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ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHER PREPARATION  
IN U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RELATIVE TO  
THE NATIONAL STANDARDS--GOALS 2000

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether elementary music teachers in United States of America (U.S.) believe that they were prepared in their undergraduate studies for implementing the National Standards for Music Education and to find out what courses music education faculty at higher education institutions in the U.S. believe enable or should enable implementation of the standards.

Electronic, world wide web-based surveys were completed by teachers at randomly selected NASM accredited colleges and universities concerning undergraduate preparation in the grade level category--K – 4. Data were reported in this category including results of the e-mail survey question answered by U. S. elementary school music teachers who were members of MENC (MENC-the National Association for Music Education).

It was clear from this study that preparation for implementing at least one of the Content Standards needs serious consideration--Content Standard 3, Improvising melodies, variations. The results of this study reveal that the college/university faculties generally believe that they are providing the courses in their curriculum that enable or should enable their music education graduates to effectively teach the Content Standards. Conversely, the elementary music educators believe that they were prepared in their undergraduate education for implementation of the Content Standards (ratings from "below average" to "average"). This study provided the opportunity for college methods faculty to evaluate these differences in perception Standard by Standard.

### ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHER PREPARATION IN U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RELATIVE TO THE NATIONAL STANDARDS--GOALS 2000

As part of the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," the United States Department of Education adopted the National Standards for Arts Education that were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. This consortium developed standards (Content and Achievement) for the arts that "specify what students should know and be able to do in the arts discipline," as well as "specify the understanding and levels of achievement that students are expected to attain in the competencies, for each of the arts, at the completion of grades 4, 8, and 12." (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations [CNAEA], 1994, p. 18)

The consortium believes that, if students complete their education in arts programs that incorporate these Content and Achievement Standards the following should occur:

1. They should be able to communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines.
2. They should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form.
3. They should be able to develop and present basic analyses of works of art.
4. They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
5. They should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines. (CNAEA, 1994, pp. 18-19)

Several researchers have completed projects that focus on these standards (Fonder and Eckrick, 1999, Adderley, 2000, Kirkland, 2003, 1996, and Louk, 2003). Fonder and Eckrick (1999) reported the impact of these standards on music education curricula at various colleges and universities in the United States. Their findings suggest that the

national standards were influential in changes to the programs of study at the larger institutions of higher education. It was noted that due to this attention to the standards instruction in improvisation, compositions and world music were improved. Adderley (2000) stated that college and university music instructors generally believed that they were providing adequate preparation to future K – 4 music teachers to teach according to the various standards, but believed the weakest preparation was for those standards that dealt with improvisation, and understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside of the arts. Kirkland (2003) surveyed American music teachers to determine if the proficiency level standards were being met, and the ratings these instructors indicated as goals for achievement for their students. She reported that elementary students met Content Standard 6 - Listening to, analyzing, and describing music at the highest proficiency level. In Kirkland's (1996) earlier study, her results showed that students met the performance-oriented standards at the highest proficiency levels, and that the instructors rated standards 1 and 2 as the highest goals for student achievement. Louk (2003) investigated general music teachers' attitudes and practices as they relate to the standards. She reported that there were differences in importance of those standards that dealt with reading music, history of music, playing an instrument, singing, and listening to music, than those standards that did not focus on these competencies.

Several years have passed since the Department of Education adopted the National Standards for Arts Education and educators in most states are urged to voluntarily include them in their instructional sequences. Between 1993 and 2001, nine states (i.e., Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, and Washington) passed legislation mandating that assessments be administered in the arts; albeit, only Kentucky and Minnesota include the arts in the state's high stakes assessment program (for the purposes of school accountability or student graduation, Yan & Rieder, 2001). An additional eight states (i.e., Alaska, California, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, and South Carolina) encouraged arts assessment through professional development materials for arts educators, arts assessment enterprises, or both (Yan & Rieder, 2001; Yap, Schneider, Johnson, Mazzie & Porchea, 2003). Moreover, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is scheduled to administer an arts assessment to a national sample of eighth grade students in 2008 that is based in large part, on the National Standards for Arts Education. As K – 12 educators continue to implement changes in their teaching practices and the U. S. Department of Education moves closer to goals outlined in new initiatives, it is not clear, whether American institutions of higher education are providing students with the appropriate core curriculum and related experiences that will lead to successful implementation of the National Standards.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether elementary music teachers in the United States of America (U. S.) believe that they were prepared in their undergraduate studies for implementing the Standards and to find out what courses music education faculty at higher education institutions in the U.S. believe enable or should enable implementation of the standards. The K– 4 elementary music teachers in the U. S. were surveyed to rate the quality of their undergraduate education for effective

teaching of the standards. The music education faculty at the NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) accredited campuses in the U.S. were asked to identify specific courses and/or course objectives offered that enabled the music educator to implement each of the music Standards. The study provides a profile of core music education courses and recommendations for the improvement of these courses relative to the National Standards.

Electronic, web-based surveys were completed by teachers at randomly selected NASM accredited colleges and universities concerning undergraduate preparation in the grade level category--K – 4. Data are reported in this category including results of the e-mail survey question answered by U. S. elementary school music teachers who are members of MENC: the National Association for Music Education).

Standards for all the arts are available in one document: *What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts*, ISBN 1-56545-036-1, a Music Educators National Conference publication.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data reported in this study were obtained mainly from a electronic world wide web-based survey sent to music education faculty at the four-year colleges/universities in the U. S. that are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The survey was designed for those who teach the courses related to general music in the elementary schools K -4.

Also analyzed is one question on a survey sent by another researcher (Kirkland, 2003) to a random sample of U. S. elementary music educators, public and private, who are members of MENC: the National Association for Music Education. This question was designed to determine whether these music teachers believe that they were prepared in their undergraduate education for implementing the Content Standards.

College/university music education faculty respondents rated the nine Content Standards in relation to what courses in their curriculum enable or should enable their music education graduates to effectively teach these Content Standards:

- 1 – Music Education Methods
- 2– Ensemble
- 3– Applied Lessons
- 4– Music Theory
- 5– Music History
- 6– Conducting

Elementary music educator respondents in the schools of U. S. used a five-point scale to rate the quality of their undergraduate education for effective teaching of the standards.

- 1 -- Poor preparation** for effective teaching of this Content Standard.
- 2 --Below average preparation** for effective teaching of this Content Standard.
- 3 --Average preparation** for effective teaching of this Content Standard.
- 4 -- Good preparation** for effective teaching of this Content Standard.
- 5 -- Superior preparation** for effective teaching of this Content Standard.

Before the final draft of the survey was sent to the various music education faculty, a field trial of the survey was conducted to determine whether the questions were clear and logical, and to determine the average time for completion. Accordingly, a few changes were made and the music education faculty at higher education institutions in the U. S. were notified via e-mail concerning the availability of the web-based survey and to assure them that their input would be greatly appreciated.

Surveys were administered to 42 music education faculty (representing 28 of 50 states and the District of Columbia). Surveys were also returned from 941 music educators in the schools of the U. S. who are members of MENC: the National Association for Music Education (representing 49 of 50 states and the District of Columbia).

A reliability analysis was not performed for the survey questions administered to college or university faculty because respondents were allowed to choose more than one category. Therefore, the results were investigated based on the frequency of selection for each category as it pertained to each content standard.

A reliability analysis was run to determine the consistency of the scores obtained on the survey administered to the K-4 educators. The coefficient alpha for the survey was .92. To determine if the survey was measuring the latent trait of university preparation, a principal components analysis was performed. The survey was found to have one component with an eigenvalue greater than one, which accounted for 60% of the variance. Reckase (1975) determined for a dominant construct to be present, the principal component should account for a minimum of 20% of the variance in scores. The researchers therefore determined that the survey was of sufficient technical quality.

Where bar graphs are presented, the results are displayed in relation to what courses in the college/university curriculum enable or should enable music education graduates to effectively teach these Content Standards (see Figures 1 - 9).

When tables are presented, the results display means and standard deviations (see Tables 1 - 9) of the responses of the K-4 educators. The mean for each five-point rating scale may be interpreted in the following manner:

- 1.00 - 1.49 = poor preparation
- 1.50 - 2.49 = below average preparation
- 2.50 - 3.49 = average preparation
- 3.50 - 4.49 = good preparation
- 4.50 - 5.00 = superior preparation

## RESULTS

Responses are reported from College/University Methods Faculty concerning the courses in their curriculum that enable or should enable their music education graduates to effectively teach these Content Standards. The bar graphs in each figure indicate the frequency that a course was selected by the survey participants. Each faculty member was asked to select all courses that apply to the skills needed for implementation of the specific standard. Ratings obtained from U.S. elementary music educators for preparation to effectively implement the Content Standards are also reported. For every Content Standard, the number responding for the college/university faculty and the mean for the U. S. elementary music educators are listed. The graphs below indicate that college/university faculty generally believe that they are providing the appropriate courses that enable or should enable teachers to effectively teach according to the Content Standards (see Figures and Tables 1 - 9).

Figure 1.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 1

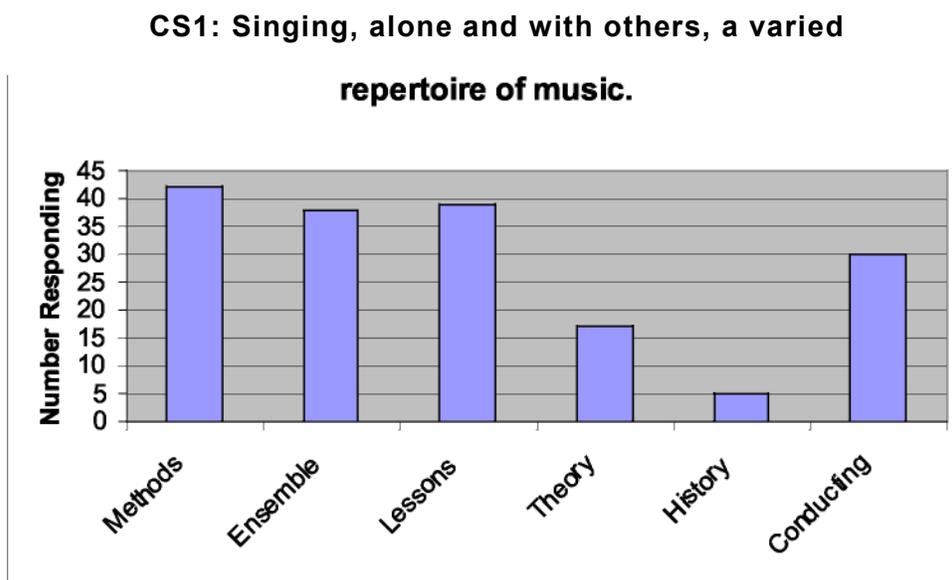


Table 1.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 1

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.25	1.01

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty feel that the methods courses, ensembles, private lessons, and the conducting classes that are offered should enable students to effectively implement this standard. K-4 educators in this study report that their coursework provided average preparation in teaching their students how to sing alone and with others.

Figure 2.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 2

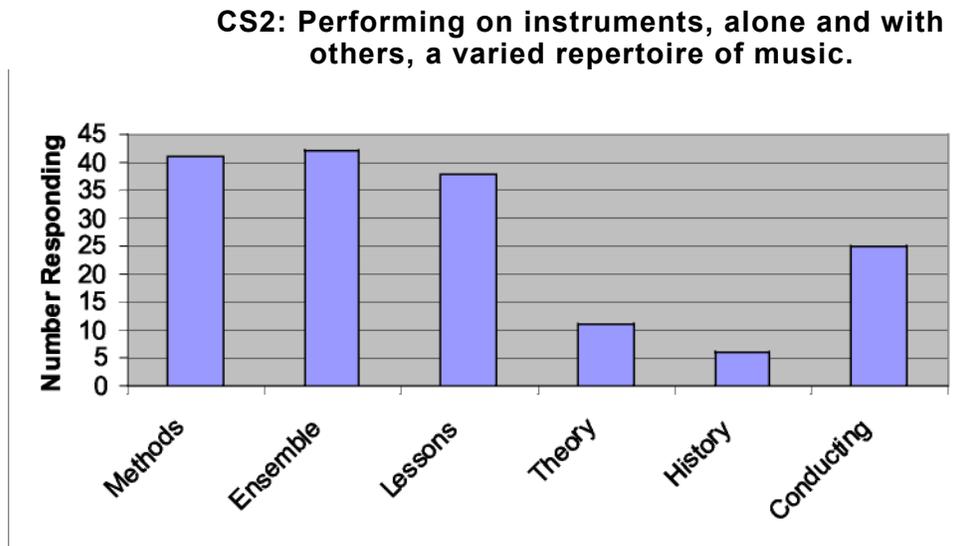


Table 2.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 2

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.09	1.01

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty feel that the methods courses, ensembles, private lessons, and the conducting classes that are offered should enable students to effectively implement this standard. K-4 educators in this study report that their coursework provided average preparation in teaching their students how to perform alone and with others.

Figure 3.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 3

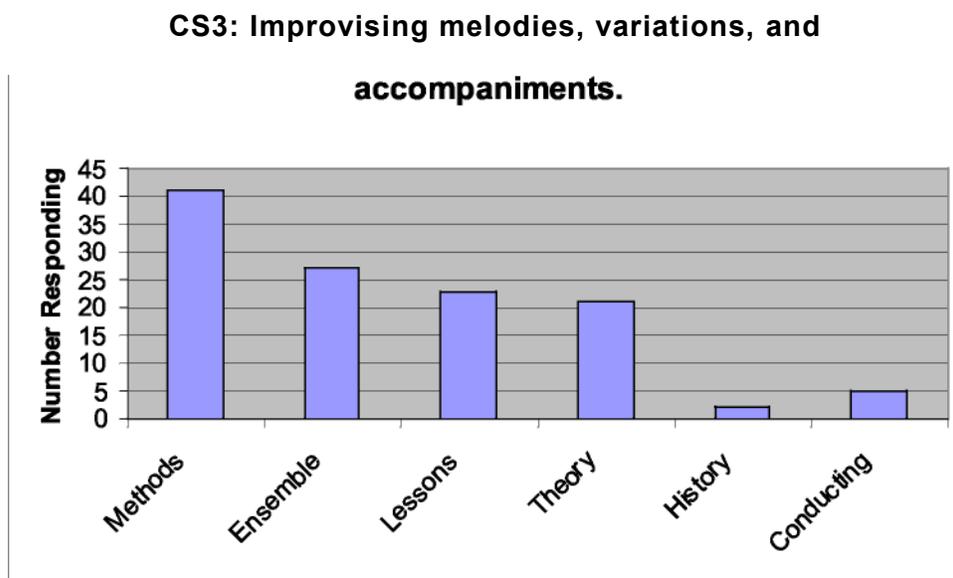


Table 3.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 3

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	2.46	1.04

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses, ensembles, private lessons, and theory classes that are offered should enable students to effectively implement the national improvising standard. Conversely, the K-4 educators in this study reported that their coursework provided below average preparation in teaching their students how to improvise melodies, variations, and accompaniments.

Figure 4.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 4

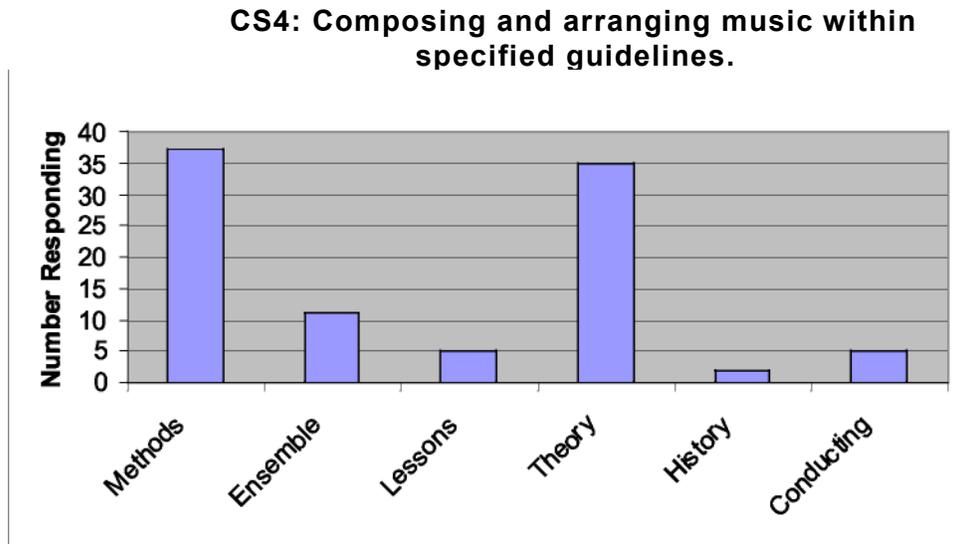


Table 4.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 4

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	2.55	1.06

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses and theory classes should enable students to teach composition. Conversely, the K-4 educators in this study reported that their coursework provided average preparation in teaching their students how to compose.

Figure 5.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 5

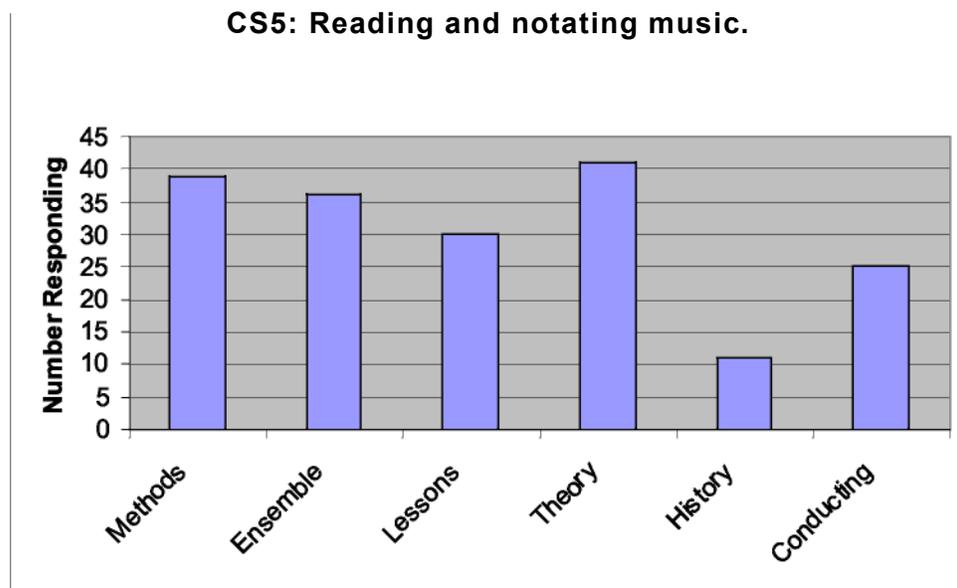


Table 5.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 5

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.41	0.92

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses, ensembles, lessons, and conducting courses should enable students to teach composition. The K-4 educators scored their preparation as average.

Figure 6.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 6

**CS6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing**

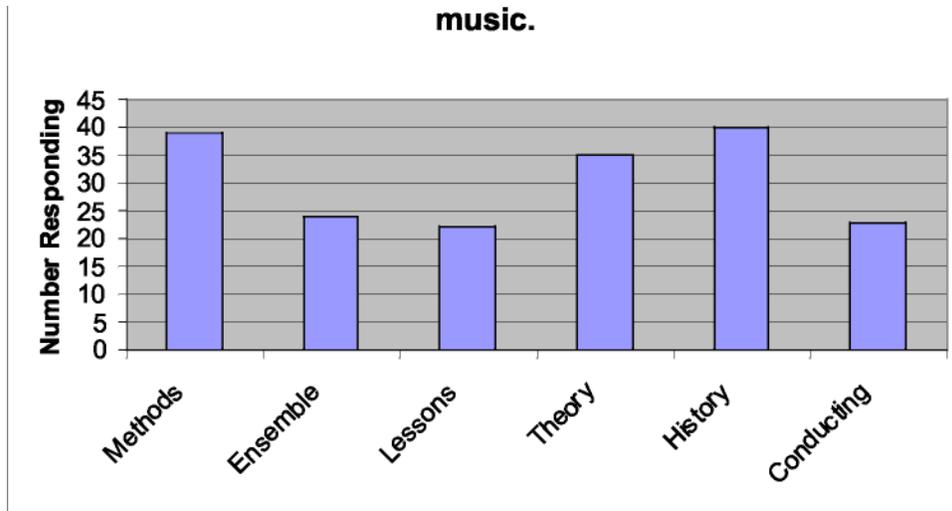


Table 6.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 6

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.21	0.92

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses, ensembles, lessons, theory, history, and conducting courses should enable students to teach listening, analyzing, and describing music. The K-4 educators scored their preparation as average.

Figure 7.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 7

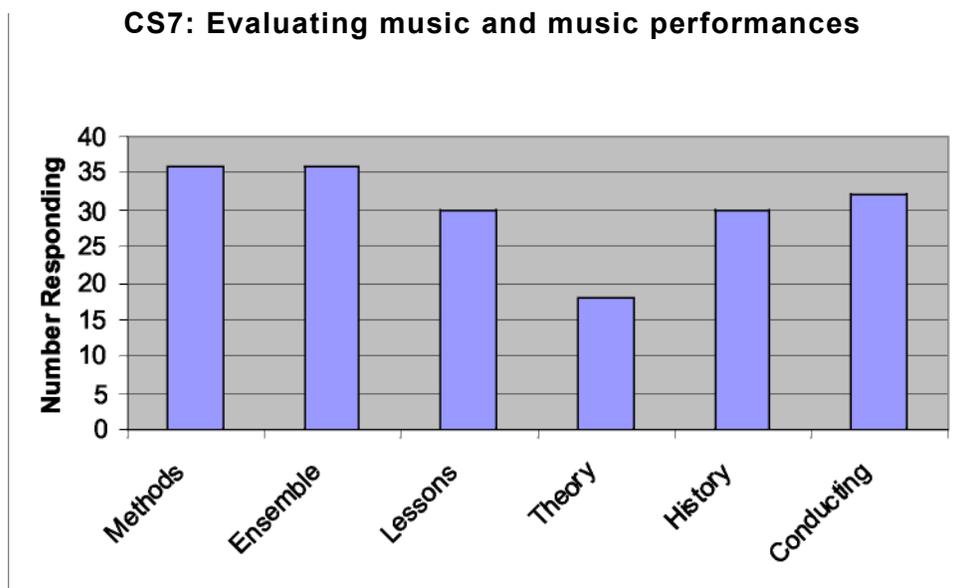


Table 7.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 7

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.07	0.90

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses, ensembles, lessons, theory, history, and conducting courses should enable students to teach listening, analyzing, and describing music. The K-4 educators scored their preparation as average.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 9

Figure 9

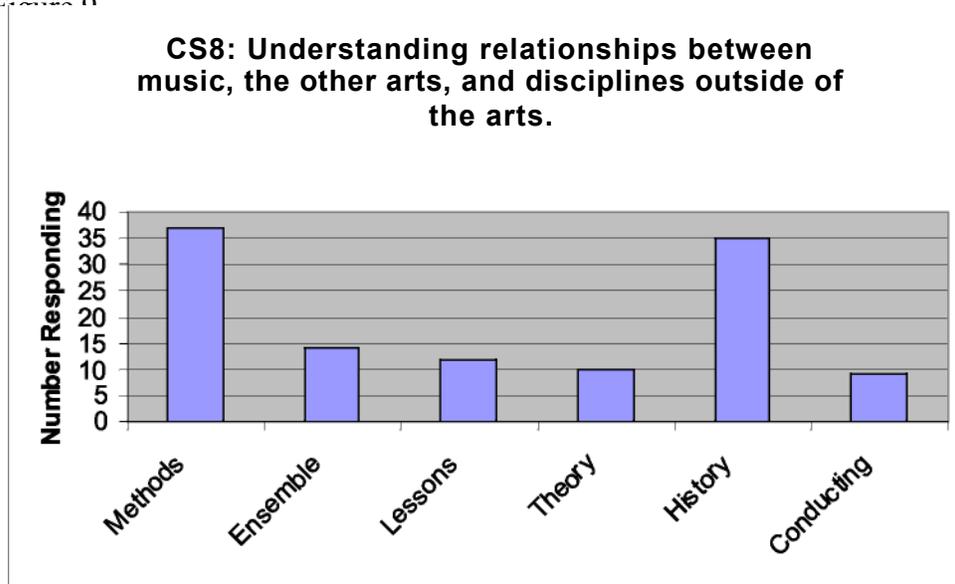


Table 8.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 8

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	2.91	0.97

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses and history courses should enable students to teach understanding relationships between music and the others arts. The K-4 educators scored their preparation as average.

Courses selected that enable or should enable effective teaching of Content Standard 9

Figure 9

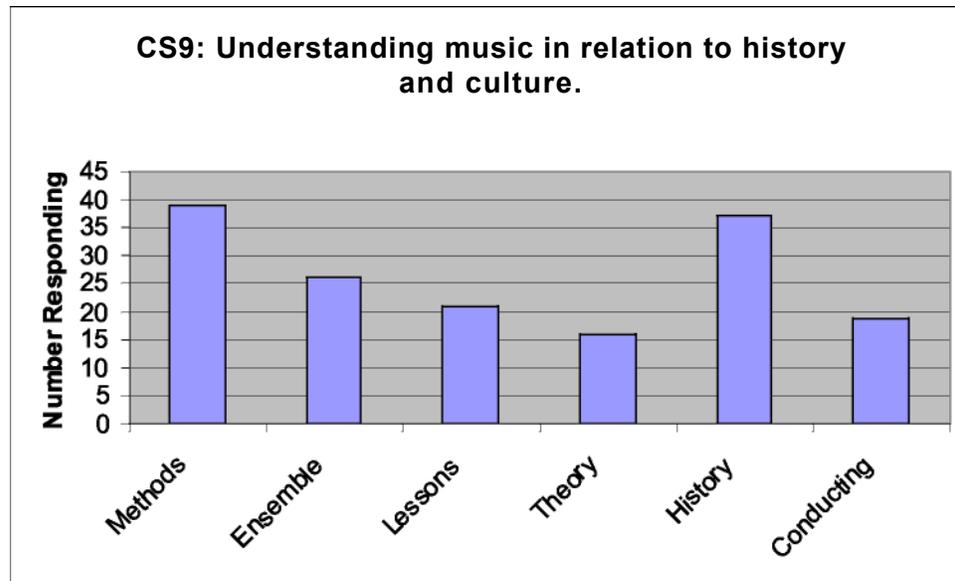


Table 9.

Average Rating for Effective Teaching Preparation of Content Standards 9

Grade Level Category	M	SD
K-4 G/C (Music Educators)	3.18	0.90

Note. G/C = General and Choral.

College/University faculty in this study felt that the methods courses, ensembles, lessons, theory, history, and conducting courses should enable students to teach listening, analyzing, and describing music. The K-4 educators scored their preparation as average.

The nine Content Standards (CS) are listed below:

1. CS: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. CS: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. CS: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. CS: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. CS: Reading and notating music.
6. CS: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. CS: Evaluating music and music performances.
8. CS: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. CS: Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Many elementary teachers have patterned their style of instruction after those that taught them in previous classroom settings. College and university faculty have generally prepared their students to enter classrooms with skills that reflect the expectations of school administrators and of parents and those expectations are typically called traditional expectations (i.e., performance). The National Standards point to goals that that might not be the norm for some music educators, but they are voluntary benchmarks adopted by the U. S. Department of Education that in more states are becoming mandated by state law. Higher education music educators in the U.S. should examine the differences reported in the results portion of this study with a view adjusting their curriculum so that more elementary educators would believe that they are enabled to meet the goals outlined in the National Standards. Educators are reporting that they are receiving below average preparation in teaching improvisation. As more states hold arts educators accountable for state arts standards, it becomes paramount that institutions of higher learning meet the needs of these educators so that they may successfully implement the standards.

Although some colleges and universities will resist changing their approach to assisting future elementary teachers to meet the goals outlined in the Standards. What many of us must remember is that some of these professors were hired because of their performance ability and knowledge of standard repertoire; improvisation is not necessarily in their background. The professors who generally teach the traditional academic courses (music theory and music history) at these same colleges and universities have not had to traditionally be concerned with how the content of their courses is passed on by teachers in the public schools. Instructors of music education courses and ensemble rehearsals have also not necessarily included such methodology in their classes. If more elementary music teachers are to succeed in incorporating these Standards, then changes are necessary so that K - 4 teachers may gain the skills to implement all of the National Standards.

It is clear from this study that preparation for implementing at least one of the Content Standards needs serious consideration--Content Standard 3, Improvising melodies, variations. Higher education music educators in the U.S. may need to provide music education majors with adequate musical experiences that closely relate to this specific Content Standard.

The results of this study reveal that the college/university faculties generally believe that they are providing the courses in their curriculum that enable or should enable their music education graduates to effectively teach the Content Standards than the elementary music educators believe that they were prepared in their undergraduate education for implementation of the Content Standards (ratings from "below average" to "average"). This study provides the opportunity for college methods faculty to evaluate the differences between higher education faculty and K-4 perceptions Standard by Standard. In the future, it may be beneficial to modify the teacher survey so that it may

be administered to higher education faculty so that the results may be correlated. At that time, quantitative data may be provided that show the degree to which the two groups agree or disagree in regard to the preparation that teachers are receiving from colleges and universities. However, if the results of this study are accurate, there appears to be a disconnect between higher education and K-4 education.

The writers recommends that elementary music teachers in the schools advise their former college/university music educators of the need for change in the manner in which courses are taught so that they may feel more adequately prepared to implement the Standards. It is also recommended that higher education music educators consult with the elementary school teachers in making these necessary changes.

Each study that focuses on the Content Standards provide a basis for music curriculum modification in order to better prepare elementary music teachers for implementation of the National Standards.

In 1994, the United States Department of Education accepted the National Standards for Arts Education. Even though these Standards are to be voluntarily implemented by music educators, and MENC – the National Association for Music Education is strongly encouraging music educators to do so, it is still not clear if college and university faculty are meeting the needs of future elementary music educators to implement these Standards. It is clear from this study, and others, that we need to continue to revise our curricula, especially with regards to implementation of Standard 3, (Improvising).

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