credence that may be correlated with student achievement within and outside of schools. Despite the importance of assessments for K–12 music education, little is known about the assessment strategies music faculty are using and/or teaching to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs. In this study, I addressed this gap by exploring what assessment strategies music faculty throughout the United States used and taught preservice MTEs in the classroom. Positive social change may occur through gathering recommendations from faculty about what assessment strategies can be used to effectively improve music teaching and student learning that foster the value of music assessment among state and national stakeholders to bridge this gap.

### **Problem Statement**

There was a gap in the research on what assessment strategies music faculty use and teach preservice music teachers to use in the classroom. Although researchers and organizations have previously investigated this issue (Baumgartner & Council, 2019; Cavanagh et al., 2019; Pellegrino & Conway, 2018; Vasil et al., 2019), few focused on teaching preservice MTEs' assessment strategies. Without a greater understanding of preservice MTEs' ability to use assessment strategies in the classroom, music teachers may lack the knowledge of how these strategies can inform their teaching and how their students may benefit through the means of assessment.

Furthermore, the NAFME (2022a) indicated that creating and using assessments remains a major challenge in the field of music education. The current study built on the existing literature by exploring what type of assessment practices are being used or taught by music faculty. Research in this area could provide MTEs in K–12 and postsecondary settings, along with teacher preparation programs, with recommendations on what assessment strategies can be used to effectively improve music teaching and student learning that foster the value of music assessment among state and national stakeholders.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. I interviewed 10 music faculty to understand their perceptions of using and/or teaching assessment

strategies to preservice MTEs to use in the classroom. The phenomenon of interest for this study was the preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs to use assessment strategies.

### **Research Questions**

Research Question: What assessment strategies do music faculty use or teach preservice MTEs in K–12 music education certification programs or institutions?

Subquestion 1: What is the process of designing an assessment strategies course?

Subquestion 2: How are the 2014 National Core Music Standards implemented, if at all, when teaching assessment strategies?

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The conceptual framework for this study was the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE) instructional design model. Each of the five phases have their distinct purpose and role in the development of an instructional design (Peterson, 2003). Each phase has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the cycle (Learning Theories, 2022) and allows instructional designers, faculty, and others working in higher education to revisit a phase and refine it (see Davis, 2013). Furthermore, the ADDIE model is used by educators and instructional designers to design and develop educational and training programs (Ngussa, 2014). I used the ADDIE model to guide the design of the current study to explore what assessment strategies music faculty teach preservice MTEs to use in the classroom. The conceptual framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

## **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this research was a basic qualitative inquiry from the social constructivist position, which focuses on a complex, detailed understanding of the issue through rich description (see Merriam, 2016). The phenomenon of interest was the assessment strategies that music faculty across the United States used and taught preservice MTEs to employ in the classroom. A basic qualitative study design enabled me to determine what types of assessments are being used and/or taught by music faculty that align with curricula and national standards. I invited 10 music faculty who used or taught assessment strategies for individual interviews. These interviews were conducted via Zoom or the phone, audio recorded, and transcribed for accuracy. I then used open coding and inductive comparative analysis to look for themes in the participants' responses.

## **Definitions**

*ADDIE model*: A five-phase instructional design framework consisting of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation, with each phase serving a unique purpose in creating instructional design (Peterson, 2003). More details are available in Chapter 2.

*Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs)*: Payne et al. (2019) described the MCAs as a growing approach to assessment in K–12 music education that enhances assessment practices, improves student performance, guides instruction, and supports advocacy for music education.

*NAFME*: An organization committed to advancing music education by offering resources and opportunities to educators, schools, and advocacy groups at national, state, and local levels (NAFME, 2023).

*NAEP arts assessments*: An evaluation of students' knowledge and skills in the visual and performing arts by observing, describing, analyzing, and assessing original works (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

*Opportunity to Learn (OTL) Standards*: These standards were established in 2015 to provide teachers, schools, and districts with resources to help students excel at the levels outlined in the 2014 Music Standards (NAFME, 2020).

*Preservice teachers/Preservice arts and music teachers*: Students in an educator preparation program studying to become practicing teachers in their field. They are supervised and mentored by university faculty and K–12 cooperating teachers. In addition, preservice arts teachers are introduced to various pedagogical methods in their respective disciplines. For instance, preservice music teachers must not only be acquainted with performing music, but “they must be able to identify which appropriate pedagogical methods is intrinsic to helping students learn to play, understand, and appreciate music” (Beudert, 2010, p. 698).

### **Assumptions**

This research study was based on several assumptions. One assumption was the participants' willingness to share their experiences and insights throughout the interview. Their responses allowed me to understand their perceptions and how they make meaning of their insights. Another assumption was that as music faculty who participated in this

study recognized the need to teach preservice MTEs assessment strategies. As music faculty, I assumed they would have a significant understanding of how assessment strategies and the core music standards and assessment framework are used to inform stakeholders about student learning and teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The problem was limited to preservice MTEs, K–12, and postsecondary music faculty who used and taught assessment strategies. Due to the breadth of this study, recruitment occurred via research invitations with several professional music associations and networks across the United States to music faculty that met the eligibility requirements to participate. I will elaborate on the participant recruitment process in Chapter 3. This study did not include undergraduate students majoring in music education.

### **Limitations**

Although I may have had access to approximately 1,017 college faculty that offer a music degree (see U.S. News, 2024) and several national professional music associations and networks across the United States, one potential limitation of this study was the difficulty of recruiting participants for interviews. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, another limitation was the lack of quantitative data related to demographic information, experiences, and activities in which participants have engaged as well as their professional perceptions collected through answered survey questions. Another area of concern was researcher bias. One area of such bias was my experience as a preservice music teacher where there was a lack of instruction related to teaching assessment

strategies. Whereas, as a music teacher, I was exposed to assessment strategies through professional development and graduate school. To combat this bias, I asked my committee to review my analysis and interpretations.

### **Significance**

This basic qualitative study was essential in that it addressed a major challenge of music teachers as it relates to using assessment to inform their teaching and students' learning as outlined in the music standards and assessment framework. A better understanding of what types of assessment strategies music faculty used and taught K–12 preservice MTEs and how they align with national standards was needed. The implications for positive social change include recommendations involving music faculty with an understanding of what assessment strategies can be used to effectively improve music teaching and student learning that foster the value of music assessment among statewide stakeholders.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. Recent studies indicated that preservice K–12 MTEs had more experience in assessment preparation at the graduate level rather than the undergraduate level and state and institutional requirements varied when it comes to learning emerging assessment practices in the field of K–12 music education (Parkes & Rawlings, 2019; Payne et al., 2019; Pellegrino et al., 2018). The research questions for this study focused on what assessment strategies music

faculty used or taught to K–12 preservice MTEs. Additionally, the subquestions addressed how these strategies are part of the faculty’s overall course design and its correlation with the 2014 National Core Music Standards, OTL Standards, and MCAs. Data were collected from 10 semistructured interviews. In Chapter 2, I will thoroughly describe the conceptual framework and provide a review of the literature on types of assessments; assessments in music education; arts teacher education programs; MTE perceptions; the preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs; and the 2014 National Core Music Standards, OTL Standards, and MCAs.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study addressed one of the major assessment challenges music teachers encounter using assessment in their programs to inform their teaching and how it benefits their students (see NAFME, 2022a). Despite the importance of national standards and assessment frameworks as they relate to music education, the purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. In this chapter, I explain the literature search strategy, describe the conceptual framework, and review the extant empirical research regarding key concepts related to this study.

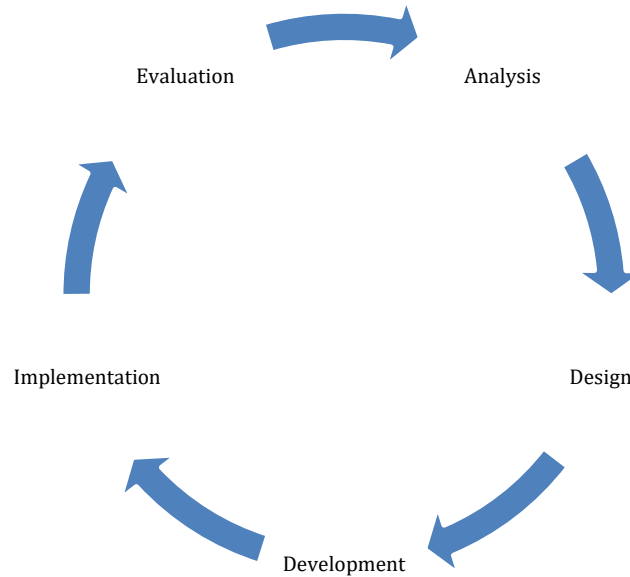
### **Literature Search Strategy**

I accessed several databases and search engines to investigate the assessment strategies higher education music faculty are teaching to preservice MTEs, including Academic Search Complete Databases, Education Source, ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, Political Science Complete, SAGE Journals, Taylor and Francis Online, and Thoreau. I also read theses, dissertations, and other resources from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global and the NAFME. The following keywords and phrases were used both individually and in concert with each other: *arts teacher education programs, pre-service music teachers, music teacher educator perceptions, 2014 National Core Music Standards, OTL Standards, MCAs, K–12, assessment strategies, formative assessment, summative assessment, performance assessment, higher education, and ADDIE instructional design model.*

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the ADDIE model. ADDIE is a basic instructional design model that is based on Gagne's nine levels of learning behaviorist model and the Dick and Carey model among many others (Mercadl, 2021). In the 1970s and 1980s, the ADDIE model was developed at Florida State University (Fernandes et al., 2020), where contributing researchers, Dick and Carey, created instructional systems design models like ADDIE for many organizations to train departments and employees in the industrial and technology fields (Kallio, 2021, para. 21). Consequently, this model has been adopted by the Armed Forces and is being used today (Kallio, 2021).

ADDIE is an instructional design cycle that is comprised of five stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (see Figure 1). The five phases have their distinct purpose and role in the development of an instructional design (Peterson, 2003). Each phase has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the cycle (Learning Theories, 2022) and allows instructional designers, faculty, and others working in higher education to revisit a phase and refine it (Davis, 2013). Subsequently, in a survey study, Bond and Dirkin (2020) found that out of 39 models, including backward design and tech-focused frameworks, such as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition. ADDIE was the most prominent among instructional designers in the field of education. Therefore, I used the ADDIE model to guide the design of the study along with writing the interview questions.

**Figure 1***ADDIE Instructional Design Model***ADDIE Five Phases Design Model**

As a result of its influence, the ADDIE model is seen as the most used instructional design model among educators, instructional designers, and training developers in higher education because of its clearly defined stages that foster the implementation of effective training tools (Castro & Tumibay, 2021). During the analysis phase, the educator “identifies instructional problems, goals and objectives, learning environments, and the skill of the learners” (International Society for Education Technology [ISET], 2022, para. 4). A needs assessment is conducted by instructors and designers to examine the standards and competencies to set the foundation for what the students need by the completion of the course, and this is usually determined by course evaluations (Peterson, 2003). Additionally, considerations are given to behavioral

consequences, constraints to learning environments, and the timeline for project completion. After the analysis phase, the design phase is the next step in the cycle in specifying learning objectives; evaluation tools; training and exercises; content development; and an examination of content matter, schedules, and technology options to achieve project goals (ISET, 2022). The development phase is the creation of the various course components. This process may take up to a semester to a whole year for educators to refine and improve the course. The implementation phase consists of various steps, including (a) preparing educators to educate, (b) providing tools to the learners, and (c) conducting delivery and assessment (ISET, 2022, para. 12). During the evaluation phase, data are gathered and assessed through formative and summative assessments to provide feedback from students about the course to stakeholders (e.g., administrators and accreditors; Learning Theories, 2022).

### **Implementation of the ADDIE Model**

In terms of implementation, Peterson (2003) indicated that the ADDIE model is one of the most effective and adaptable instructional design models to use in a variety of settings. Additionally, the ADDIE model of instructional systems design is widely used in all forms of instruction, particularly web-based and online learning (Kallio, 2021, para. 9). For instance, Durak and Ataizi (2016) conducted a case study where the ADDIE model was applied to develop a course of Programming Languages-I online, which is given on a face-to-face basis at the undergraduate level. The findings of the study supported the results of another study that revealed the incorporation of the ADDIE

model yielded better outcomes than the traditional methods of instruction (Durak & Ataizi, 2016).

Likewise, an action research-based study on the ADDIE training program using a quasi-experimental, one-group design with 77 female in-service teachers from Saudi Arabia aimed to enhance in-service teachers' perceived skills in solving educational problems revealed that the ADDIE training program was highly effective in terms of improving teachers' ability to solve educational problems from teachers' perspectives (Alsaleh, 2020). Consistent with previous studies, Ozdamli and Ozdal (2018) used both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop an infographic design based on the ADDIE model instructional design. As a result, both teachers and students reached a consensus that the usage of infographics in teaching had positive outcomes in learning environments (Ozadamli & Ozdal, 2018).

The ADDIE instructional design model is a commonly used approach to developing an effective implementation of instructional courses. The model consists of five phases: (a) analysis, in which designers analyze learners by asking who the students are, what they already know, and what they need to learn; (b) design, in which designers design instruction as well as determine course goals, learning objectives and assessment, and activities that will help students achieve those objectives; (c) develop, in which designers develop learning materials and activities and are concerned with textbook choice, readings, interactive materials, and online resources; (c) implement, in which the instruction is implemented and is, literally, the execution or actual instruction of the course; and (e) evaluation, in which instructors and designers evaluate whether students

achieved the learning outcomes and where the actual course itself is evaluated (Budoya et al., 2019; Strawser, 2020).

### **Application of ADDIE in the Music Classroom**

Trust and Pektas (2018) posited that the role of 21st-century K–12 teacher educators need to evolve, especially with the latest innovations in technology, standards, curriculum, and policies to address student needs. As part of a collaborative way to work with faculty that teach assessment strategies to preservice MTEs, the ADDIE instructional design model can be used as a guide for formal professional development for those who are not tech-savvy when it comes to designing courses and improving student learning. For instance, in a performative setting, (a) instructors can have students sing and analyze their part based on the performance rubric, (b) send a file or upload it to YouTube to be analyzed by the instructor and students, (c) have the student resubmit the file upon receiving feedback, (d) the instructor records an instructional lecture using Zoom or a preferred digital platform, (e) the student incorporates feedback and/or recorded lecture and reattempts their part, and (f) the instructor collects all performances and uses a digital platform (e.g., Garage Band, Portfolium) to give feedback to the entire ensemble (CourseHorse, n.d.).

Through the ADDIE instructional design, this development of an online course promotes a continuous cycle of practice, feedback, and learning for faculty and students. It offers flexibility and a solution to both faculty and students when having to instruct and learn in asynchronous or synchronous settings. Subsequently, the ADDIE framework proved to be useful in the current study by providing context about its usage in learning

and practical settings as well as how assessment is perceived and taught in higher education, especially as it relates to music education and the assessment strategies K–12 and postsecondary music faculty are using and/or teaching preservice MTEs to employ in the classroom.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts**

In this literature review related to key concepts, I describe studies related to assessment and assessment strategies in higher and music education, arts teacher education programs, MTEs' perceptions, 2014 National Core Music Standards, OTL Standards, and MCAs. I reviewed and synthesized studies related to the key concepts and the research questions to guide the development of my interview questions and data analysis. The aim of this literature review was to investigate and provide a description as to why the phenomenon under study is meaningful, what remains controversial related to it, and what still needs to be studied.

### **Implementation of Assessment Strategies**

A growing body of research has suggested that the use of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools and faculty collaboration across courses are achievable ways that demonstrate how students learn in higher education (Suskie, 2020). Assessment strategies include tests and quizzes, performance assessments, and indirect and direct assessments. Typically, formative and summative assessments are the two major forms of assessment used in higher education to demonstrate evidence of student learning.

Formative assessment takes place throughout the course or program. Homework, quizzes, and midterm exams are examples of formative assessments used to inform and

improve student learning before the end of the course, whereas summative assessment takes place at the end of the course or program (Suskie, 2020). Final exams and other major assignments are examples of summative assessments used to adjust students' subsequent learning experiences and modify learning activities for faculty when teaching the course (Suskie, 2020).

Performance assessments are commonly used in arts education because such assessments prompt and guide students about what they are expected to do or produce through a rubric (NAfME, 2024a; National Art Education Association, n.d.). A rubric is a written guide that lists the criteria that faculty are looking for to assess students' work and can take the form of a checklist, scoring guides, or rating scales with brief descriptions of each trait at each performance level (Suskie, 2020). There is some debate as to whether checklists, scoring guides, and rating scales should be referred to as rubrics since some experts believe that an analytic rubric is the only form that can be called a rubric (Suskie, 2020). It could be argued, in this instance, that in the music classroom, data collection tools need to be easy, measurable, trackable, and comparable to capture students' understanding and engagement while generating information that informs students, teachers, school administration, and public officials (Barlow, 2018).

Unlike explicit assessments that tend to generate minimum interaction between students and teachers with responses, such as "good," "needs improvement," and so forth, that provide instant feedback for students to move on to the next objective, performative assessments provide opportunities for both student and teacher to work together through

the learning process that appears to be most useful in terms of extending pedagogical interaction (Grooms, 2019). Likewise, Campbell and Cabrera-Maray (2020) posited,

That interactions between teaching strategies and course ideas are meaningful to learning; students are not blank slates; strong teaching strategies consider various contexts of learning, and teaching and learning is a shared experience are guiding principles that further support the framework of the understanding teaching and teaching practices and its connection to student learning in higher education (p. 1526).

### **Assessment in Higher Education**

Assessment in the context of higher education is essential to the teaching-learning experience because it provides information about how students can understand and improve their learning. Faculty can use that information to be informed about their teaching of learning outcomes as well and data can be used to demonstrate to the institution's stakeholders its commitment to effective teaching and student learning (Suskie, 2020). Likewise, Colwell (2019) indicated that policymakers value data to ensure public trust in revealing there are numerous ways to teach, learn, and evaluate. Furthermore, assessments provide a holistic picture of learning and feedback from various sources (i.e., support services, student affairs programs, and programs) throughout the institution (Slotnick & Jankowski, 2020).

In the United States, seven regional accreditors provide institutional-level quality assurance to improve student learning and educational offerings (Slotnick & Jankowski, 2020). Specialized programs can be subjugated to additional programmatic accreditation

if required. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM; 2022), an organization of school conservatories, colleges, and universities that provide standards and guidelines for accreditations for institutions and evaluators, recommended that institutions should focus on:

- specializations,
- primary and secondary music education methods courses,
- observation and teaching experiences before admission in teacher education programs (i.e., in school settings),
- evaluative procedures to assess students' learning and achievement, and
- opportunities for advanced undergraduate study.

Additionally, the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (2022), the professional accreditor that reviews departments, universities, and colleges that prepare teachers and educators seeking state certification and licensure to teach (para. 4), indicated that teacher preparation programs (TPPs) are essential to developing quality first-year teachers (Tutt, 2018). Although TPPs' sole responsibility is to prepare teachers to teach, Tutt (2018) indicated that "federal legislation and government officials suggest that TPPs are responsible for many of the problems that face public education which result in additional regulations and systems designed to evaluate TPPs' success in preparing effective teachers" (p. 185).

Baumgartner and Councill (2019) indicated that TPPs encounter unique opportunities and challenges where effective methods for collaboration among student teachers, cooperating teaching, and faculty must be the primary focus. Therefore,

expectations before the student teaching seminar about professional development goals, seminar assessments, and cooperating teacher requirements must be communicated upfront to ensure a successful placement and, most importantly, to provide students with a high-quality music education experience from future effective music education teachers (Baumgartner & Council, 2019).

Currently, there is an ongoing debate in the field of assessment that focuses on the purpose of student learning assessment, how to measure student learning, and the usefulness of results (Slotnick & Jankowski, 2020). These along with other debates about the evidence of learning, improvement of student learning, and external accountability will continue to shape the conversation about the process of assessment.

### **Assessments in Music Education**

Bolden and Deluca (2022) responded in their basic qualitative study to Burnard and Power's (2013) assertion that formative creativity assessment could provide the framework and fundamental change required in the development of assessment practices for learning in the music classroom. Beard and Perez (2019) suggested that formative assessment can be divided into two categories when implementing music as a formative assessment to improve student cognition: assessment for learning and assessment as learning. For instance, assessment for learning is student-centered, whereas assessment as learning is based on predetermined and desired objectives. Beard and Perez go on to say that authentic assessment has proven to be effective for all age levels and that is particularly important in music classrooms given the emphasis placed on standardized testing.

In contrast, Payne et al. (2019) identified six key steps for conducting effective assessments in music classrooms: (a) defining clear outcomes for each grade level; (b) creating assessment tasks and tools; (c) providing feedback; (d) reporting individual student progress; (e) analyzing, improving, and assigning grades; and (f) sharing results with stakeholders for accountability and advocacy (p. 6). Furthermore, MCAs are becoming a prominent assessment method in K–12 music education, promoting practices that enhance student performance, inform instruction, and support music education advocacy (Payne et al., 2019). Aligned with these six steps, performance assessments are a key strategy in arts and music education programs.

### **Arts Teacher Education Programs**

Arts education programs are a part of 4- and 2-year institutions in the United States (Hodges, 2020). The arts are categorized as fine or performing arts. Furthermore, the policies and curricula of arts programs are mandated by their respective states (Hodges, 2020). Given the value of arts-rich programs in undergraduate education, it is essential to understand the landscape of arts education programs and their role in equipping preservice arts educators specifically in the discipline of music education.

Alo et al. (2022) indicated that preservice teachers are students enrolled in an educator preparation program studying to become practicing teachers in their field. They are supervised and mentored by university faculty and K–12 cooperating teachers. In addition, preservice arts teachers are introduced to various pedagogical methods in their respective disciplines. For instance, preservice music teachers must not only be acquainted with performing music, but they must also be able to identify which

appropriate pedagogical methods are intrinsic to helping students learn to play, understand, and appreciate music (Beudert, 2010). In addition, the NASM (2022) suggested that musician-teacher:

- teach music at various age levels,
- understand child development,
- assess and meet the needs of students,
- understand current trends in the field of music education,
- avoid outdated methods and resources on assessments, and
- assess and apply assessment techniques to measure students' musicality as outlined in the curriculum's objectives and procedures.

According to Beudert (2010), several studies exist about arts education being taught in primary and secondary schools, there is a concern that research is lacking about the preparation of preservice teachers and arts teacher education programs.

### **MTE Perceptions**

In their exploratory sequential mixed-methods study, Pellegrino and Conway (2018) interviewed nine music faculty members participants and surveyed 124 reporting that over 70% felt stressed over tenure, 63% were satisfied with the balance between teaching, researching, and serving, whereas 33% felt satisfied with their balance between professional and personal life. Although they are not suggesting that MTEs should not be held accountable for fulfilling their obligations; however, to combat the negative connotation that can be affiliated with MTEs seeking tenure or balance, they recommend mentors for those on a doctoral and tenure track, the recognition of MTEs' identities as

both musician and faculty and curriculum for music educators at all levels (Pellegrino & Conway, 2018).

Holgerson and Burnard (2013) suggested that music teacher education must be a continuous cycle to keep up with the demands of an ever-changing society. This continuous cycle emphasizes three areas (a) consistent practice and experience, (b) professional development, and (c) scientific development to better music teachers and professionalism (Holgerson & Burnard, 2013). Similarly, Beudert (2010) posited that preservice teachers should acknowledge their role as life educators. They must be willing to change their perceptions about teaching arts, working with diverse student populations, and honoring local and global traditions of communities and artists in a changing world when developing into an arts teacher educator.

Nonetheless, Parkes and Rawlings (2019) posited that MTEs in higher education need to consider the type of assessment practices they are teaching future K–12 teachers in their programs as well as recognize the need to adjust undergraduate music education curricula. MTEs in higher education must prepare preservice music teachers to utilize such skills in the classroom; however, it can be difficult if they are unfamiliar with popular music pedagogies and technology skills used to engage students in the 21st century music classroom (Vasil et al., 2019). Cavanagh et al. (2019) conducted a pilot study focused on four preservice teachers' experiences upon completing a 4-week professional development session and raised concerns about novice teachers' inability to communicate effectively the connections between learning and teaching goals and assessing student learning. As a result, it was concluded that these teachers' ability to

plan lessons and assess students' learning was impacted as they struggled to identify clear learning goals to enable them to assess students' learning (Cavanagh et al., 2019).

Recommendations for teacher education programs were discussed.

### **Preparation of Preservice MTE**

Prichard (2018) contended that music teacher candidates need to be introduced to high-stakes assessment practices as well as state licensure and institutional requirements within the field of music education. This could lead to a conflict of interest if requirements from both entities differ (Prichard, 2018). Furthermore, in an exploratory study where 149 MTEs completed a questionnaire designed to determine how MTEs are taught to use and teach assessments, findings revealed most MTEs did not have a formal assessment course during their undergraduate education within the music department, and for those that did it was offered within the College of Education or at the graduate level (Parkes & Rawlings, 2019).

Millican and Forrester (2019) suggested that faculty members develop practices that focus on specific core practices like microteaching referred to as approximations of practice (Abramo, 2016; Schutz et al., 2018, as cited in Millican & Forrester, 2019). Furthermore, these activities allow preservice teachers to practice core teaching methods in authentic settings where they can be observed and guided by faculty in real time (Millican & Forrester, 2019). Legette and Royo (2021) suggested that peer feedback is vital in similar situations as described by providing critical constructive feedback, reflection, making changes to instructional approaches setting new goals, and promoting professional growth. In the next section, the 2014 National Core Music Standards along

with the OTL Standards, and MCAs, and how they provide assessment and instructional frameworks in assessing student outcomes in music education are discussed.

### **The 2014 National Core Music Standards**

The 2014 National Core Music Standards involved the collaboration of arts, education, and media arts organizations around the country (Hof, 2021). NAFME along with various partners dedicated to K–12 music education aims to develop the new Core Music Standards to cultivate music literacy and to meet the specific needs of teachers and students in their specialized classes (Hof, 2021). The National Core Music Standards is organized into three artistic processes that students ought to know: (a) creating – creating and producing whatever they may imagine; (b) performing – developing skills and characteristics in analysis, interpretation, and strategic planning as singers and instrumentalists in their lives and future aspirations; and (c) respond – the ability to use critical thinking, analyzing, effective judgment to respond to music in societal settings (Hof, 2021, paras 4-6). Additionally, the standards are presented by grade level for grades prekindergarten through eighth grade, whereas Grades 9–12 standards are organized in strands representative of the principal ways music instruction is taught in the United States (Hof, 2021).

### ***OTL Standards***

The OTL Standards were developed collaboratively by members of the Council of Music Program Leaders of NAFME in 2015 (National OTL Standards, 2020). The OTL Standards provide resources in the areas of (a) curriculum and scheduling, (b) staffing, (c) materials and equipment, and (d) facilities (National OTL Standards, 2024b) to school

systems and teachers in Grades PreK–2, 3–5, 6–8 and secondary grades for general and specialized music classes. Teachers and district stakeholders are encouraged to use the standards, strands (i.e., ensembles, harmonizing instruments, composition/theory, and technology), and enduring understanding and essential questions to facilitate student learning and effective teaching.

### *MCA*s

Along with the 2014 National Core Music Standards and the OTL Standards, the Music MCAs for music education provide both “an assessment and instructional framework that emphasize the conceptual principles of creating, performing, and responding. These frameworks align with specialized disciplines from Prek-8th grade, high school music classes, ensembles, and music composition and theory” (NAFME, 2022a, para. 3). Furthermore, the MCAs can be adopted by state associations for professional development to be used by music teachers as well as in preparing future music teacher educators about adaptable assessments and instructional and curricular design (NAFME, 2024a). The creation of these arts education standards and assessments is meant to align with national standards to promote:

- Educator accountability of arts assessment.
- Professional development for local educators to create reliable arts assessments.
- Professional development in arts assessment.
- The effective usage of technology in arts assessment.

- Accurate resources and support of highly effective arts assessment for student progress (Arts Education Partnership, 2016).

The NAEP has reported arts assessment strategies, tools, and infrastructures over the last decade, however, the National Assessment Governing Board indicated that it will remove four assessments to include the Arts, Economics, Foreign Language, and Geography to adhere to the Board's priorities and program's budget. (National Assessment Governing Board, 2020, para. 7)

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Major themes in the literature included the concept of the ADDIE five phases instructional model and its implementation in the music classroom. Additionally, the process of assessment in higher education as it relates to music education, implementation of assessment strategies in the music classroom, preparation of preservice MTEs, and national music education standards as an assessment and instructional framework were discussed. Notably, "specific content and competencies for undergraduate music education degrees required by institutions may not align with public school music teacher certification or alternative settings other than public schools" (NASM, 2022, p. 126). Previous studies revealed that effective assessment strategies integrated with state and national standards can improve performance, guide instructional decisions, and advocate for strong and dynamic music programs (Payne et al., 2019), yet still, states have the right to change or add standards that meet the needs of their academic standards; therefore, the teaching of assessment may not be a requirement for K–12 music education certification programs in the United States. Furthermore, the

elimination of the NAEP Arts Assessment to the Nation's Report Card is another hurdle facing music education in providing useful information to stakeholders across the United States.

By conducting this basic qualitative study, the discussion about the emerging process of assessment in higher education, particularly in music education must be continued and shared on a professional level as well as inclusive in arts teacher education programs to prepare preservice MTEs. This study filled a gap in research about what assessment strategies music faculty in K–12 and postsecondary music settings used and taught to preservice MTEs. In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology of the study, including the procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. I will conclude Chapter 3 with issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. In Chapter 3, I describe the research method, including the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. The instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection process are also explained. The chapter also includes discussions of the data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

This study addressed the preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs to use assessment strategies in the K–12 music classroom. The research questions were:

Research Question: What assessment strategies do music faculty use or teach preservice MTEs in K–12 music education certification programs or institutions?

Subquestion 1: What is the process of designing an assessment strategies course?

Subquestion 2: How are the 2014 National Music Core Standards implemented, if at all, when teaching assessment strategies?

I employed a basic qualitative research design in this study that focuses on a complex, detailed understanding of the issue through a rich description (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using a basic qualitative study design, I was able to determine what types of assessments are being used or taught by music faculty that align with curricula and state standards. Additionally, basic qualitative research is “a study through the lens of a

known methodology that seeks to do one or two things. It either combines several methodologies or approaches or claims no methodological viewpoint at all” (Caelli et al., 2003, pp. 3-4). In general, the focus of a basic qualitative study is to understand an experience or event (Caelli et al., 2003).

This qualitative approach aided in improving the understanding of what assessment strategies are being used or taught by music faculty to preservice MTEs. I completed an open-ended, semistructured interview with each participant and used inductive comparative analysis to reveal categories and themes from their responses. These themes were interpreted to add to the research about what assessment strategies music faculty are using and teaching. To my knowledge, this participant population has not been studied before.

I considered two other qualitative designs for this study, case study and phenomenology; however, these approaches did not align with the study as accurately as the basic approach did. The basic qualitative approach focuses on (a) “how people interpret their experiences, (b) how they construct their worlds, and (c) what meaning they attribute their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). Additionally, this approach allows for one source (e.g., interviews) to be used for data collection. The case study approach is used to analyze a bounded system (i.e., a case) that involves multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, document reviews; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because of its bound requirements (e.g., time, place, or location) and its focus on the description of the case and case-based themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), this research design was not appropriate for the current study. A phenomenological

approach would have aligned if I sought to understand “the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon” (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24) regarding music faculty’s profound lived experiences teaching assessment strategies. However, this was not the goal of the current study, so this research design was not suitable for the study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the researcher in this study was to remain impartial based on my opinions and experiences as well as the participants’ beliefs, opinions, and experiences. My own experiences as a MTE informed my thoughts on the topic; however, as a practitioner-scholar, I needed to remain outside of the study group. To do this, I mitigated my personal biases and their effect on the research.

Upon receiving approval to conduct the study from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I recruited the participants, conducted interviews, and analyzed the data using verbatim transcriptions. I did not have any personal or professional relationships with supervisory or instructor participants or were there any power differentials or conflicts of interest. Additionally, my primary role as the researcher was to be prepared to address any ethical issues that may have arisen during this study. I anticipated that I would experience more opportunities for learning that would enhance my awareness and knowledge about what assessment strategies are being used and taught to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs.

### **Methodology**

I obtained approval to conduct the study from Walden University IRB before collecting data. I held one-on-one, open-ended, semistructured interviews that lasted

between 30 and 40 minutes. Zoom was used for video interviews, and there was a phone-only option available upon request from the participant. This methodology allowed me to understand what assessment strategies are being used and taught to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs by music faculty. I completed an inductive comparative analysis of the data using open coding to look for categories and themes. I did not use any computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo) to assist with organizing the categories and themes; however, I organized the coded data using tables using Microsoft Word.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

I selected participants who were current or former K–12 or postsecondary music faculty, instructors, or adjunct professors (both part-time or full-time) using or teaching assessment strategies. Undergraduate students majoring in music education were not included in this study because, though beneficial to understanding the collegiate experience, this population was outside the study's scope.

I shared the research invitation with several professional music associations and networks across the United States. The invitation included the criteria for participation. I reached out to anyone who expressed interest via email or phone, based on their preference, to send them the informed consent form. After they signed the informed consent, I contacted them via email, text, or phone to set up their interview time.

Upon the approval of my prospectus, the prospectus program director indicated that it would be important to have a sufficient sample size from across several locations (e.g., states' chapters of NAFME) to address the study's problem and purpose, which

spanned the United States. Typically, basic qualitative studies require eight to 12 participants to reach saturation. Therefore, I aimed for 10 participants, which I thought would be an attainable number for the United States. I began analysis upon finishing my first interview and continued to collect data and analyze it to know when I reached saturation (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Instrumentation**

In this basic qualitative study, I conducted individual, 30-to-40-minute Zoom video interviews with participants to improve the understanding of what assessment strategies music faculty used and taught to prepare preservice K–12 MTEs (see Appendix for the interview protocol). Interviews were used as the primary source of data collection to attempt to generate a broad understanding of the data. Based on the research questions, I developed the interview questions to focus on what types of assessment strategies K–12 preservice MTEs are being used and taught by music faculty. Before conducting interviews with participants, Roulston and Choi (2018) suggested (a) reviewing ethics and institutional review requirements, (b) formulating an interview guide, (c) reflecting on the topic, and (d) selecting and testing equipment that will be used to record the interviews.

In these semistructured interviews, I formulated the probes relative to what the interviewees have already said to generate free-ranging conversation (see Roulston & Choi, 2018) about the topics of K–12 music assessment strategies, 2014 National Core Music Standards, and overall course design. Along with presenting the interview questions to my research committee, I sought feedback from a team of experts, including

a qualitative methodologist and colleagues well-versed in the fields of research and music education, to ensure that I avoided researcher bias. Furthermore, I conducted practice interviews with my colleagues and audio and video recorded myself during these practice sessions. Per Walden University IRB approval, any member of the committee could have requested that I submit the audio recording along with the transcript of my first interview before I conduct further interviews.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

I recruited participants once I received approval to conduct the study from the Walden University IRB. I discussed and received guidance from my committee chair and IRB on recruiting participants via professional music associations and networks across the United States. Research invitations were sent to multiple statewide and national professional music, music education, and fine arts associations and networks. Potential participants who expressed an interest in participating in an interview were asked to complete a consent form. The form explained the purpose of the study, the amount of time needed to complete the interview, the voluntary nature of the study, and the plans for using the results from the interview.

Upon receiving consent, I inquired about the participant's wishes to use it and scheduled a time for the interview. Additionally, I asked about their preferred means of communication (i.e., email, text, or phone call) if they should have any questions before or after the interview. Before conducting the interview, I used the interview protocol to go over the purpose of the study with the interviewee, provide information about confidentiality, and address any other aspects of the consent form. Additionally, the

protocol was used to take notes on all the questions during the interview, ask any follow-up questions, and thank the interviewee.

Along with taking notes, I used the audio files, the voice recorder feature on my phone, and a voice recorder for recording the Zoom interviews. I then transcribed the audio files, handwritten verbatim notes, and recordings from Zoom's transcription service. Upon completing all edits, I sent the transcript to the participant for their review and to verify its accuracy. I gave them 3 days to return the documents with any modifications they wanted to see. If I needed additional clarification or had follow-up questions, I contacted them. I also made the final study available to them if they requested it. After they finished and felt satisfied with their responses, I assigned numbers to participants.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The collected data were analyzed to answer the study's research questions. It was important to keep in mind the primary research question, the conceptual framework that I used to examine the research questions, and the research design (Laureate Education, 2016a).

Coding often occurs in cycles or steps. Elliot (2018) recommended coding in rounds (e.g., paragraphs, "chunks" of sentences, and refining labels by re-readings). In this way, I began the first cycle of coding using descriptive codes. This approach uses single words or short descriptions to identify what is going on in the content of the participant's interview (Laureate Education, 2016a). For the second cycle of coding, I clustered the codes into similar categories to detect patterns and interrelationships across

participants (see Laureate Education, 2016b). Furthermore, I created a qualitative codebook to document my reflections; thoughts; and description of the process, including data sources, transcripts, codes and themes, and results (see Laureate Education, 2016c). Next, I placed descriptive information about each participant into Microsoft Word tables, which allowed for a detailed discussion of several themes (i.e., multiple perspectives from individuals and quotations). Finally, I interpreted the data.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The qualitative research approach teaches:

- the importance of involving stakeholders,
- taking multiple perspectives into account,
- looking at events/programs with a particular context,
- studying meaning and history,
- emphasizing implementation and process,
- explaining variability rather than dismissing it as an error,
- looking for patterns, and
- focusing on the user and use (Torres et al., 2005, p. 282).

Elaborating on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness, I used a combination of overlapping strategies to ensure that the findings of this basic qualitative study were enhanced through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

**Credibility**

Cypress (2017) described credibility as the “accurate and truthful depiction of a participant’s lived experience” (p. 257). To ensure the credibility of this study, I clarified the bias that I brought to the study. Strategies used to enhance credibility included peer debriefing, or conducting a discussion with the committee to allow for questions of research activities; triangulation by cross-checking the data and interpretations within and across each category of participants; and member checking by constantly checking data and interpretations of each participant with stakeholders (see Cypress, 2017).

**Transferability**

Transferability focuses on the ability to transfer research findings from one group to another (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Laureate Education, 2016d). To enhance the transferability of the findings I took personal notes to document my thinking throughout the research process. I also provided a rich, thick description when conveying the findings.

**Dependability**

Strategies to enhance dependability, also referred to as reliability, during coding include thick description, coding, member checking, and triangulation (Hamilton, 2020). Saldaña (2019) posited by providing clear definitions inclusive of all possible responses to be collected through protocol coding, this strategy could contribute to the reliability and validity of a study. In qualitative studies, the researcher is the sole instrument conducting data collection and analysis; therefore, “acquired knowledge and training for research at the doctoral level with the expert guidance of a mentor” (Cypress, 2017, p.

258) increased the reliability of this study. Finally, study participants were asked to review transcribed interviews.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability was met through the strategies of maintaining a reflective journal throughout the research process to keep notes of what was beneficial and relevant throughout the research process (Cypress, 2017). Reflexivity is a key strategy because it requires self-reflection about potential biases that may arise during the study (Cypress, 2017). Additional strategies include an audit trail to examine the data collection and analysis process along with interpretations that were made (Cypress, 2017).

### **Ethical Procedures**

The dissertation study required approval from Walden University's IRB. To obtain this approval, I adhered to the IRB approval process to ensure that my research complies with the university's ethical standards and U.S. federal regulations. Additionally, I masked the identities of the organization(s) in the final capstone I published in ProQuest to remove any unnecessary risk to my participants.

To gain access to participants, I first received approval from IRB (Walden IRB Approval Number 09-08-23-0110219) before disseminating invites to professional music, music education, fine arts organizations, networks, and publications throughout the United States. The purpose of the research was articulated verbally and in writing so that it was clearly understood by the participants. I obtained the participants' written permission (e.g., consent) to proceed with the study. Additionally, I informed the participant about all data collection activities and devices (e.g., Zoom recording and

voice recorder). The participants were informed about their rights, interests, potential risks, and anonymity regarding the reporting of the data. Participants were informed that the interview would be transcribed and a transcript would be submitted to them for their approval. They will also have access to the completed study once it becomes available.

To ensure the protection of confidential data, all data files with pseudonyms will be kept for 5 years, after such time they will be deleted. Files will be saved onto a USB drive after the study and kept until the end of the 5 years. Additionally, all notes collected throughout the study and the USB drive will be destroyed. Finally, to ensure that I maintain the confidentiality of the participants and the integrity of my study, I removed all personal ties to information so it cannot be traced back to the participants.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. In Chapter 3, I addressed the research method, including the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. Additionally, I included information about the instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I also included a data analysis plan and concluded with the issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the participants, settings, and procedures before concluding with the results of the analyses.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. In this study, I focused on the experiences and perceptions of instructors and faculty preparing preservice MTEs using assessment strategies in the classroom. To accomplish this purpose, I reviewed frameworks, standards, instructional design models, and processes in higher education and related literature on preparing K–12 preservice MTEs as represented in the literature. The research questions for the study were based on the conceptual framework of the ADDIE instructional design model, as context, along with the literature review. The research questions were as follows:

Research Question: What assessment strategies do music faculty use or teach preservice MTEs in K–12 music education certification programs or institutions?

Subquestion 1: What is the process of designing an assessment strategies course?

Subquestion 2: How are the 2014 National Core Music Standards, implemented, if at all, when teaching assessment strategies?

I selected a basic qualitative research design for this study. This chapter includes discussions of the study's setting, participant demographics, data collection and analysis processes, evidence of trustworthiness, and results.

### **Setting**

I recruited participants from all the state chapters of the NAFME through LinkedIn, Facebook, and Walden's Participant Pool. I also received recommendations from colleagues and higher education institutions as well as searched through peer-reviewed music education journals, targeting music instructors and faculty. The interviews took place over the Zoom Workplace conferencing tool, and while turning on the webcam was optional, all 10 participants opted to share it. With the participants' consent, all interviews were recorded. The videos were transcribed using the Google Pixel 7a Voice Recorder and Zoom transcripts.

I reviewed the transcriptions and summaries of key points for accuracy before sharing them with the participants for their review. One participant sent additional comments after their interview to be included in the transcript. Another participant confirmed that they had read and approved both the transcript and the summary of key points. A participant mentioned that after reviewing the transcript, they found minor voice-to-text errors and recommended verifying quotes by checking the audio recording. I assured the participant that I would implement their suggestions to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis process. The other participants had no comments or corrections to add.

### **Demographics**

I used purposeful sampling and the snowball technique to recruit participants. NAFME state chapter websites, higher education institutions, and authors of relevant literature were researched to determine postsecondary music faculty who taught

assessment strategies to preservice MTEs. If faculty emails were available, I attempted to recruit participants via email. Seven participants responded and agreed to take part in the study via email invitation. Florida's NAFME chapter was willing to share my recruitment email broadly with their membership body, which yielded one additional faculty participant. During the initial interviews, instructors, and faculty were welcomed to refer colleagues who might be interested in participating in the study, which yielded one additional participant for a total of 10 participants.

To protect participant identities, I did not include all participant's demographics; instead, I described the demographics generally (see Table 1). There was an equal distribution of participants who taught in K-12 ( $n = 5$ ) and postsecondary settings ( $n = 5$ ). Participants varied across several academic specializations (as shown in Table 1). Other specializations had at least one or more participants representing one of the following emphases: vocal and instrumental piano and organ, music technology, conducting, strings, and choral music. Most participants ( $n = 5$ ) had 17 to 21 years of experience using or teaching assessment strategies, fewer ( $n = 3$ ) had 6 to 14 years of experience, and two had less than 6 years of experience. Many participants ( $n = 6$ ) had 2 years or less experience designing and developing assessment courses, whereas fewer ( $n = 4$ ) had 6 to 11 years of experience designing and developing assessment courses. Seven ( $n = 7$ ) participants have affiliations with professional music education organizations, and fewer ( $n = 3$ ) did not have any affiliation. The distribution of participants across different regions of the United States was as follows: Four participants were from the Southeast,

three participants were from the Northeast region, two participants were from the West, and one participant was from the Midwest.

**Table 1**

*Demographics*

Participant	K–12 or postsecondary	Academic specialization	Years of using or teaching assessment strategies	Years of designing and developing assessments or courses	Affiliation with professional music education organizations	Region
1	Postsecondary	Music education and music technology	20	6	Yes	NE
2	Postsecondary	Music education with instrumental music and conducting emphasis	12	7	Yes	SE
3	K–12	Vocal music with instrumental piano and organ emphasis	19	0	Yes	NE
4	K–12	General music education with choral emphasis	9	0	No	SE
5	Postsecondary	Music education	18	8	Yes	Midwest
6	Postsecondary	Music education	2.5	2	No	NE
7	Postsecondary	Instrumental Music education	21	1	Yes	W
8	K–12	Music education	17	0	Yes	SE
9	K–12	General music education with choral emphasis	6	0	No	W
10	K–12	Instrumental music education with strings emphasis	14	11	Yes	SE

**Data Collection**

To better understand the assessment strategies used or taught in preparing preservice MTEs, I used interviews for data collection in this basic qualitative study. Since participants were in various locations, I emailed them a research invitation explaining the research and participant qualifications. These individuals were identified

through professional networking or previous research as mentioned earlier. Once the potential participant expressed interest and was deemed eligible based on the inclusion criteria, I sent them the informed consent document. The informed consent form provided potential participants with detailed information about study demands, timing, risks, and data. After the individual accepted the invitation to participate by signing and returning the informed consent form, we negotiated interview times based on availability.

A total of 10 participants met the inclusion criteria and consented to participate in the study. Interviews were between 13 and 37 minutes each, as indicated in Table 2. The average interview length was 27 minutes due to an outlier of 59 seconds; therefore, most of the interviews were 26 minutes and 46 seconds, on average. Due to the nature of Zoom workplace conferencing, I could only control my setting, which was a home office. All participants appeared in their home offices or private designated spaces during the interview and shared their videos. Upon the interview's conclusion, participants received a \$20 Amazon e-gift card as a token of appreciation. They were also informed that they would receive a transcript and summary within 3 to 5 business days for review and would have access to the study upon its completion.

**Table 2***Participant Interview Log*

Participant	Interview length (min:sec)
P1	29:31
P2	25:26
P3	27:05
P4	28:31
P5	30:57
P6	13:42
P7	32:46
P8	18:52
P9	23:18
P10	37:30

Interviews were conducted from January to July 2024, with one to two weekly interviews. I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix) as developed unless the faculty needed prompting for responses. Interview data were recorded using Zoom and Pixel 7a Voice Recorder and stored in an encrypted online storage drive. I encountered several unusual circumstances during data collection. I had to revise my inclusion criteria from the study having a statewide to a nationwide focus and adjust my targeted population to include music instructors, faculty, and adjunct professors (both full-time or part-time). This course of action required multiple Revised Changes in Procedures form submissions to the chair and Walden University IRB, which were approved. Additionally, several imposters did not meet the inclusion requirements, despite signing and returning the signed consent form. The participants answered all the introductory demographic questions because of their “experience” using and teaching assessment strategies; however, after further analysis of their responses during the interview, I concluded that

they did not meet the study's requirements. Thus, their data were not included in the study's results.

### **Data Analysis**

My data analysis plan did not change from the original plan. I proposed beginning the first cycle of codes using descriptive codes to the second cycle of coding where I clustered the codes into similar categories to detect patterns and interrelationships among participants (see Elliot, 2018; Laureate Education, 2016a, 2016b). Using this combination, I created a qualitative codebook to document my reflections and descriptions of the process, including data sources, transcripts, codes and themes, and results (see Laureate Education, 2016c). My analysis included multiple data readings incorporating a prereading of transcripts to gather a general understanding of the dialogue and a second reading to assign codes to statements and concepts (see Table 3). Next, I conveyed descriptive information about each participant onto tables in Microsoft Word to allow for a detailed discussion of several themes (i.e., multiple perspectives from individuals and quotations). To create larger representations, categories, and themes from the coded units in the transcripts of interviews, I analyzed the key points and ideas shared in each transcript.

**Table 3***Sample of Text Excerpt – Open Coding*

Participant	Interview text excerpt	Descriptive code
P1	I use a mixture of quizzes, performance assessments, and reflective writing to gauge student understanding.	Diverse assessment methods
P2	I chaired the International Symposia on Assessment in Music Education which is a bi-annual conference that brings together scholars on assessments.	Diversity in music
P3	Backward design helps in structuring the course effectively.	Course design and planning
P4	There were days that the district would offer professional development days, and we designed our own... we just pulled from each other bits and pieces.	Lack of structured professional development
P5	The system is not conducive for you to teach all those standards.	Challenges in music education
P6	I use them in so far as I require my students to reference them. They needed to include a clear objective from one of the four competencies.	Adapting standards for music education
P7	I think feedback is crucial. It helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.	Feedback and reflection
P8	We focus on teaching the whole child... it is not just about academics but also social and emotional learning.	Holistic education
P9	We follow the ADDIE model to ensure our assessments are well-structured.	Use of instructional models
P10	Digital portfolios are a great way for students to showcase their work over time.	Technology-enhanced assessment

I conducted a careful analysis of participant transcripts to see how their responses related to the research questions and conceptual framework. I then summarized the relevant information from each participant's responses to address the main questions. After that, I reviewed the themes extensively to ensure nothing was overlooked and created subthemes where needed. The final categories helped in developing the following themes that influence the experiences of music instructors and faculty in their assessment strategies:

- Assessment strategies in music education,

- Technology as a tool for engagement and assessment,
- Course design and curriculum development,
- Professional development and collaboration, and
- Standards and frameworks in music education.

The alignment of codes, categories, themes/subthemes, and research questions are presented in Table 4. I have taken note of memos for both rounds of coding to include documented personal reflections about the data. Additionally, I utilized various data management tools for analysis, such as recordings of interviews; transcripts; Microsoft Word; and AI tools, including ChatGPT, to manage the collected data effectively.

**Table 4**

*Codes, Categories, Themes, and Research Question Alignment*

Codes	Categories	Theme (subtheme)	Research question
Summative and formative assessments, performance, assessments, and differentiated technology integration, negotiated assessments, self-assessment, exit tickets, project-based, portfolio assessments, observational assessments, student reflection, process-oriented, rubrics and rating scales, quizzes and tests, written reflection, practical demonstrations, ensemble performance evaluations, individualized assessments, authentic assessment	Assessment strategies  Assessment techniques	Assessment strategies in music education	Main research question
Interactive, accessible, technology and popular music	Technology-enhanced assessments	Technology as a tool for engagement and assessment	Main research question, Subquestion 1
Smart music, use of music technology tools, online assessments, digital portfolios	Technology use		

Codes	Categories	Theme (subtheme)	Research question
Backward design, diversity in music, accreditation requirements, clear expectation, incorporation of technology to enhance student engagement and assessment, alignment with course objectives, integration of standards and learning goals, challenges in time management	Course design	Course design and curriculum development (subtheme)	Subquestion 1
Professional growth, peer collaboration, reflective practice, holistic education, informal learning, professional affiliations, professional development opportunities, No formal preparation, peer reviews of course design, use of teaching assistants, institutional support, self-directed learning, participation in workshops and conferences	Professional development Collaborative learning among teachers	Professional development and collaboration (subtheme)	Subquestion 1
Familiar with 2014 National Core Music Standards, not deeply familiar with OTL and MCAs, use OTL, instructional design models, lesson planning, Instructional methods, assessment design based on standards, curriculum development, balancing standards with creative teaching approaches, adaptation of standards to local contexts, difficulty in aligning standards with diverse student needs, professional development on standards, integration of standards into teacher training, state adaptation		2014 National Core Music Standards and framework in music education	Subquestion 2

The discrepant cases provided a realistic understanding of the various approaches and philosophies that educators bring to music education and assessment practices. This process emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and exploring differences in qualitative research, leading to more insightful conclusions. The differing cases in P4 through P6's responses highlight the diversity of experiences and practices among music educators, showcasing distinctions in technology integration, professional development, assessment strategies, and the incorporation of national standards. Considering these differences enriches the understanding of music education practices, promoting adaptability and improvement in teaching strategies. Recognizing and exploring these educators and researchers can better address the complexities and challenges in using and teaching assessments in music education.

The analysis of differing cases from P7 to P9's responses added depth and breadth to the overall understanding of assessment practices. By identifying and examining these deviations, the analysis acknowledged the diversity of experiences and approaches among educators, emphasizing the importance of innovative, holistic, reflective, and practical considerations in assessment design and implementation. These differing cases offer valuable insights into potential areas for further research and development in educational assessments, ensuring that the findings are well-rounded and reflective of the complexities of teaching and learning. Analyzing differing cases gives a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances in P10's teaching and assessment practices. These cases reveal the challenges and opportunities within music education, prompting

further exploration of how music teacher educators can balance tradition with innovation, technology integration, and curriculum diversity.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In this section, I outline the use of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative research on preparing K–12 preservice MTEs with assessment strategies. These methods strengthen the study’s applicability, validity, impartiality, and reliability ensuring that the data accurately reflects the experiences and views of music faculty and may be relevant to similar educational settings.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the extent to which the study measures the accuracy and truthful depiction of a participant’s lived experience (Cypress, 2017). In this case, I had familiarity with assessment strategies in K–12 and postsecondary music education settings through my academic and professional experience. This qualitative research method aligned with the research nature including involving stakeholders, taking multiple perspectives into account, and looking for patterns (Torres et al, 2005). Because qualitative research seeks to understand the participants’ beliefs, experiences, and perspectives, this research method was aligned.

I did not change my research method, a basic qualitative design, to improve the understanding of what assessment strategies are being used and taught to prepare preservice K–12 MTEs. In addition, member checking by constantly checking data and

interpretation of each participant with stakeholders (Cypress, 2017) was used during and after the interviews to clarify participants' responses by asking probing questions.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of one's study apply in other contexts (Merriam, 1998), and was addressed through various approaches. Using an interview protocol ensured that each participant was asked the same questions, increasing the reliability of data collection. To further ensure transferability, I used a reflection journal to record my thoughts during the data collection and analysis stages; and I adhered to the qualitative dissertation checklist and provided a description of the data collection and data analysis plan for other researchers to replicate this phenomenon.

### **Dependability**

To ensure dependability, strategies were implemented to enhance dependability, also called reliability during coding, including thick description; coding; member checking; and triangulation (Hamilton, 2020). Dependability was met through Walden University's IRB approval of my data collection protocol. In addition, interviews were recorded, transcribed, and summarized immediately after data collection and analysis. I provided interview transcripts and a summary of key points to participants as an opportunity to provide clarification or corrections. This strategy contributed to the reliability and validity of the study (Saldaña, 2019).

### **Confirmability**

To ensure the confirmability of this study, I maintained a reflective journal throughout the research process to keep notes of what was beneficial and relevant

throughout the research process (Cypress, 2017). This is a key strategy because it requires self-reflection about potential biases that may arise during the study (Cypress, 2017). In addition, I tracked decisions related to the data collection and analysis process along with interpretations made for auditing purposes and reflection.

The findings of this basic qualitative study were obtained from the analysis of data analysis of data through interviews conducted with a group of 10 music faculty. The research study aimed to gain insights into the assessment strategies used or taught by the participants to understand how these strategies can better prepare K–12 preservice music teacher educators to use assessment strategies effectively.

To gather data and explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about teaching, designing, and implementing assessment strategies, semistructured, in-depth interviews were conducted with music faculty. These interviews included a set of questions aimed at addressing the research question with the interview protocol and demographic questions available in Appendix.

As faculty shared their experiences, several factors emerged that influenced their approach to teaching and using assessment strategies. These included assessment methods in music education, the use of technology for engagement and assessment, course design and curriculum development, as well as professional development and collaboration. Each of these themes will be discussed and supported by excerpts from participant responses, with notable differences or contrasting viewpoints highlighted (see Table 5).

**Table 5***Discrepant Cases*

Discrepant cases	Participant	Description	Analysis factor
Assessment philosophy	P3	Focus on project-based learning, differing from others' mixed methods.	Broaden understanding of creativity and student-centered learning
Technology use	P1	A cautious approach, focusing on engagement over assessment.	Highlighted spectrum of technology use in education
Collaborative practices	P2	Emphasizes formal collaboration, unlike others' informal approaches.	Enriched theme on collaboration diversity
Standards emphasis	P1	Minimal focus on alignment with standards compared to others.	A balanced view on standards' role in assessment
Technology integration	P4	Used an improvisational approach to technology, lacking a structured strategy.	Varied approaches to technology
Professional development	P6	Engaged in formal, structured professional development focused on assessments.	Differences in professional development experiences
Assessment strategy	P5	Emphasized real-world applications through project-based assessments.	Variability in assessment strategy implementation
Incorporating the national standards	P4	Acknowledged standards without active incorporation.	Passive acknowledgment without active implementation
Unique use of technology	P7	Heavy emphasis on integrating advanced technology into assessments.	Highlighting innovation
Resource and time constraints	P9	Significant challenges in managing time and resources for assessment design.	Addressing practical challenges
Focus on emotional and social development	P8	Significant emphasis on social and emotional learning, going beyond the academic focus typically associated with assessment.	Broadening assessment scope
Innovation vs tradition	P10	Tension between adopting new teaching techniques and maintaining established practices that prioritize performance.	Resistance to change

**Theme 1: Assessment Strategies in Music Education**

Participants' responses varied regarding their personal experiences using and teaching assessment strategies in music education. Some instructors and faculty employ a mixture of assessment strategies. For example, P1 stated,

I think my strategies are going to be a little different than perhaps others that are focusing on more kind of, I do not know, traditional approach to music education... I certainly incorporate summative and formative assessments but in activities like in my popular music class where we might have like a songwriting unit and there is an assessment around songwriting, there can be challenges from my perspective for assessing creative activities, like music creation...So, a lot of the assessment strategies that I bring into my popular music class are working with students to kind of understand the opportunity for thinking outside the box. I have brought in aspects of negotiated assessment where if you are not familiar with negotiated assessment, there are several different metrics, and the learner and I agree upon how heavily each of those will be weighed.

Similarly, P10 mentioned.

Yes, I use all three types of assessments to understand students' prior knowledge. For summative assessments, I use final evaluations like playing tests and written reflections. Performance assessment involves students using Smart Music to record their performances for feedback on rhythm, technique, and musicianship.

Similarly, P8 expressed that "we regularly use summative assessments such as true and false questions and quizzes, after chapters that are read. We cover quite a bit of music

history.” In addition, participants shared their experiences using various methods, including rubrics, performance-based assessments, peer teaching, and reflective practices to address diverse learning needs. P2 stated,

Most of the things that I focus on are the things that they may not be able to do as intuitively, which again are things like rubrics and getting things implemented like how do we go through it? And, you know, because we wrote a rubric for music performance. How are you going to run that assessment? Is everybody going to sing at the same time? Or are they going to sing separately? How long are you going to do it or you are going to do a whole piece or an excerpt?

P4 acknowledged that they utilize the performance piece to assess the knowledge of their students. Likewise, P2 and P6 indicated that they use performative assessment regularly for students. Exit tickets as a quick formative assessment. P3 focuses on preassessment and “basically met the students where they were and then assessed them moving forward.”

P7 and P8 experiences are rooted in the K–12 setting except P7 eventually became a professor of music education at the postsecondary level emphasizing the integration of assessment into higher education. P5 and P6 emphasized the practical applications and project-based learning as a core assessment strategy. P8 presented a unique strategy focused on a broader scope of student development beyond academic performance, stating, “So, we are designing assessments for our students; I think that it is very important that the whole child be taught through music.”

Correspondingly, P9 mentioned when it comes to using tools when assessing students’

knowledge, “Yeah, no I do not. I see them once a week for 45 minutes and so again that is why the tools, I use are my ears and my eyes...It is very observational; if I do not have any written assessment.” P2 iterated the importance of their preservice MTE students to build an assessment toolbox:

In the vast majority of my courses. And the strategy is basically, I focus on principles rather than specific strategies, because students, I encourage students to build their toolbox of assessment strategies. So, what I focus on is the fact that we are collecting assessment data to help inform our teaching and to help provide feedback for the students. What I encourage my preservice music teachers to do is to think about what are the most effective ways that you could measure, whether you’ve achieved, the goals that you've set out to achieve in this particular lesson and what are the most effective ways that you can provide feedback to their students based on their performance.

The findings provide insights into the experience of music faculty using and teaching assessment strategies. All participants have extensive experience in using and teaching various strategies including a mix of formative, summative, and performance assessments, incorporating rubrics, holistic, and reflective practices. The data from the interview transcripts align with the study’s focus on the preparation of K–12 preservice music teacher educators using assessment strategies and shed light on what assessment strategies are being used and taught in music education.

## **Theme 2: Technology as a Tool for Engagement and Assessment**

Through digital portfolios, online assessments, and music technology tools, K–12 and postsecondary participants believe that technology enhances student engagement and provides new opportunities for assessment. Technology opens new avenues for assessment and engagement. For example, one participant alluded that digital portfolios are a great way for students to showcase their work overtime, P10 mentioned,

You picked a unit or you picked a standard you demonstrated how you worked along that and when they started advocating that at the student level; I like doing it for my advanced and proficient players because when they left school, they had a portfolio. It was the same way that I looked at how they did it for art.

Art, when you graduated you had a portfolio with which you worked. You had all the work you had in Art 1 to Art 4. We did not have that same for music. Most of our records were how we have been at the concert or whatever you scored on solo and ensemble.

Participants highlighted their collaborative course design, incorporating technology and interdisciplinary approaches to enhance learning. P4 stated, I have a background in music technology, so I would help, and this may go into some of your questions about assessment strategy perhaps, I do not know. Because I am in music technology; my colleagues knew that myself and one of my colleagues from another school got together and we did a little, you know, piece a little segment, and a professional development day about how to incorporate technology into the classroom.

P3, P4, and P10 believe in the importance of collaborating with teachers informally to share knowledge and techniques, particularly in integrating technology including attending workshops on tech-based assessments, creating segments on professional development days about how to incorporate technology in the classroom, and seeking out professional development opportunities on updated best practices.

Participants shared their experiences and perceptions about technology as a significant component of music education, used to enhance teaching and student learning, P10 mentioned,

So, as far as performing assessments, I have software that I use called Smart Music. Smart Music is essentially a recording and practice tool that they have. It is run by a couple of organizations that work with some larger music publishers, where they input music that allows students to practice along with them.

Participants emphasized the importance of technology tools providing opportunities for assessment through digital interactive tools and informal professional development opportunities about how to incorporate technology in the classroom.

### **Theme 3: Course Design and Curriculum Development**

Based on the data gathered for this qualitative study several key findings emerged regarding the design of the courses and strategies and experiences with the instructional design model used as a guide to design the course and strategy. P2, P5, P6, and P7 shared that they utilized the backward design model to develop courses and assessment strategies while focusing on end goals and objectives. Additionally, they believe in incorporating feedback from students and colleagues to refine their course design and

participate in professional development opportunities on the latest best practices in the field. Whereas, P1 and P2 used elements the understanding by design and universal design for learning as instructional design models to guide their course as well as incorporated flexible assessment options and sought feedback from students and colleagues when issues arose.

The majority of responses emphasize the importance of collaboration with colleagues, ongoing professional development, and adjusting the curriculum to better align with standards and needs. However, one participant mentioned that “there’s limited use of formal instructional design models due to the performance-based nature of the course, but we focus on aligning national and state standards” (P10). Correspondingly, P4 shared “I cannot honestly say I sat down and purposely designed it for a specific function. No instructional design models were used as a guide.” Furthermore, P5 emphasized that there is often no formal design process for assessment and that teachers must rely on intuition and basic musical elements. “There's you know not any kind of required or formalized collaborative process by which I'm designing courses, it's up to me.” These are examples of a lack of formalized processes in designing assessments. P8 mentioned that a course should focus on a holistic approach involving active student participation. Although participants emphasize alignment with course objectives, standards, backward and other instructional design models, and peer and student feedback, supported by professional development; these nonconforming data and discrepancies highlight the issue of balancing traditional teaching methods with innovative instructional strategies along with the need to meet accreditation requirements with creating applicable courses

to “appeal to a more general enrollment” (P6) are practical concerns that need to be addressed while implementing the best practices in providing students with a well-rounded, holistic, and modern experience in music education.

#### **Theme 4: Professional Development and Collaboration**

Participants shared their experiences with professional development and collaboration including sharing knowledge about assessment strategies, technology, and informal sessions, particularly in the absence of structured development. One participant stated when it came to receiving professional development, “Yeah, it is not much and I think that is true for most college faculty. You are sort of given a course name and sometimes you might have access to a prior syllabus that preceded you” (P5). In addition, P7 mentioned,

Oh, I wish I could say, yes. No. Okay, no, I did not. You know it. And again, I'll reiterate for me personally the TA position was the greatest help to prepare me in a sense of being in the classroom with undergraduates throughout that process because otherwise, I mean I'm not, I loved my degree program but it was that experience with the undergrads that I think was the most helpful with me feeling confident when I came out to be able to do what I do now.

In another instance, P4 explained that when it came to collaboration,

So, we just pulled from each other bits and pieces. We would, as I said, we shoot from the hip. We kind of had to get the job done. So, whatever we could do to help one another, if there were websites, new pieces, or composers that we needed

to look into, you know, anything within the classroom setting that would help us get the job done. That is what we did.

The participants described an environment where teachers were given leeway to create strategies due to no formal professional development. The importance of collaboration when designing a course or strategy was highlighted by P10, stating “I frequently collaborate with middle school directors and other band directors in the district. Their roles involve sharing strategies, aligning on educational goals, and ensuring consistency across different levels.”

Moreover, P8 iterated that “middle school core music teachers and high school core music teachers generally collaborate once per quarter, we try to meet with elementary, middle, and high.” P2 participated in professional development workshops focused on assessment and attended conferences related to music education. Regarding the importance of collaboration with colleagues, P3 emphasizes professional development being crucial in keeping abreast of the latest trends and best practices in assessment strategies. These recommendations and experiences underscore the need for professional development and collaboration opportunities, including feedback, continuous learning to improve assessment strategies, and sharing resources in informal and formal settings.

### **Theme 5: 2014 National Core Music Standards and Frameworks in Music Education**

The majority of participants incorporate the 2014 National Core Music Standards to guide lesson planning and ensure alignment with broader educational objectives. These

standards are crucial in helping to structure lessons and assessments. P1 mentioned, “I bring in the national core arts standards in part, for justification of a lot of work we do.”

Another participant emphasized the importance of incorporating the national core standards by stating,

I use them in so far as I require my students to reference them when they are building lesson planning materials, I do not use them to build courses. I use the NASM Standards for Music Teacher Certification. However, in terms of my expectations for my students, they needed to include a clear objective from one of the four core competencies of performing, composing, responding, and listening (P6).

P10 explained, “I use them to guide my assessment strategies, ensuring that they promote creativity, student autonomy, and prescriptive learning outcomes.”

Additionally, challenges of aligning the standards with diverse students' needs but the importance of adapting the standards to fit local contexts was highlighted by P3, stating, “aligning assessment standards can be challenging due to diverse student needs.” Furthermore, additional educational frameworks including the MCAs and OTL Standards would help to reinforce the standards when using, teaching, or designing assessment course (s) or strategies. P5 highlighted the role of MCAs when teaching them to preservice K–12 MTEs, by stating,

Yeah, I do if we have time to get to them sometimes, you know, when possible, I do because, you know, they give good exemplars of performance tasks and events or project-based learning kind of applications that again, most secondary

ensemble students do not see. The kids I have who are preservice music teachers, by and large, did not experience options like that for assessment. Once a year, they played a test to determine what chair clarinet they were and maybe they had to write in some rhythms one time on a paper and pencil test and that is the extent of their formalized assessment experience.

Similarly, P10 mentioned their familiarity with MCAs, stating,

So, those MCAs allowed us to measure growth. And not necessarily achievement. It could measure achievement if you wanted it to, but I think watching students make that growth point throughout and have to be creative and reflective about what they do.

P7 shared whether the OTL standards are used when teaching their students, by stating,

I do. I cannot say that is my go-to resource, but I am familiar with them. I know they are there. I think they are valuable. I think sometimes, in mine, I can do all the reading, but I want my students to experience it. So sometimes it is the grad students that I can then go back and say, okay, now you have talked. Now let us go back and dig into some of the things that may be in your undergrad. You just kind of got the surface level of it and now let us dig even deeper and get into the why and how. So, with undergrads, I do feel like maybe I do not go into the opportunity to learn standards as much as they are aware of them.

The majority of responses emphasize the importance of the 2014 National Core Music Standards in playing a significant role in guiding lesson plans, ensuring alignment of educational objectives and frameworks, assess effectively. These experiences and

suggestions do not forego the need for professional development to understand and implement the national core music standards successfully.

### **Discrepancy Cases Discussion**

In examining the findings, it is important to acknowledge discrepant cases or nonconforming data. These cases revealed differences in technology integration, professional development, and assessment strategies (see Table 5). Understanding these discrepancies promotes adaptability and improvement in teaching strategies and acknowledges the complexities and challenges in music education. The analysis of differing cases adds depth to the understanding of assessment practices and offers valuable insights for further research and development. By examining these cases, I gained a comprehensive understanding of teaching and assessment practices, revealing both challenges and opportunities within music education.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a summary of this basic qualitative research findings, highlighting the diverse experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of music faculty regarding the assessment strategies used or taught and how these strategies can better prepare K–12 preservice MTEs to employ them effectively. Five themes emerged from the data analysis and were discussed: (a) assessment strategies in music education, (b) technology as a tool for engagement and assessment, (c) course design and curriculum development, (d) professional development and collaboration, and (e) 2014 National Core Music Standards and frameworks in music education. Overall, music faculty shared similar experiences, beliefs, and perceptions about teaching, using, and designing assessment

strategies and courses. However, they emphasized the importance of reflective and holistic practices, adaptation and implementation of effective assessment strategies, continuous learning to improve assessment strategies to meet the needs of students and educational standards, and professional development opportunities for staying updated on best practices.

The insights from this study offer a deeper understanding of the opportunities, innovations, and challenges in using, teaching, and designing assessment strategies in music education. These findings lay the groundwork for further discussion in Chapter 5, where interpretations, limitations, recommendations, and implications will be explored in detail.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to address the gap in research regarding assessment strategies used and taught by music faculty across the United States to prepare K–12 preservice MTEs for classroom instruction. There was a gap in the literature regarding preparing preservice MTEs to use assessment strategies. I used a qualitative approach to understand the music faculty’s experiences, beliefs, and perspectives of using and designing assessment strategies through the lens of the ADDIE instructional design model. The sample of this study consisted of 10 music faculty from across the United States who met the inclusion criteria, including being a current or former K–12 or postsecondary music faculty, instructor, or adjunct professor (either part-time or full-time) using or teaching assessment strategies. The data collected from semistructured, face-to-face interviews were analyzed through descriptive open coding based on the conceptual framework and research questions.

Analysis of faculty experiences with using, teaching, and designing assessment strategies revealed five common themes. The first theme focused on the use and teaching of assessment strategies in music education. The second theme highlighted music technology tools that enhance student engagement and provide new assessment opportunities. The third theme centered on the design of courses and strategies, including experiences with instructional design models used as guides. The fourth theme underscored shared experiences with professional development and collaboration regarding various assessment strategies. The fifth theme highlighted the incorporation of the 2014 National Core Music Standards to guide lesson planning, assessments, and

ensure alignment with broader educational objectives. These themes support a comprehensive understanding of using and teaching assessment strategies, revealing challenges and opportunities within music education.

In this chapter, I provide my interpretation of the findings in relation to the research questions, conceptual framework, and literature review. The chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations of the study, my recommendations for further research, and an explanation of the implications for positive social change.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

#### **Theme 1: Assessment Strategies in Music Education**

The findings indicate that diverse assessments, including formative, summative, and performance-based assessments, are used in music education, such as quizzes, performance assessments, reflective writing, digital portfolios, and rubrics. This aligns with previous research indicating that a combination of assessment types improves student learning and engagement by catering to different styles and needs (Payne et al., 2019; Pellegrino et al., 2018), which confirms existing knowledge that faculty participants report using various assessment methods (Suskie, 2020). However, the findings extend knowledge by highlighting the general benefits of technology in music education. In the current study, participants reported a range of approaches incorporating digital tools in their assessment practices.

#### **Theme 2: Technology as a Tool for Engagement and Assessment**

The integration of technology in assessment, such as the use of digital portfolios and online assessments, suggests that technology-enhanced assessments provide

flexibility and more dynamic ways to assess students' skills and understanding.

Participants reported a range of approaches, from cautious engagement to advanced integration, which highlights a spectrum of technology use and suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all approach (see Tables 3, 4, and 5). These strategies promote technology use to improve student learning outcomes and engagement (Trust & Pektas, 2018). This finding extends the understanding of technology's role by showing its diverse applications in music education.

### **Theme 3: Course Design and Curriculum Development**

The findings indicate that emphasis on instructional design models, including the backward design, understanding by design, and universal design for learning, and the alignment of the 2014 National Core Music Standards show the importance of aligning course objectives and standards to ensure coherent and effective curriculum development. This reflects the broader educational practices of designing courses that incorporate clear learning objectives and assessments, as documented in existing literature (see Beudert, 2010; NASM, 2022; Parkes & Rawlings, 2019; Strawser, 2020).

### **Theme 4: Professional Development and Collaboration**

Participants highlighted that professional development opportunities were crucial for staying updated on best assessment practices, mirroring the findings of previous studies on continuous learning and professional growth for music educators (see Baumgartner & Council, 2019; Vasil et al., 2019). Therefore, the findings confirm the literature's emphasis on ongoing professional development to help MTEs effectively understand and implement national standards. While existing literature emphasizes

structured professional development as essential for improving teaching practices, the current study reveals a discrepancy in how professional development is perceived and implemented. Some participants rely heavily on informal collaboration with peers rather than formal professional development opportunities, which contradicts the structured approach promoted in the literature (see Cavanagh et al., 2019; Legette & Royo, 2021).

### **Theme 5: The 2014 National Core Music Standards and Frameworks in Music Education**

The findings revealed that many of the participants aim to align their assessment strategies with the 2014 National Core Music Standards. Additionally, most of them acknowledged the role of standards in guiding lesson planning and ensuring the alignment of educational objectives, confirming that these standards are vital in maintaining consistency and quality in music education programs (see Arts Education Partnership, 2016; Hof, 2021). Although the findings extend the knowledge in the field by providing detailed accounts of how participants navigate and implement the 2014 National Core Music Standards, there was variability in their application. Some participants admitted that they are not using the standards as expected, pointing to potential barriers, such as lack of training, time constraints, or resistance to change.

### **Findings Related to the Conceptual Framework**

The research findings align with the study's conceptual framework of the ADDIE model. The themes aligned well with the ADDIE model's phases (see Castro & Tumibay, 2021; Mercadl, 2021; Peterson, 2003), demonstrating a structured approach to instructional design in music education. Each theme corresponded to a specific phase of

ADDIE, from initial analysis to ongoing evaluation reflecting a holistic approach to developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional and assessment strategies in music education. For example, the analysis phase aligned with the assessment strategies in music education theme that focuses on understanding various diverse learning environments and needs of music educators and students as well as differentiated assessments, including summative and formative assessments and self-assessments, which are important to analyzing the current gaps in music education assessment strategies.

The course design and curriculum development theme aligned with the design phase, where participants highlighted various approaches to course design, including backward design models (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), understanding by design, and universal for learning as frameworks to guide course design, incorporating flexible assessment option, and seeking feedback to refine their instructional approaches. This phase demonstrates a deliberate effort to ensure that assessment tools and teaching strategies are directly aligned with state and national standards and overarching educational goals.

The development phase involved creating and refining learning materials, instructional activities, and assessment tools based on peer feedback and alignment with standards and frameworks. The technology as a tool for engagement and assessment theme fits well with this phase because it included participant mentions of using a mixture of traditional and technology-enhanced assessment tools, such as digital

portfolios and Smart Music, to develop courses and strategies that cater to both performance-based and conceptual learning.

The implementation phase involves the actual delivery of instruction and assessment in a real-world setting. The professional development and collaboration theme contains descriptions of how the participants execute their instructional plan, including informal professional development and collaboration among faculty that occur in workshops, conferences, or professional development days where they share knowledge about teaching practices, the use of innovative digital tools, and assessment strategies in actual classroom settings.

The nature of the study served as an evaluation of the assessment strategies of the participants, aligning with the evaluation phase of the ADDIE model. The findings provide insights into the effectiveness of these strategies in preparing K–12 preservice MTEs. The theme of the 2014 National Core Music Standards and frameworks in music education involves evaluating how the assessment strategies align with the 2014 National Core Music Standards and other frameworks. Additionally, there is an emphasis on gathering feedback, and refining teaching practices based on observations, as shared in interviews, which serve as summative evaluation.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As reported in Chapter 4, I identified several limitations that affect the trustworthiness of the study that were used to revise what was initially written in Chapter 1 at the proposal stage of the research. I faced challenges in recruiting participants, which led to reliance on sampling techniques, such as snowball sampling; social media outlets,

including LinkedIn and Facebook; and researching postsecondary music faculty from peer-reviewed music education journals. I also acknowledged that there was potential research bias due to my personal experience as a MTE. This bias may have potentially influenced my interpretation of data and/or the analysis process, despite efforts to mitigate it through peer debriefing and member checking. There were minor errors identified in the voice-to-text transcription process, and one participant needed to verify the accuracy of their transcription. Although these errors were addressed, they highlight potential inaccuracies in data collection that could potentially affect credibility. I relied heavily on self-reported data from the interviews, which can be influenced by participants' perceptions and willingness to share openly. This may have potentially affected the confirmability of the findings. Lastly, the study was limited by its geographic scope and access to participants. While attempts were made to recruit participants from across the United States, the sample may not fully represent all music education faculty, potentially impacting the findings' applicability to different regions.

### **Recommendations**

My recommendations for further research are grounded in the study's strengths and limitations and align with the study's results and literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The recommendations focus on areas where I identified gaps in the literature or the need for additional investigation, including (a) technology integration, (b) professional development opportunities, (c) tailored instruction for effective assessment, (d) cross-regional analysis of assessment strategies, and (e) alignment of standards.

Considering the study's results, future research could focus on specific technological tools and their impact on student learning outcomes in music education, addressing the gap in consistent technology use. Furthermore, research could be conducted on the long-term impact of formal versus informal professional development on the effective implementation of assessment strategies in music education. Longitudinal studies on assessment strategy effectiveness are necessary to evaluate the long-term effect of these strategies on student outcomes and teacher performance. Additionally, further exploration is needed to address the geographic limitations of this study and compare assessment strategies used across different regions to identify regional trends and differences. This type of exploration could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how locations and cultures influence assessment practices in music education. Research could also be conducted to investigate the role of standards and frameworks in shaping assessment practices with the 2014 National Core Music Standards. Additionally, further research should explore the challenges and facilitators of implementing standards across K–12 and postsecondary educational settings.

### **Implications**

This study on the preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs using assessment strategies has implications for positive social change at various levels, including the individual, family, organizational, and societal/policy. The results emphasize the need for (a) enhancing teaching skills, (b) professional development, (c) improved educational support, (d) curriculum development and professional collaboration, (e) influence on standards, and (f) advocacy for music education.

This study highlights the importance of empowering preservice K–12 MTEs with effective assessment strategies, enabling them to enhance their teaching skills. This could lead to improved student engagement and improved learning outcomes in music education. In addition, by incorporating the recommended assessment strategies preservice K–12 MTEs could experience personal and professional growth, contributing to their effectiveness as MTEs. The results suggest that as preservice K–12 MTEs implement effective strategies, students' learning experiences in music could improve, fostering a greater appreciation for the arts that could enhance academic and artistic performance in students, which might extend to their families or home environment.

K–12 and postsecondary settings could adopt the proposed assessment strategies from the current study to refine their music education programs and curricula to better prepare preservice K–12 MTEs for practical challenges in the classroom. Furthermore, the results of this study encourage collaboration among faculty in music education programs, leading to a more united approach to teaching and assessing.

The study's final social change implication relates to the results being used to inform policymakers, think tanks, nonprofit arts organizations, and educational leaders about the importance of integrating effective assessment strategies in music education standards at the state and national levels. These insights contribute to the broader advocacy for the importance of music education at a societal level to ensure that teaching music remains a vital part of providing students with a holistic educational experience.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this qualitative research study provide valuable insights into understanding and improving the preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs using assessment strategies. Despite the numerous obstacles in recruiting participants for the study, the findings reveal that effective assessment strategies are essential for enhancing music education. The participants' documented experiences emphasize the importance of adaptability, perseverance, and ongoing professional development and collaboration. The results can foster positive social change by providing actionable steps for educators and stakeholders to use to equip future MTEs for classroom assessment.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of preparing K–12 preservice MTEs to effectively use assessment strategies. By having a deep understanding of assessment tools, MTEs can significantly impact student learning and advocate for the importance of music education in the broader educational landscape. These findings underscore the role of these efforts in shaping a more informed and effective preparation of K–12 preservice MTEs.

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## Appendix: Interview Protocol

Participant Number:

Date:

Introductory Script:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in an interview for my doctoral study.

As you are aware, my study aims to gain insights into the assessment strategies being used or taught by K–12 or post-secondary music faculty, instructors, or adjunct professors like yourself. My goal is to understand how these strategies can better prepare K–12 preservice music teacher educators (MTEs) to use assessment strategies effectively.

I will ask you a series of questions beginning with some general demographic questions, then we will discuss aspects of your experience/perceptions/beliefs about teaching, designing, and using assessment strategies. This interview is confidential and will be recorded for transcription purposes. Is this, okay?

The interview should last approximately 30 to 40 minutes, and you can decline to answer any question during the interview. After the interview, I will transcribe, and then begin to analyze some of the themes within our conversation.

Before we get started do you have any questions?

[START RECORDING]

Based on the selection requirements, I would like to spend a few minutes asking you some introductory general demographic questions that expound on your experience.

Opening Demographic Questions

1. Have you used or taught assessment strategies in a K–12 or post-secondary setting?
2. What is your academic specialization?
3. How many years have you used or taught assessment strategies in a K–12 or post-secondary setting?
4. Do you have experience with designing and developing assessment strategies course(s)? If so, how many years?
5. Do you have any affiliations with professional music education organizations?

#### Primary Questions

Transition Statement: My first group of questions is about assessment strategies in a K–12 Music Education Certification Program or at your school.

1. Please describe the assessment strategies used or taught in the course.
  - a. Probe, if needed: What assignments do you use to teach this assessment strategy(s)?
  - b. Probe, if needed: How do you assess the students' knowledge?
  - c. Probe, if needed: Do you use formative, summative, and performance assessments? If so, can you give me an example?

Transitional Statement: Now that you have shared what types of assessment strategies you used or taught your students. I like now to move to questions related more to the design of the course(s) or strategy(ies).

2. Please share how this assessment strategy(ies) or course was designed.

- a. Probe, if needed: What role did you play in designing the strategy(ies) or course?
- b. Probe, if needed: Who did you collaborate with when designing this course or strategy(ies), and what were their roles throughout the process?
- c. Probe, if needed: How long did this design collaboration process last from start to finish?
- d. Probe, if needed: What professional development or support did you receive before designing this course or strategy(ies)?
- e. Probe, if needed: To your knowledge, what instructional design model(s) was used as a guide to design this course or strategy(ies)?
- f. Probe, if needed: Can you describe any issues while designing this course or strategy(ies)?
- g. Probe, if needed: Can you tell me about how these issues were resolved?

Transitional Statement: My last set of questions is related to the 2014 National Core Music Standards for K–12 Music Education.

3. Are you familiar with the 2014 National Core Music Standards?
  - a. Probe, if needed: Do you use them in your course when using or teaching assessment strategies? If so, please tell me how.
  - b. Probe, if needed: Are you familiar with the Opportunity to Learning (OTL) Standards?
  - c. Probe, if needed: Do you use them in your course when using or teaching assessment strategies? If so, please tell me how.

- d. Probe, if needed: Are you familiar with the Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs)?
- e. Probe, if needed: Do you use them in your course when using or teaching assessment strategies? If so, please tell me how.

Final IQ: Would you like to share any other thoughts on teaching, designing, or using assessment strategies?

Closing Questions and Statements: Thank you for your participation in this interview.

Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated. This interview will be transcribed and a transcript will be sent to you in the next 5 days. Additionally, you will have access to this completed study once it becomes available. As a token of my appreciation, you will receive a \$20 Amazon e-gift card. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at XXX@waldenu.edu.

Again, thank you!