

Creativity in the Middle School Instrumental Setting: Music Educators' Use of Improvisation and Composition

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Research-in-progress

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of creative activities – improvisation and composition – by music educators in the instrumental settings of Pennsylvania middle schools. A survey design was used to answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of the relationship between educators' *use of creative activities* in the middle school instrumental setting and their *personal experience* with these activities?
- What kinds of creative activities are presently used by these educators in their instrumental music settings?

The targeted population included educators of middle school instrumental music students – band and orchestra – in the public school districts of the state of Pennsylvania. The educators were selected through systematic sampling from the school district listing on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) web site. Web site or postal addresses were obtained from the PDE web site for 118 public school districts resulting in identifying 188 instrumental music teachers from these districts.

An on-line questionnaire designed by the researcher consisting of 26 questions was used to gather data in each of the following categories:

- teaching environment
- use of improvisation and composition in the school setting
- educators' personal experience with improvisation and composition
- specific creative activities used in the school setting

Data from the first category of the questionnaire will furnish demographic information to be used in a description of the participants and their teaching environment.

Descriptive statistics will be computed from the data collected in the next three categories of the questionnaire. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation will be run to

identify the nature of the relationship between two variables; *use of creative activities* and *educators' personal experience* with creative activities.

Finally, two questions will allow the participants to identify the specific activities used in their setting. These questions also include an “other box” to describe activities not provided on the prescribed list. The responses to these two questions will be used to compute a frequency tally of activities used by the participants.