Hello wonderful colleagues! Can you believe that a new school year is already under way? I hope you are doing well and that you are excited about all the possibilities that await you in the 2011-2012 academic year! To align with the *PMEA News* theme of "Assessment in the 21st Century" and to pass along some of the wealth of assessment thoughts and best practices that we are all creating at our own institutions, I sent out a call for assessment ideas to share in this month's journal. A huge THANK YOU to all of you who responded and were so willing to pass along your ideas to us!

Competency Examinations at Slippery Rock University

by Kathleen Melago & Stacey Steele

In 1997, Slippery Rock University began the practice of giving 30 minute individual competency examinations during the methods block courses (Elementary Methods, Secondary Methods and Instrumental Methods), which are typically taken in the spring of the junior year.

The competency exams are part of the department's ongoing efforts to improve the preparedness of field students and student teachers and are based in part on comments received from field and student teacher cooperating teachers in surveys they complete after serving as cooperating teachers.

The exams are given in March prior to their field experience placement, with one opportunity during finals week to retake any portion of the competencies not passed on the first try. The evaluation panel for the competency examinations includes the instructors for the three courses in the methods block. Following their exam, the students receive comments on areas in which they did not pass.

Although initially, the exams were designed to retest the basics that had been taught in the freshmen through junior year, they have been modified frequently over the past fifteen years to include a more comprehensive assessment of the skills of the potential future music educator in a variety of areas, including vocal, general and instrumental music, and to include the second of three reviews of the students' professional portfolios. The 2011 Competency Examination requirements and the evaluation sheet follow.

Elementary

- Sight-sing a simple children's song, first with solfege and hand signs, then with words.
- Demonstrate sequential procedures for teaching a children's song using guitar accompaniment.
- Sing a song, which will be selected by the committee, from your song collection.
- Master Copy: Successfully notate stick notation, solfege, and lyrics for a children's song sung by the professor.

Secondary

- Play and sing selected choral warm-ups.
- Play voice parts of a choral score on piano.
- Play piano accompaniment of a choral score.
- Demonstrate ability to audiate all parts of a choral work.
- Conduct a choral work.

Instrumental

- Conduct *Cenotaph* or *Gavorkna Fanfare* by Jack Stamp with correct beat pattern, style, cues and dynamics.
- Identify selected transpositions of notes and keys within *Cenotaph* or *Gavorkna Fanfare* by Jack Stamp.
- Demonstrate knowledge of instrument assembly, embouchure formation, posture and fingerings by teaching a beginning band lesson. Prior to competency demonstration, students will not know which instrument will be taught.

Pennsylvania Music
Educators Association

Competencies for Music Method Courses
Revised 3/2011

Name_____   Date_____

UNSATISFACTORY (UNS): Student does not demonstrate competency to an acceptable level. Competency performance contains numerous errors.
PROFICIENT (PROF): Student demonstrates competency at an acceptable level with minor errors.
DISTINGUISHED (DIST): Student demonstrates competency at a very high level with no errors.

ELEMENTARY COMPETENCIES

	UNS	PROF	DIST
Sight-sing a simple children's song, first with solfege and hand signs, then with words			
Demonstrate sequential procedures for teaching a children's song using piano or guitar accompaniment			
Sing a song, which will be selected by the committee, from your song collection.			
Master Copy: Successfully notate stick notation, solfege, and lyrics for a children's song sung by the professor			

Comments:

SECONDARY COMPETENCIES

	UNS	PROF	DIST
Play and sing selected choral warm-ups			
Play voice parts of a choral score on piano			
Conduct a choral work			
Audiate all parts of a choral work			

Comments:

INSTRUMENTAL COMPETENCIES

	UNS	PROF	DIST
Conduct "Cenotaph" or "Gavorkna Fanfare" by Jack Stamp with correct beat pattern, style, cues, and dynamics			
Identify selected transpositions of notes and keys within "Cenotaph" or "Gavorkna Fanfare" by Jack Stamp			
Demonstrate knowledge of instrument assembly, embouchure formation, posture, and fingerings by teaching a beginning band lesson			

Comments:

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

	UNS	BASIC	PROF	DIST
Portfolio assessment				

Rubric for Music Education Portfolio

Name of Candidate:_____

Music Methods Competencies:
Consult PASS Rubric and Music Department Handbook for detailed information about portfolio expectations.
* Categories marked with an asterisk are not required at this time

Technical Aspects

Organization	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
Labeling	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
Table of Contents	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
Appearance	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished

Content

Domains	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
Artifacts	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished

Reflective Statements

• Development	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
• Applicable Domain	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
• Insight	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
• Understanding	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
• Application of Artifacts	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished
• Plan of Action	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished

Writing Skills

Spelling	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Punctuation	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Grammar	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Word Processing	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Citations & Reference List	☐ P ass	☐ Fail

Music Department Objectives

Artifacts	☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ Basic	☐ Proficient	☐ Distinguished

Required for candidates admitted to SRU Fall 2005 or later

Experience in Diverse Settings	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Professional Dispositions	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
* Impact on Student Learning	☐ Pass	☐ Fail
Professional Growth Matrixes for Domains 1-4	☐ Pass	☐ Fail

Comments:

Software Assessment at Elizabethtown College

by Kevin Shorner-Johnson

At Elizabethtown College, we developed and are using a software program called etownVR©. This software program allows an instructor to create rubrics, attach those rubrics to assessment events and upload related videos. Once the event is completed, the student logs in to the software application, views the video and completes a reflection upon that video. Once the student has completed a reflection, the student is instantly provided access to the instructor's feedback and rubric-based assessment. The software has been used to assess beginning piano performances, in-class microteaching and class presentations. The presentation of video alongside assessment and reflection has greatly improved the formative nature of our assessment practice.

The value of the etownVR© is that it allows different rubrics to be created to emphasize different aspects of a performance. The rubric below is used with beginning piano students to emphasize the importance of rhythmic accuracy and a consistent pulse.

Beat	The beat needs improvement for the overall strength of the performance.	A generally consistent pulse is maintained, however the beat fluctuates slightly at more difficult spots	A consistent pulse is maintained throughout the performance.
Rhythmic Accuracy	The rhythm needs improvement for accuracy and consistency within the performance.	The performer performs with generally accurate rhythm, but more than 2 instances could be improved.	The performer makes very few (less than 2) rhythmic errors
Pitches	The accuracy of pitches needs improvement for the overall effect of the performance.	Pitches are generally correct, but more than 2 instances could be improved.	Pitches are correct and in the correct key signature.
Expressiveness	The performance needs more expressive variation for an effective performance.	The performer performs with dynamics and some variations, but this aspect could be improved for a more expressive performance.	The performer effectively varies dynamics and performs tempo variations for an expressive performance.

The Authentic Assessment Environment: What Can We Learn from the Pros?

by Nathan Buonviri, Temple University

Authentic assessment is commonly employed in music instruction. Teachers typically focus their attention on developing the assessment task and the instrument that will be used to score it, but often fail to consider carefully a third vital component: the circumstances in which the assessment takes place. Authentic assessments should occur in authentic environments to encourage authentic musical learning. The work of professional musicians can illustrate typical characteristics of an authentic environment for any given musical task, and can be applied to music classrooms. Three of these applied characteristics suggest that authentic assessments should be subtle, frequent and public.

Subtle assessment means that students should not feel an abrupt shift from the comfort of learning to the terror of an exam. An authentic assessment, for example, an individual improvisation, should grow naturally and almost imperceptibly from the learning and practice that has preceded it. Professional singers, composers and conductors are constantly engaged in subtle assessment as they cycle through preparation, presentation and reflection on their work. They become comfortable in

their work environments as they complete these cycles. In the classroom, an environment of subtle assessment helps students to develop healthy attitudes toward their musical learning and toward assessment itself!

Professional musicians do what they do frequently. Orchestral musicians play hundreds of concerts per year and composers write many pieces according to multiple deadlines, for example. What can we learn from them about classroom assessment? Smaller, more frequent authentic assessments may be more conducive to student learning. A large single playing exam at the end of the semester in orchestra class might be a poor indicator of the student's progress for a variety of reasons, including student anxiety. Frequent assessments, on the other hand, can lower student stress over time. Students have a chance to get acquainted with the process, to learn to address nervousness, and to reflect on their own progress more often.

Finally, professional musicians work with the public. They rarely play, sing, conduct, improvise, compose, record or arrange music for one expert to judge. Authentic assessments performed only for the teacher are equally ridiculous! Music students should work with a "public" as well, whether a large audience of strangers or just the rest of the class. Students learn a great deal by witnessing their peers making music, and authentic assessments should take place in an environment where everyone has the chance to grow.

Authentic classroom assessments that are subtle, frequent and public reflect the work of professional musicians. Preservice and inservice teachers can benefit from considering these factors, among others, as they establish and refine their assessment philosophies. Careful consideration of the circumstances surrounding an authentic assessment task promotes healthy student attitudes, valid assessment results and thorough musical learning.

PMEA Contact Information

Mailing:
PMEA
56 S. Third St.
Hamburg, PA 19526

Phone:
610-562-9757
888-919-7632

Fax:
610-562-9760

Email
Executive Director
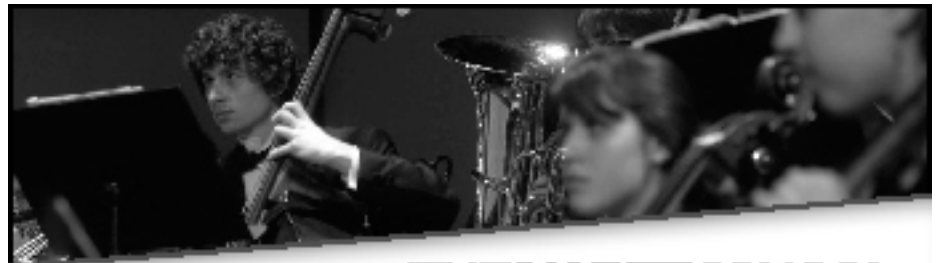Margaret Bauer, CAE
msb@pmea.net

Administrative Assistant
Kelly Gressley
kelly@pmea.net

Director of Communications
Dave Weiss
pmeanews@pmea.net

Director of Meetings and Membership
Abigail Young, CAE
abiyoung@pmea.net