

Assessment for Learning, a decade on: Self-reported assessment practices of secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong

International Journal of
Music Education
0(0) 1–14

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DOI: 10.1177/0255761413491056

ijm.sagepub.com



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Abstract

“Assessment for Learning” (Afl) is integral to the decade-old reform of Hong Kong education. To investigate the assessment practices of secondary music teachers in Hong Kong ostensibly following Afl, this quantitative study investigates the self-reported assessment practices and perception of assessment modes of Hong Kong secondary school music teachers ($n = 97$) drawn from 120 secondary randomly selected schools. The reported data, with a response rate of 83.3% based on 30% of the target school population, comprises responses to a self-administered survey questionnaire. Key data results findings differ from McClung (1997) and here indicate that, regardless of the perceived difficulty of implementation, respondents favored as being more suitable for their students the practice of achievement-oriented assessments. Discussion of this key result supports Morris’s (1996) view that in Chinese societies teachers emphasize students’ achievement.

Keywords

assessment for learning, assessment practice, music assessment, perception, secondary music educators

Assessment reform has attracted international attention with advocates of alternative assessment such as formative assessment or assessment for learning in classroom instruction pointing to improvements in students’ learning and performance (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004; Sadler, 1998) and even higher achievement in externally mandated assessments (Wiliam, Harrison, & Black, 2004).

In Hong Kong, assessment reform is integral with an overall education reform and is guided by the policy document *Learning to Learn* (Curriculum Development Council [CDC], 2000) and subsequently implemented as “Assessment for Learning” (Afl) concurrently with the new Hong Kong *Music*

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Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3) (CDC, 2003). The *Music Curriculum Guide* lays out a music curriculum framework for students from ages 6–14 years with assessment procedures that seek to embody AfL in order to improve student learning (CDC, 2003). The concept of AfL in Hong Kong is similar to that of formative assessment as described in the British educational literature, and also similar to classroom assessment as described in American educational literature (Brookhart, 2004), for all three advocate the use of formative assessment to inform teaching and learning in addition to the traditional use of summative assessment to evaluate students' learning outcomes (CDC, 2002).

As AfL has now been integral to the training and practice of music teachers in Hong Kong schools for almost a decade, the question arises: what impact does AfL have on practicing secondary music teachers? To investigate this question, secondary music teachers' self-reported assessment practice are examined in terms of what these reports reflect of their training, experience and perception of assessment modes.

Theoretical background

The theoretical framework for this study is developed from a synthesis of existing literature related to music assessment. Music educators have advocated various assessment modes to facilitate learning, such as authentic assessment (Asmus, 1999; Chiodo, 2001); assessment of listening activities and keeping an observation journal (Cavner & Gould, 2003), peer-assessment and self-evaluation (Bergee & Cecconi-Roberts, 2002), as well as portfolios (Chiodo, 2001; Kelly 2001; Mills, 2009). However, as noted by Lehman (1998) and Colwell (2006), music assessment in classroom instruction is often neglected by music educators who continue to assess students in traditional ways that emphasize non-music achievement criteria such as attitude, participation and attendance rather than musical knowledge or skill (Kotora, 2005; McClung, 1997; McCoy, 1991; Russell & Austin, 2010) instead of, as commonly practiced in other school subjects, relating assessment to the objectives of learning and taxonomies of cognitive development (Colwell, 2006). Many music programs in schools are heavily performance-based with its emphasis on performance rather than other aspects of music learning resulting in unbalanced music assessment (Fisher, 2008). For example, Kotora (2005) reports the assessment strategies commonly used by choral teachers include "concert performances," "student participation," and "student attendance," while "portfolio" is seldom used.

Music teachers' assessment practices were found to be influenced by a range of factors including their personal choice (Kotora, 2005), specialization area, that is, choral or instrumental (Russell & Austin, 2010), teaching experience (McCoy, 1991), confidence (Beston, 2004), the number of students (Lehman, 1998), instructional time (Kotora, 2005), and teaching level, i.e. elementary or secondary (Russell & Austin, 2010). For example, assessing students' learning in classroom choral performance commonly employs extramusical assessment criteria such as "participation," "attitude," and "attendance," and "performance test" rather than "portfolio" (McClung, 1997). Such common practices indicate a key role for teachers' perception of music assessment. Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate teachers' perception of music assessment.

Contextual background

Secondary schooling in Hong Kong

This study was conducted in the academic year 2008–2009, when secondary schooling in Hong Kong was of 7-year duration (ages 12–19 years), comprising 3 years of junior secondary school (Secondary 1–3), 2 years of senior secondary school (Secondary 4–5) and 2 years of matriculation

(Secondary 6–7) prior to university studies. All students received 9 years' free and compulsory education up to the age of 14. After completing Secondary 3, students may either study Secondary 4–5 in mainstream secondary schools, or receive vocational training. Those studying Secondary 4–5 were assessed by Hong Kong Certificate Examination of Education [HKCEE], while Secondary 6–7 studies were assessed by the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination [HKAL]. Both of these public examinations were achievement-oriented assessments used to select capable students for university education. From September 2009, the HKCEE and HKAL were jointly replaced by with the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, and the duration of secondary schooling changed to 6 years i.e., 3 years of junior secondary and 3 years of senior secondary (Education Bureau, Hong Kong SAR [EDB], 2011).

Most students in Hong Kong are allocated by the Education Bureau to “government” or “aided” schools in their neighborhood, which provide education to students free of charge. “Government schools” are funded and operated by the government while “aided schools” are government-funded but operated by religious, charity, or social organizations. A small proportion of Hong Kong students study in schools belonging to other categories; including “direct subsidy”, “international”, and “private” schools. These schools are independent in many ways. In terms of curriculum, they may choose to follow the official curriculum framework of Hong Kong or other curriculum framework, such as the International Baccalaureate Program, or other international curriculums. In terms of financial arrangement, students of these schools are required to pay expensive school fees though some of these schools may receive some kind of funding from the government.

In preparation for the above 2010 assessment change, the curriculum framework was reorganized in 2002 into eight Key Learning Areas for students in junior secondary schools. These eight areas comprised Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, Technology, Science, Personal Social and Humanities, Physical Education and Arts Education (EDB, 2013). According to the *Arts Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2002), Music, Visual Arts, Media Arts, and Drama are subjects within the Arts Education Key Learning Area.

Confucian thinking has been the most influential value system in Chinese society of Hong Kong, though people may hold it even in conjunction with their other religious beliefs (Lau, Lee, Wan, & Wong, 1991). Children raised with Confucian values are both aware of the expectations of their parents and teachers, tend to focus on achievement and to develop learning self-reliance when subjected to competitive pressure (Morris, 1996). Although many educators advocate a child-centered approach to curriculum design, in Hong Kong, the pressure of academic examination achievement remains undiminished (Morris, 1996). For example, Hong Kong music teachers seeking to impart practical music skills and musical knowledge within a compressed curriculum most commonly employ an achievement-oriented teacher-centered approach (Wong, 2002).

Music curriculum in Hong Kong secondary schools

The *Music Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2003) listed the expected learning objectives and expected students to “develop skills, knowledge and positive attitudes through integrated music activities [i.e. listening, performing, and composing] by means of effective learning and teaching and assessment” (CDC, 2003, p. 11). There is also a list of assessment modes to be used for assessing students. Teachers are expected to “assess students’ performance in creating, performing (singing and instrumental playing) and listening” (CDC, 2003, p. 75), employing diversified modes of assessment. These assessment modes include classroom performance, worksheets, practical test, listening test, concert report, project learning, self and

peer assessment, music activities record and portfolio (CDC, 2003, pp. 77–78). Similar to other subjects, secondary school music teachers are required to report students' achievement half-yearly.

Definitions of assessment modes in Hong Kong

The *Music Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2003) defines the function of various assessment modes according to the context of schools in Hong Kong. "Classroom performance" is to be used for observing "students' classroom performance continuously" and assessing students' development in "music knowledge and skills" as well as "values and attitudes" (p. 77); "Worksheet" is to be used for assessing students' abilities in "music knowledge and skills" (p. 77); "Practical test" is to be used for assessing students' abilities in "singing, instrumental playing and music reading through performing" (p. 77); "Listening test" is to be used for assessing students' listening abilities, and "application of music knowledge, analysis and appreciation" (p. 77); "Concert report" is to be used for students to "report their comments after attending concerts" (p. 77); "Project learning" is to be used for checking "students' understanding about the topic of the project" (p. 77); "Self and Peer assessment" is to be used for students to "assess their own or others' music creative works or performance" (p. 78); "Music activities record" is for recording "students' participation and achievements in music activities in school and outside school" and count it as part of their performance in music when assigning grades (p. 78); "Portfolio" is to be used for recording and collecting "students' music creative works continuously" and assessing "students' learning progress" and "learning achievements" (p. 78).

These assessment modes can be classified into three categories: achievement-oriented assessments, extramusical assessments and alternative assessments. "Worksheet," "practical test" and "listening test" can be categorized as achievement-oriented assessments because these assessment modes are used for assessing students' attainments in music knowledge, practical skills in performing and music listening. "Classroom performance," "concert report," and "music activities record" can be categorized as extramusical assessments which emphasize on students' participation in music lessons, attitude toward music and attendance in music activities held inside and outside school. "Project learning," "self assessment," "peer assessment," and "portfolio" can be categorized as alternative assessments which provide opportunities for teachers to understand students' learning process and collect feedback from students about their learning needs.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to address the question: "After a decade of implementing AfL, what are the assessment practices of secondary music teachers?"

To address this question, secondary music teachers' self-reported assessment practice are examined in terms of what these reports reflect of (a) their teaching experience and training and (b) their perception of assessment modes.

Methodology

Samples and data collection

In the academic year 2008–2009, there were altogether 527 secondary schools in Hong Kong, of which 403 secondary schools were "government" or "aided" schools. The target population for this study was music teachers in these "government" and "aided" schools. The rationale of

targeting music teachers in “government” and “aided” schools is that for these schools it is mandatory that they follow the official curriculum framework of Hong Kong, including the implementation of Afl.

Adopting a random sampling approach, the study-population comprised 120 schools – approximately 30% of the target population were selected randomly. In Hong Kong, it is very common for a secondary school to employ only one full-time music teacher. Based on this assumption, a questionnaire together with an invitation letter and the abstract of the present study were sent randomly to each of these 120 secondary schools in Hong Kong in October 2008.

Music teachers were invited to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return their questionnaires with prepaid and self-addressed envelope. Follow-up telephone contacts proved necessary to persuade music teachers to complete the questionnaires. All data was collected by January 2009. A hundred questionnaires were received – giving an initial response rate of 83.3%, of which 97 were completed questionnaires, and 3 questionnaires were incomplete. Of the 20 schools that did not respond, three schools cited teacher-refusal, four schools’ teachers could not be contacted due to illness or resignation; three schools did not offer any music program. No response was obtained from music teachers of the remaining 10 schools.

Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part I solicits teachers’ teaching experience and training. Part II solicits teachers’ self-reported practices of using assessment modes. Part III solicits teachers’ perceived suitability and perceived difficulty of implementing assessment modes in music instruction. The assessment modes listed on the questionnaire were based on the recommendation of the *Music Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2003). All items in the questionnaire were constructed by the author.

Piloting the questionnaire employed a convenience sample of 10 secondary school music teachers. These 10 teachers were not selected to respond to the actual study. Each of these 10 teachers was asked to fill out the questionnaire twice at an interval of 2 weeks. These teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaires, give advice on the design and content of the questionnaire.

Validity and reliability

As the questionnaire instrument was constructed by the author of this study, the procedures for ensuring its content validity were completed during the pilot study. The author solicited advice from each of the 10 teachers who participated in the pilot study. They provided valuable advice on the design, content and relevance of the pilot questionnaire. The questionnaire was revised according to the advice of the respondents of the pilot study. Due to the nature of this study, and the design of the questionnaire comprising categorical data with expected frequencies of less than five in each cell of a 2-by-2 table, presentation of statistical reliability is not applicable to this questionnaire.

Data analysis

Survey data were entered into SPSS version 16. Descriptive statistics reported teachers’ teaching experience, training and their self-reported assessment practices. Fisher Exact Test was used to display the effect of teachers’ perception of assessment modes, as well as their experience and training on their

self-reported assessment practices. Employing the Fisher Exact Test instead of chi-square test reflected both the small sample size and the expected frequency of the less than five in each cell of a 2-by-2 table of data. The dependent and independent variables of this study are listed below.

The dependent variable is:

- (1) Teachers' self-reported practice of a certain assessment mode

The independent variables are:

- (1) Teachers' length of teaching experience
- (2) Teachers' training in music education
- (3) Teachers' perceived suitability of assessment modes for assessing students
- (4) Teachers' perceived difficulty of using assessment modes

Limitations

The following limitations are to be noted.

1. The population size of secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong is small. The sample size of respondents ($n = 97$) represents music teachers in 24% of government-funded secondary schools in Hong Kong. The choice of statistical applications available for this study is limited by the small sample size.
2. The respondents of this study were limited to teachers of government-funded secondary school music teachers only.
3. Given the absence of suitable established instruments, the researcher constructed the instrument for this study. Content validity was achieved by piloting the instrument with 10 music teachers other than the research respondents.
4. There is no statistical information available on the reliability of the research questionnaire, as its design does not involve a scale and yields categorical data with expected frequency of less than five in each cell of a 2-by-2 table.
5. This study is limited to the investigation on teachers' self-reported assessment practice. Their actual assessment practice is beyond the scope of this study. Teachers' self-reported assessment practice is limited to the investigation of whether they had ever used a particular assessment mode in their classroom music instruction instead of the frequency of how often they use it.

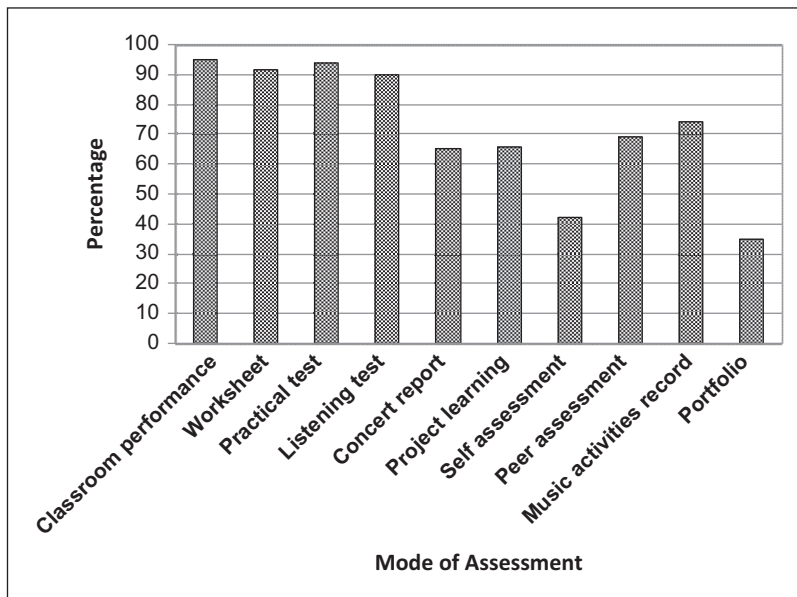
Results

Table 1 reports the range of teaching experience and training of these respondents. Among those 97 respondents, 25.8% were novice music teachers with 5 years' teaching experience or less; 74.2% of them were experienced music teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience. The majority of teachers, 96.9%, were trained in music education. Most of them, 87.6%, had education in music as a major discipline. Some of them, 9.3%, had no music education but had musical training. A few, 3.1%, studied music as major discipline but did not have training in music education at the time of data collection.

Figure 1 reports the descriptive statistics of the respondents' self-reported practices of using assessment modes in their classroom music instruction. The most common reported assessment modes were

Table 1. Teachers' teaching experience and training ($n = 97$).

Characteristics	Number of teachers (n)	%
Teaching experience		
1–5 years	25	25.8
more than 5 years	72	74.2
Training		
Teachers with (1) education in music as major discipline, and (2) training in music education	85	87.6
Teachers with (1) education in subjects other music, and (2) training in music education	9	9.3
Teachers with (1) education in music as major discipline, and (2) without training in music education	3	3.1

**Figure 1.** Teachers' self-reported assessment practice ($n = 97$).

“Classroom performance” (94.8%) and “Practical test” (93.8%). In contrast, the least reported were “Portfolio” (35.1%) and “Self assessment” (42.3%). These results support Kotora (2005).

Figure 2 and Figure 3 report the descriptive statistics of respondents' perception of assessment modes. Figure 2 shows that the large majority of teachers perceived “Classroom performance” (94.84%), “Worksheet” (92.78%), “Listening test” (92.78%), and “Practical test” (91.75%) as the top four assessment modes suitable for assessing students' performance in music. “Portfolio” (43.29%) was the assessment mode that most teachers perceived as unsuitable for assessing

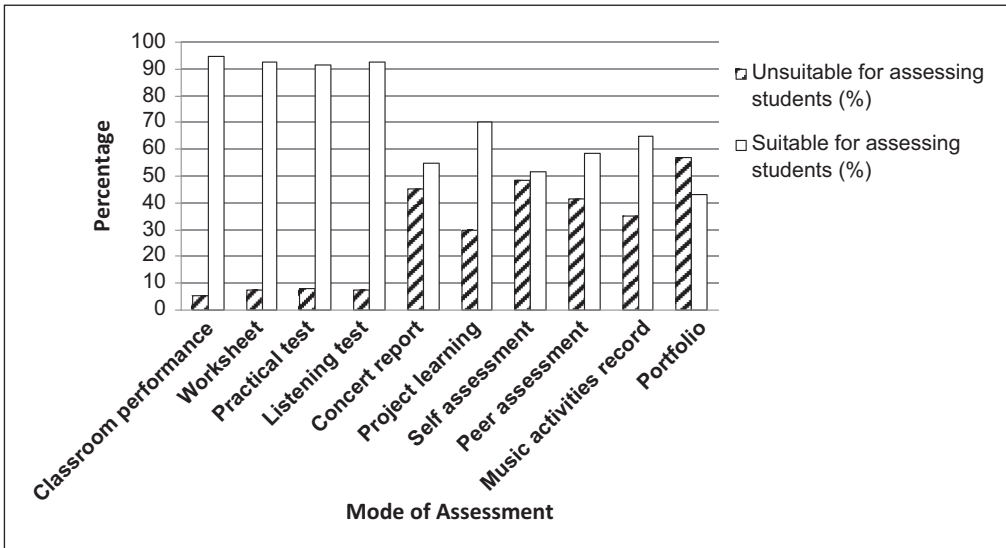


Figure 2. Teachers' perceived suitability of assessment modes (n = 97).

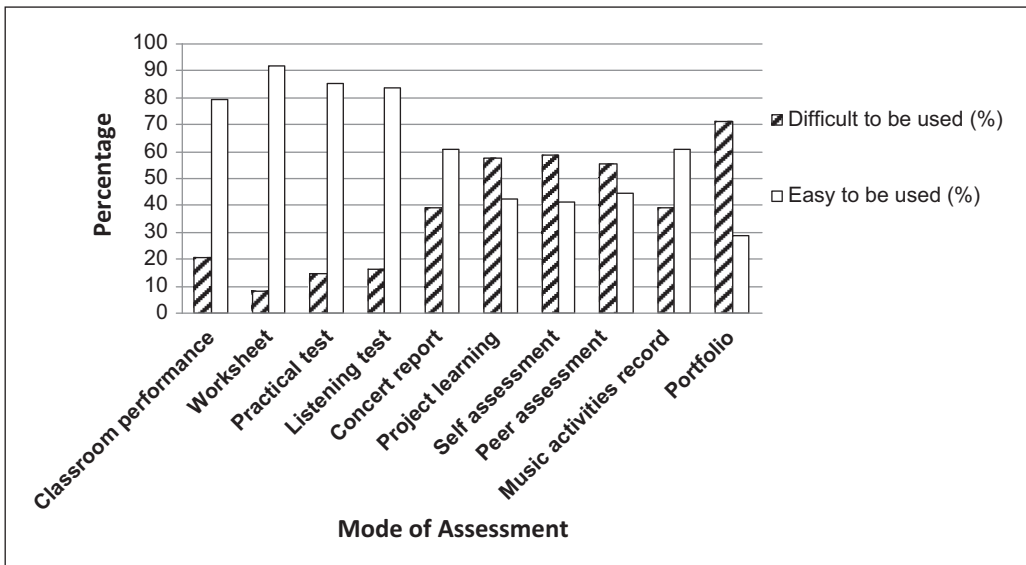


Figure 3. Teachers' perceived difficulty of assessment modes (n = 97).

students' performance in music. Figure 3 shows that the large majority of teachers perceived "worksheet" (91.75%) and "practical test" (85.56%) as easy to be practiced. They perceived alternative assessment modes, such as "portfolio" (71.13%), "project learning" (57.73%), "self assessment" (58.76%), and "peer assessment" (55.67%) as difficult to be used.

Table 2 reports the relationship between respondents' reported practice of assessment and their training and teaching experience. To calculate these relationships, the Fisher Exact Test was used with a significant value, $p < 0.05$.

A significant relationship was found between teachers' training in music education and their reported practice of a "listening test," but no significant relationship between teachers' training in music education and their reported practice of other assessment modes. Teachers with training in music education are more likely to practice a "listening test" than those who do not have training in music education.

A significant relationship is found between teachers' teaching experience and their reported practice of "peer assessment," while no significant relationship is found between teachers' experience and their reported practice of other assessment modes. Teachers with teaching experience more than 5 years are more likely to practice "peer assessment" than those who have 5 years or less experience in teaching.

Table 3 reports the relationships between respondents' reported practice of assessment and their perception of the assessment modes. A significant relationship is found between teachers' perceived suitability and their reported practice of nine assessment modes, including "classroom performance," "worksheet," "listening test," "concert report," "project learning," "self-assessment," "peer assessment," "music activities record," and "portfolio". This significant relationship suggests that teachers who perceived these assessment modes as suitable for assessing their students are more likely to practice these assessment modes.

There is no significant relationship found between teachers' reported practice of "practical test" and their perceived suitability of this assessment mode, indicating that respondents reported this practice whether they perceive it as suitable for assessing their students or not.

A significant relationship is found between teachers' perceived difficulty of six assessment modes and their reported practice of these assessment modes, including "practical test," "project learning," "self-assessment," "peer assessment," "music activities record," and "portfolio." This significant relationship, put simply, indicates that teachers who perceive these assessment modes as easy to be used are more likely to practice these assessment modes than those who perceive these assessment modes as difficult to be used.

There is no significant relationship found between teachers' reported practice and their perceived difficulty of "classroom performance," "worksheet," "listening test," and "concert report." Teachers appear to report practicing these assessment modes regardless of their perceived difficulty.

Discussion

The majority of the teacher respondents are experienced and trained in music education. Their self-reported assessment practice embraces all 10 assessment modes stipulated by the *Music Curriculum Guide*. The phenomenon of teachers' assessment practice and their perception of assessment practice are found to differ across various categories of assessments.

Achievement-oriented assessments

The descriptive statistics of respondents' perception of assessment modes ranked highest three achievement-oriented assessments – "worksheet," "listening test," and "practical test." "Worksheet" and "listening test" are ranked jointly as the most suitable assessment modes, while "practical test" is ranked a close third. These findings differ from McClung (1997) who found that "performance test," which is similar to "practical test" in the Hong Kong context, is the only achievement-oriented assessment to be perceived as the most suitable assessment for assessing students' choral performance.

Table 2. Relationship between teachers' self-reported practice and their training and teaching experience ($n = 97$).

	Teachers' training in music education #			Teachers' teaching experience #		
	No	Yes	p (Fisher Exact Test)	5 years or less	More than 5 years	p (Fisher Exact Test)
Classroom performance						
Does not use	1	4	0.148	2	3	0.601
Use	2	90		23	69	
Worksheet						
Does not use	1	7	0.23	2	6	1.00
Use	2	87		23	66	
Practical test						
Does not use	0	6	1.00	3	3	0.176
Use	3	88		22	69	
Listening test						
Does not use	2	8	0.027*	5	5	0.119
Use	1	86		20	67	
Concert report						
Does not use	2	32	0.28	9	25	1.00
Use	1	62		16	47	
Project learning						
Does not use	1	32	1.00	12	21	0.14
Use	2	62		13	51	
Self assessment						
Does not use	2	54	1.00	16	40	0.492
Use	1	40		9	32	
Peer assessment						
Does not use	1	29	1.00	14	16	0.003*
Use	2	65		11	56	
Music activities record						
Does not use	1	24	1.00	8	17	0.434
Use	2	70		17	55	
Portfolio						
Does not use	2	61	1.00	18	45	0.471
Use	1	33		7	27	

* $p < 0.05$; # Results are reported as number of respondents.

This phenomenon may be explained by the traditional achievement-oriented value of Chinese culture where teachers usually put emphasis on students' achievement in addition to the pressure of competing between schools and between individual prevails in Hong Kong society (Morris, 1996). Secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong may be more familiar with traditional achievement-oriented assessments that they were brought up with and tend to perceive these assessments as more familiar as well as more suitable for assessing their students when compared with their counterparts in Western societies.

Table 3. Relationship between teachers' self-reported practice and their perception of assessment modes ($n = 97$).

	Perceived suitability#			Perceived degree of difficulty#		
	Unsuitable	Suitable	p (Fisher Exact Test)	Difficult	Easy	p (Fisher Exact Test)
Classroom performance						
Does not use	3	2	0.001*	3	2	0.058
Use	2	90		17	75	
Worksheet						
Does not use	3	5	0.011*	1	7	0.511
Use	4	85		7	82	
Practical test						
Does not use	2	4	0.076	3	3	0.037*
Use	6	85		11	80	
Listening test						
Does not use	4	6	0.002*	3	7	0.361
Use	3	84		13	74	
Concert report						
Does not use	23	11	0.001*	18	16	0.051
Use	21	42		20	43	
Project learning						
Does not use	18	15	0.000*	29	4	0.000*
Use	11	53		27	37	
Self assessment						
Does not use	38	18	0.000*	39	17	0.013*
Use	9	32		18	23	
Peer assessment						
Does not use	19	11	0.004*	26	4	0.000*
Use	21	46		28	39	
Music activities record						
Does not use	19	6	0.000*	16	9	0.004*
Use	15	57		22	50	
Portfolio						
Does not use	50	13	0.000*	56	7	0.000*
Use	5	29		13	21	

* $p < 0.05$; # Results are reported as number of respondents.

There is significant relationship between teachers' self-reported practice and their perceived suitability of almost all assessments modes, except "practical test." However, there is significant relationship between teachers' self-reported practice and their perceived difficulty of "practical test." Teachers had reported practice of "practical test" also perceived it as easy to be used for assessing students. As "practical test" is traditionally and commonly used by Hong Kong school music teachers, they perceive it as easy to be used and practice it no matter whether they perceive it as suitable or not.

As the implementation of "listening test" may require teachers' expertise in music education, this may explain the significant relationship found between teachers' reported practice of "listening test" and their training in music education rather than any of the other assessment modes, and

perhaps demonstrates that teachers with training in music education are more likely to implement “listening test” than those untrained teachers. According to findings of McCoy (1991), band directors with 5 or more years of teaching experience tend to emphasize more on assessing students’ achievement in music performance than did those band directors with lesser experience. Extending beyond the notion of McCoy (1991) that teachers’ experience is related to their assessment practice, this present finding specifically reveals that teachers’ practice of “listening test” is related to their training in music education.

The phenomenon of having no significant relationship being found between achievement-oriented assessment modes with high rate of teachers’ self-reported practice and their perceived difficulty of these assessment modes suggests that teachers may practice assessment modes such as “worksheet,” and “listening test” regardless of their perceived difficulty of these assessment modes.

Extramusical assessments

McClung’s (1997) findings, that teachers emphasize such extramusical assessments as “participation,” “attitude,” and “attendance,” are supported here by these respondents who then would add that their most suitable classroom assessment was “classroom performance.” Extending beyond McClung’s (1997) findings, a significant relationship is reported here between teachers’ self-reported practice and their perceived difficulty of “music activities record.” This statistical relationship perhaps indicates that teachers who had reported practice of “music activities record” perceived it as easy.

Of interest are the other extramusical assessment modes which show no significant relationship between practice and perceived difficulty, yet a significant relationship between practice and perceived suitability. Such a combination implies that teachers may practice assessment modes, such as “classroom performance” and “concert report,” when they are perceived as suitable for assessing their students, rather than being swayed by the perceived difficulty of implementing such assessment modes. Such an interpretation gives credit to teachers’ willingness to prioritize their students’ needs.

Alternative assessments

Similar to Kotora’s (2005) findings that music teachers seldom employ “portfolio” to assess their students’ learning progress, and McClung’s (1997) findings that “portfolio” is perceived as unsuitable for assessing students, respondents of this study ranked lowest their practice of alternative assessments such as “portfolio” and “self assessment,” and further perceived such alternative assessments as “portfolio,” “self-assessment,” “project learning,” and “peer assessment” as the most difficult assessment modes to use.

In the context of McClung’s (1997) study, “portfolio” was used to assess the learning progress of the performance of his choral students. In the context of Hong Kong music curriculum, “portfolio” refers to recording and collecting “students’ music creative works continuously” and assessing “students’ learning progress” and “learning achievements” (CDC, 2003, p. 78). Although the contexts of both studies are different, “portfolio” is perceived as unsuitable by music teachers in Hong Kong, similar to their counterparts in Western societies.

Instead of finding a positive relationship between teachers’ experience and their assessment practice in students’ music performance as in McCoy’s (1991) study, the present findings shows that positive relationship is found between experienced teachers and their reported practice of

“peer assessment” rather than other assessment modes. Experienced teachers are more likely to practice “peer assessment” than novice teachers.

Conclusion

The results of this study illustrated that the secondary school music teachers of this study favored the practice of achievement-oriented assessments and reflect the emphasis on students’ achievement in Chinese societies. These respondents practice achievement-oriented assessments regardless of the perceived difficulty of these assessments and tend to perceive achievement-oriented assessments as more suitable for assessing students than other categories of assessments. In contrast, and just like their counterparts in the Western societies, teachers in this study also emphasize extramusical assessments. They perceive some extramusical assessments as suitable for assessing their students and may practice this category of assessments regardless of the perceived difficulty of using these assessment modes. On the whole, alternative assessments were least reported by respondents suggesting that they do not practice alternative assessments, and they are likely to perceive these assessments as difficult.

Suggestions for future research

1. The statistical data of this study demonstrated the existence of relationship between teachers’ perception of implementing “Assessment for Learning” and their self-reported assessment practices. However, the underlying reasons that contribute to such relationships call for further investigation.
2. It is possible that teachers in primary schools may not have the same responses to a similar survey, and further studies would be needed to address the primary/elementary music teachers’ assessment practices and perception of assessment.
3. The assessment practice reported in this study relies on teachers’ self-reported information. As respondents’ actual assessment practice in music classrooms was not investigated this may justify a contrastive study.
4. This study only investigated teachers’ perceptions. To complete the teaching/learning paradigm it may be helpful to investigate students’ perception of music assessment both inside and outside schools.

Funding

The author wishes to acknowledge the generous support of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Baptist University for funding this project.

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