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**Middle School Administrator and Instrumental Music Teacher Perceptions of the
Danielson Framework for Teaching Observation Tool**

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the Faculty of the School of Music
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Doctor of Music Education

by

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Abstract

Despite continuous efforts to develop teacher observation and evaluation frameworks, one-size-fits-all evaluation tools may not be adequate for an instrumental music classroom. Since implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (*ESSA*) in 2015, teacher evaluation has shifted from a high-stakes accountability model to models focused on feedback and professional growth. One popular model is the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT), which is utilized across all disciplines, including music. The current study proposes to fill a gap in the literature regarding the utility of the FFT to contribute to teachers' professional growth. This transcendental phenomenological study examines the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators on the effectiveness of the FFT as an evaluation tool for instrumental music. Open-ended survey questions were distributed to volunteer middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators, and semi-structured interviews were conducted following the survey. The discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Administrator participants indicated the biggest challenge is a lack of knowledge of the content and what is considered effective planning and preparation for instrumental music classes. Teacher participants expressed frustration over applying the framework to a single class observation, which does not fully document the comprehensive nature of the instrumental music class. The results offer discussion points for further research on music evaluation policy content-specific tool development. Additionally, results contribute to a body of evidence for developing alternative theories for instrumental teacher evaluation and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for music teacher evaluation.

Keywords: teacher evaluation, teacher observation, music teacher evaluation, Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT), music education, assessment

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Chapter One: Introduction

Since implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (*ESSA*) in 2015, teacher evaluation in the United States has shifted from a high-stakes accountability model to models focused on feedback and professional growth. One popular model implemented in the United States is the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT). Existing literature fails to support the contribution FFT has had on teacher improvement and efficacy in the instrumental music classroom. This study investigates the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators on the effectiveness of the FFT as an evaluation tool for feedback, professional development, and accountability.

Background

Historically, federal and state policies guide the teacher evaluation systems that are adopted by school systems in the United States. According to Shaw, changing educational philosophies determine the “purpose, method, form, and stakes attached to evaluations.”¹ In the early 2000s, the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation emphasized accountability and standardized tests, often putting teachers in the position of potential firing based on student underachievement.² The unpopular NCLB legislation was replaced by *Race to the Top* (R2T) in 2011, tying student achievement and performance on standardized tests to teacher performance. During this era, school systems implemented models of high-stakes teacher evaluation systems. Dudek et al. remark, “In response to increasing calls for accountability, teacher evaluation outcomes are linked to key human capital decisions such as tenure, termination, promotions, and

¹ Ryan Shaw, “Arts Teacher Evaluation: How Did We Get Here?” *Arts Education Policy Review* 117, no. 1 (2016): 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2014.992083>.

² Cara Bernard and Joseph Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music: A Guide for Music Teachers in the U.S.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019).

incentivized pay structures. Teachers' classroom observations play an important role in these accountability processes and evaluation systems."³

This widespread disapproval of *R2T* led to its replacement by the most recent *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015. With *ESSA*, states can determine the teacher evaluation tool, emphasizing teacher growth and student achievement and less on standardized test scores. As a result of this direction, most states adopt the following four strategies: formal and informal observations, rubrics to measure instruction, feedback provided to teachers by evaluators, and goal setting for student achievement.⁴ Authors Bernard and Abramo point out, "These evaluation systems make direct connections between policy and pedagogy, providing a basis for student engagement, giving teachers feedback on their instruction, and allowing space for teacher improvement."⁵

In response to *ESSA*, most school systems adopted an existing evaluation framework, like the Danielson FFT or the Marzano Evaluation Model. Nielson summarizes the purpose of these frameworks, stating, "Both the Danielson and Marzano models have a similar purpose—to improve student learning by developing teachers' expertise in the classroom."⁶ The Danielson FFT, in addition to other popular models of teacher observation tools utilized in the United States, is built upon traditional classroom models of instruction. Initially introduced in 1996, the FFT changed in 2007 and 2011, leading to the most recent edition in 2013. The 2013 model

³ Christopher M. Dudek, Linda A. Reddy, and Ryan J. Kettler, "One Size Does Not Fit All: A Concurrent Analysis of the Framework for Teaching and the Classroom Strategies Assessment System," *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, February 24, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-023-09405-6>.

⁴ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 15-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶ Lance D. Nielsen, "Teacher Evaluation: Archiving Teaching Effectiveness," *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 1 (September 2014): 64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432114536736>.

reflects the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) instructional implications, emphasizing deep engagement and active learning.⁷ In 2023, no CCSS written for music classrooms existed. In 2007, a revised FFT edition released frameworks for specialists, nurses, counselors, media specialists, and instructional coaches.⁸ However, a specialty rubric for music does not exist. The most updated version of the framework was in 2022, which changed some of the language in the domains and standards.⁹ This research will employ the terminology of the 2022 FFT updates.

The Framework for Teaching strives to establish a common language for teachers and observers to drive professional learning and teacher growth.¹⁰ The Danielson FFT is a rubric-based framework comprised of four domains designed to provide feedback to teachers of all levels of experience. There are 22 components across the four domains and 76 elements associated with the domains. Ratings assigned to the teacher include unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, or distinguished for each component.¹¹ The observation process usually contains three parts: a pre-observation conversation, formal in-class observation, and a post-conference with the observer to review the feedback. In the post-conference, the observer utilizes the language in the FFT rubric to rate the teacher and identify the growth areas for the teacher's personal and professional development.

When a school system selects a singular observation framework, it applies across grade

⁷ Charlotte Danielson, *The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument 2013 Edition*. (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2014), 2.

⁸ Charlotte Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2007), 109.

⁹ "The Framework for Teaching," The Danielson Group, <https://danielsongroup.org/the-framework-for-teaching/>.

¹⁰ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 6.

¹¹ The Danielson Group, "The Framework for Teaching."

levels, disciplines, and classroom types. FFT creator Charlotte Danielson maintains that “Although those different contexts imply very different decisions by teachers about what they do every day, the framework for teaching captures those aspects of teaching that are common across contexts.”¹² Contrary to Danielson’s assertions, Maranzano concludes that the “one size fits all” approach does not meet the needs of performing arts teachers and that “new and more inclusive models for performance documentation, emphasizing multiple sources of data, collaboration with administrators, self-evaluation, self-reflection, and measurements over broader periods of time may prove extremely beneficial for music teachers and educational administrators.”¹³

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is transcendental phenomenology.

Phenomenology is a philosophy credited to Edmund Husserl. He theorizes that transcendental phenomenology’s sole task and service “is to clarify the meaning of this world, the precise sense in which everyone accepts it, and with undeniable right, as really existing”.¹⁴ Martin Heidegger contributed to phenomenology by adding to the argument that it is how being is understood by raising questions about the meaning of being.¹⁵ In summary, “While Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology takes aim at the correlation between mind and world, Heidegger’s phenomenology adds the perspective of the phenomenon of being.”¹⁶ Phenomenologists use the

¹² Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 22.

¹³ Charles Maranzano, “Music Teacher Performance Evaluation: A Call for More Inclusive Models,” *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 14, no. 3 (September 2000): 272.

¹⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), xlii, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵ Henrik Gert Larsen and Philip Adu, *The Theoretical Framework in Phenomenological Research: Development and Application*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

word intentionality to indicate how a person meaningfully connects to the world.¹⁷ The present study applied transcendental phenomenology to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions surrounding the teacher observation process and Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

Phenomenological Reduction

In transcendental phenomenological research, the researcher applied the principles of epoché and bracketing to conduct unbiased research relative to participants' lived experiences. “In a direct translation, the epoché could be understood as suspending judgment or withholding judgment.”¹⁸ The researcher removed internal bias and preconceived notions surrounding teacher observation to conduct research, withholding judgment through bracketing. Bracketing is defined as “a way to practice the phenomenological reduction or epoché—and is the term used more often than the reduction or epoché in phenomenological methodologies.”¹⁹ Bracketing was necessary due to the researcher's experience as a music teacher and an administrator who conducts teacher observations.

Cognitive Theory

The framework for this study is based on the social cognitive theory and self-efficacy by Albert Bandura. He popularized the cognitive theory of self-efficacy in the 1970s, but the theory is applied frequently to research in education. Bandura's theory posits that humans are “agents of

¹⁷ Mark D. Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2018), 28. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315173474>

¹⁸ Larsen and Adu, *Theoretical Framework*, 60.

¹⁹ Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research*, 14.

experiences rather than simply undergoers of experiences.”²⁰ Four core features of human agency include intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness.²¹

Forethought is when human agents motivate themselves based on value, direction, and meaning.²² Bandura states, “In regulating their behavior by outcome expectations, people adopt courses of action that are likely to produce positive outcomes and generally discard those that bring unrewarding or punishing outcomes.”²³ Applying this theory to teacher evaluation supplicates whether teacher actions in the classroom indicate their pedagogical motivations or the incentive to avoid punishing outcomes in the evaluative process.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their success.²⁴ Bandura theorizes, "Higher levels of perceived self-efficacy are accompanied by higher performance attainments."²⁵ Feedback and ratings as a result of the evaluation process contribute to a teacher's feelings of self-efficacy. Feedback quality and self-efficacy (or lack thereof) can influence a teacher's motivations to set and commit to goals.²⁶ Teacher evaluation is a social interaction involving giving and receiving feedback. Through this interaction, a teacher is processing feedback from a given task based on that task (the observation). “Consequently, an individual’s behavior is influenced as a result of this process, which can alter their personal feelings. These perceived feelings guide future

²⁰ Alfred Bandura, “Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no.1 (2001), 4.

²¹ Bandura, “Social Cognitive Theory,” 7-10.

²² *Ibid.*, 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴ Ralf Schwarzer, *Self-Efficacy: Thought Control of Action*, 1st ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

endeavors involving specific tasks and dictate levels of interest, effort, fear, and motivation.”²⁷

The current study investigating the perceptions of the Danielson FFT in instrumental music is lensed through the concept of self-efficacy as a result of confidence in an evaluation tool.

Conceptual Framework

The Danielson FFT explores the following four domains: Domain 1: Planning and Preparation, Domain 2: The Classroom Environment, Domain 3: Instruction, and Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. Twenty-two components within the four domains contain rubric descriptions to rate a teacher as unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished.²⁸ Further, the framework divides the 22 components into additional elements. 76 elements exist between the 22 components in the four domains (see Appendix A).

The process for utilizing the Danielson FFT begins with a pre-conference led by the observer. The pre-conference allows the observer to gather information about the planned lesson, such as objectives, assessments, student learning outcomes, accommodations and modifications, and lesson design. The observer who completed the pre-conference then observes a complete class period. After the lesson, the observer utilizes the FFT rubric to score teachers and provide comments for each domain. The observer schedules a post-conference to review the report with the teacher and make suggestions for professional development and growth. The district files the teacher's observation report as a part of their evaluation and performance record.

²⁷ Eric C. Smith et al., “Teacher Evaluation Feedback and Instructional Practice Self-Efficacy in Secondary School Teachers,” *Educational Administration Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (October 2020): 680.

²⁸ The Danielson Group, “The Framework for Teaching.”

Statement of the Problem

A lack of research exists on the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT when applied to specific content areas, and virtually no research in music. However, the FFT is a widely adopted tool for music teacher evaluation. These evaluations provide a rating to teachers (unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, distinguished) based on the information captured in one observation event. Additionally, the tool is supposed to provide a teacher with significant feedback for professional development. Music is a content area with specific pedagogical approaches to instruction that differ from other subject areas. Because evaluation tools aim to provide accurate ratings of teacher performance and promote professional growth, the profession must conduct additional research on the effectiveness of the FFT to fill the gap in the existing research literature. This research aimed to provide qualitative evidence for the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the Danielson FFT in the content area of instrumental music and promote further discussion and analysis of the teacher evaluation process.

Statement of the Purpose

The study examined the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and middle school administrators on the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as an evaluation tool for instrumental music through a phenomenological study design.²⁹ Open-ended survey questions were distributed to volunteer middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators, and semi-structured interviews were conducted following the survey. The survey elicited narrative responses to understand the participants' feelings and perceptions on using the Danielson FFT. Central to this study are Maryland teachers currently contracted as middle school instrumental

²⁹ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2018), 13.

music teachers observed employing the Danielson FFT. Administrators include Maryland middle school principals or assistant principals responsible for classroom teacher observations. Findings are reported in a qualitative analysis and provide recommendations for further research surrounding the limitations of the FFT. Additionally, results add to a body of research-based evidence that teachers, arts administrators, and educational policy critics can use to advocate for an arts-specific observation tool that may improve the quality of the teacher observation process in music.

Significance of the Study

A gap in the literature exists regarding the perceptions of popular teaching frameworks as they apply to instrumental music teachers' professional development and feelings of success. Current research proposes considerable challenges for evaluating music teachers on a practical evaluation framework and offers suggestions on how teachers can manipulate their instruction to meet the framework constraints. Further research is needed to improve professional practice in music teacher evaluation. This study focused on middle school instrumental music teachers, who have a crucial role in bridging the gap between beginning elementary music programs and student continuation into high school ensembles. This study provides additional qualitative evidence for developing an evaluation model that meets the needs of instrumental teachers seeking feedback that addresses their professional development and growth needs. Comparing multiple perspectives from the evaluator (administrator) and subject (teacher) of observations will give narrative evidence to support the need for collaborative conversations regarding music teacher evaluation models, increasing teacher job satisfaction, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Research Questions

Teacher evaluation frameworks and policies apply to highly tested subject areas and generally do not provide specific structures for the arts. The Danielson FFT provides a comprehensive model for teacher evaluation primarily based on core content classroom teaching like math and English. Teacher evaluation aims to provide teachers with formative and summative feedback and improve teacher development and student achievement.³⁰ In that case, it is essential to investigate if the Danielson FFT meets instrumental music educators' needs. As an exploration of these ideas, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

Research Question One: How do middle school music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

Research Question Two: What are the key challenges and limitations of using the Danielson Framework to evaluate music teacher performance as perceived by middle school music teachers and administrators?

Research Question Three: What recommendations do middle school music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

Research question three addresses the need for future research based on the findings of the current research project as an addition to the literature base on music teaching evaluation. Participant responses and conclusions drive questions for policymakers, administrators, and educational systems to collaborate on a more content-specific evaluation system for instrumental music.

³⁰ Charlotte Danielson and Thomas McGreal, *Teacher Evaluation to Enhance Professional Practice*, (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2000), 8.

Definition of Terms

Accommodations- modifications or adjustments made to the learning environment, teaching methods, materials, or assessments to accommodate the individualized needs of students.³¹

Administrator- a school principal or assistant principal who acts as a teacher supervisor.

Assessment- the process of collecting data regarding student learning and achievement.³²

Basic- fundamental level of performance; slightly above unsatisfactory performance.³³

CCSS- abbreviation for Common Core State Standards.

Danielson Framework for Teaching- a commonly used framework for teacher evaluation created by Charlotte Danielson.³⁴

Distinguished- exemplary performance.³⁵

Domain- broad categories of teacher evaluation representing a distinct aspect of teaching within the Danielson Framework.³⁶ Domains include Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.³⁷

³¹ “Accommodations,” *National Center on Accessible Educational Materials*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://aem.cast.org/about/learning-tools-resources/definitions/accommodations.html>.

³² “Collect Data on Student Learning,” Drake Institute of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://drakeinstitute.osu.edu/instructor-support/assessment-plan-development/collect-data-student-learning>.

³³ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 39.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

Domain 1: Planning & Preparation- “describes how teachers organize instruction for student learning.”³⁸

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment- “conditions and qualities of environments that are conducive to learning and support student success.”³⁹

Domain 3: Instruction- “the engagement of students in learning experiences and reflect the primary mission of schools: enhancing student learning and growth.”⁴⁰

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities- “teachers demonstrate their commitment to high ethical and professional standards and seek to improve their practice.”⁴¹

ESSA- abbreviation for Every Student Succeeds Act federal legislation.

Evaluation Framework- a general term for teacher evaluation system (e.g., Marzano, Danielson, Stronge).

FFT- abbreviation for Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Formal Observation- an observation scored on a specific rubric used for teacher evaluation.

Learning Outcomes- skills or processes that students obtain through instruction and assessment.⁴²

NCLB- abbreviation for No Child Left Behind federal legislation.

³⁸ The Danielson Group, “The Framework for Teaching.”

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 92.

⁴² "Learning Outcomes," Center for Teaching Excellence, University of South Carolina, accessed April 15, 2024, https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/teaching_resources/course_design_development_delivery/learning_outcomes/index.php.

Objectives- main lesson idea based on a curricular standard.

Observation- the formal or informal viewing of a live teaching environment for assessment purposes.

Pedagogy- the art, occupation, or practice of teaching. Also: the theory or principles of education; a method of teaching based on such a theory.⁴³

Post-Conference- a follow-up meeting between the observer and teacher to discuss the outcome of the observation results.

Pre-Conference- a meeting between the observer and teacher before a formal or informal observation to discuss the content of the lesson plan.

Proficient- satisfactory performance.⁴⁴

Professional Development- activities designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and expertise of individuals in their respective fields, typically aimed at improving job performance, career advancement, and personal growth.⁴⁵

R2T- abbreviation for Race to the Top federal legislation.

Rubric- a scoring tool that identifies the criteria relevant to an assessment that states the possible levels of achievement in a specific, clear, and objective way.⁴⁶

Unsatisfactory- not satisfactory; poor performance.⁴⁷

⁴³ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "pedagogy," accessed February 25, 2023, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/139520?redirectedFrom=pedagogy#eid>

⁴⁴ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 40.

⁴⁵ "Professional Development," *Dictionary.com*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/professional-development>.

⁴⁶ "Rubric Best Practices: Examples & Templates," DELTA Faculty Commons, North Carolina State University, accessed April 15, 2024, https://teaching-resources.delta.ncsu.edu/rubric_best-practices-examples-templates/.

⁴⁷ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 39.

Delimitations

The researcher elected to keep the scope of the study limited to middle school instrumental teachers rather than utilizing a larger sample size of all middle school music teachers. Additionally, the researcher examined the perceptions of middle school administrators and did not include other central office or supervisory personnel. Keeping the scope limited to middle school was a choice made by the researcher to gather an appropriate amount of participants for a phenomenological study. According to Creswell and Creswell, phenomenology involves a range of 3-10 participants.⁴⁸ The study focused on feedback specific to the Danielson FFT which is a widely used commercial framework for teacher evaluation.

Summary

Understanding the perceived success and potential challenges of the Danielson FFT is essential for improving the quality and value of instrumental music teacher observations. The utility and design of teacher observation frameworks play a significant role in teacher satisfaction, professional growth, and retention. The Danielson FFT is not yet well-researched regarding its use to improve instrumental music instruction. Districts should evaluate instrumental music teachers using a tool that fits the scope of their classroom environment and provides them with timely, relevant, and meaningful feedback for professional growth. This phenomenological study offered qualitative input from both users of the tool (school administrators) and recipients (middle school instrumental music teachers). Participant responses contributed to a body of knowledge regarding developing new, music-specific observation tools or advocating and supporting the appropriate training for administrators using the tool in the music classroom.

⁴⁸ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 186.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of effective teacher evaluation in the middle school instrumental music classroom. Teachers and administrators connect the teacher evaluation process to teacher satisfaction and professional growth, but research has not adequately addressed specific methods for the instrumental music classroom. A practical evaluation process for the instrumental music teacher must be developed, tested, and adopted. This chapter presents the historical context of teacher evaluation in music, the theoretical framework, and summary.

Historical Context of Teacher Evaluation

Between 1900 and 1920, teacher observation transformed into a business productivity model based on proposed objective criteria to measure performance.¹ Supervisors and principals conducted teacher observations to improve teachers' skills and enhance teacher retention. Two rating scales for teacher evaluation first appeared in 1915. Critics of teacher rating systems deemed the scales highly subjective, saying, "Rating scales allowed individuals, most often administrators, to rate the presence, absence, or quality of traits that were deemed important for effective teaching (e.g., voice, grasp of subject matter, attention, and response of the class)..."² The conversation of teacher traits, influence on student achievement, teacher accountability, and growth continued to develop into contemporary models of teacher observation in the United States.

¹ Jodi Wood Jewell, "From Inspection, Supervision, and Observation to Value-Added Evaluation: A Brief History of U.S. Teacher Performance Evaluations," *Drake Law Review* 65, no. 2 (2017), 378.

² Alyson Leah Lavigne, and Thomas L. Good, *Teacher and Student Evaluation: Moving Beyond the Failure of School Reform*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 14.

In 1966, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare published a landmark report titled *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, which investigated educational achievement across various regions and demographic groups. The researchers assessed educational quality by “curriculum offered, school facilities such as textbooks; laboratories, and libraries, such academic practices as testing for aptitude and achievement, and the personal, social, and academic characteristics of the teachers and the student bodies in the schools.”³ The examination of the teacher variables in the report concluded four findings: teacher differences show a cumulative effect over the years in school, teacher differences show more relation to differences in educationally disadvantaged minority groups, teachers’ verbal skills have an impact first showing in grade six, and teachers’ educational background has an effect first showing in grade nine.⁴ This comprehensive report provided a foundation for future research into the factors influencing student achievement, including teacher-related factors.

Research on classroom observation models gained more popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. Before this time, education research suggested external factors such as student IQ, socioeconomic status of the student, funding allocated to the school, and student's family background influenced student achievement.⁵ In 1971, Rosenshine and Furst’s research on teacher performance criteria proposed 11 variables of teacher performance that impact student achievement. The 11 variables are: (1) clarity, (2) variability, (3) enthusiasm, (4) task-oriented and/or business-like behaviors, (5) student opportunity to learn criterion material, (6) use of student ideas and general indirectness, (7) criticism, (8) use of structuring comments, (9) types of

³ James S. Coleman et al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1966).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 318-319.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

questions, (10) probing, and (11) difficulty of instruction.⁶ Rosenshine continued to contribute to the body of research on teacher performance, emphasizing teacher qualities that correlated to student achievement. In their review of educational research in 1974, authors Heath and Nielson criticized Rosenshine and Furst's research and other current literature on performance-based teacher education. Their analysis resulted in three conclusions: 1) there is not enough empirical evidence to support a recommendation to change in teacher training, 2) the definitions of teaching and achievement are insubstantial, and 3) the effects of teaching on achievement are inconsequential compared to the research on external factors.⁷

The clinical model of supervision was a widely deployed method of teacher observation through the 1970s and 1980s. Marzano indicates, "Few models in the entire field of education- let alone in the specific domain of educational supervision- have been as widely deployed, as widely disparaged, or as widely misunderstood."⁸ Harvard professor Robert Goldhammer developed a five-phase process of supervision that introduced teacher and supervisor dialogue in his 1969 book *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers*.⁹ In phase one, the teacher and supervisor discussed the conceptual framework of the observation. Phase two is the classroom observation. Phase three is the supervisor's analysis of the observation and preparation for teacher discussion and reflection. Phase four is the conference, where the supervisor and teacher engage in a reflective dialogue. In the final phase, supervisors analyzed

⁶ Robert W. Heath and Mark A. Nielson, "The Research Basis for Performance-Based Teacher Education," *Review of Educational Research* 44, no. 4 (1974), 463. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1170103>.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 481.

⁸ Robert J. Marzano, Tony Frontier and David Livingston, *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching*, (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2011), 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

their practice of the observation process.¹⁰ Morris Corrigan, a Harvard colleague of Goldhammer and professor in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, authored a similar text in 1973 titled *Clinical Supervision*. Corrigan pointed out a potential flaw in the supervision model: “A supervisor’s personal model of teaching might impede his or her ability to provide effective feedback to the teachers.”¹¹ Goldhammer’s steps were intended to observe the holistic teaching practice, yet over time, the model was reduced to a set of steps to be followed.¹²

One of the critical models developed for teacher evaluation in the 1980s was based on Madeline Hunter’s seven-step model lesson. Teachers were observed and evaluated on their ability to utilize the model in their classroom teaching.¹³ The seven elements of the Hunter lesson plan model include anticipatory set, objective and purpose, input, modeling, checking for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice. According to Marzano, Hunter’s steps were the subject of pre-conference, observation, and post-conferences and reflected mastery teaching.¹⁴

Marzano and Toth offer that the 1980s marked the beginning of questioning teacher observation processes and set the stage for emphasis on teacher evaluation.¹⁵ In 1983, the United States National Commission on Excellence in Education published a report titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which initiated a national conversation on

¹⁰ Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston, *Effective Supervision*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ Robert J. Marzano and Michael D. Toth, *Teacher Evaluation That Makes a Difference: A New Model for Teacher Growth and Student Achievement*, (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2013), 2.

improving education, school curricular offerings, and effective teaching.¹⁶ The report warned that schools were not preparing students for the society in which they live and provided recommendations for educational reform necessary to improve the educational system in the United States.¹⁷ Recommendation D, one of four primary categories, outlined specific steps to improve the professional stability, growth, and success of teaching.¹⁸ Recommendations include high standards for teacher preparation programs, competitive salaries, incentives for becoming an educator, early career support, and 11-month contracts.¹⁹ *A Nation at Risk* was a step towards more federal influence in public education and teacher development.

A study conducted by the RAND group in 1984 investigated the instruments and procedures of teacher evaluation systems and the organizational contexts within which they operate.²⁰ Thirty-two districts participated in the study with varying methods of teacher observation. The authors concluded that “school authorities do not agree on what constitutes the best practice with regard to instrumentation, frequency of evaluation, the role of the teacher in the process, or how the information could or should inform other district activities.”²¹ Respondents identified similar difficulties in the consistency of evaluations, training of evaluators, and shortcomings of observations in secondary and specialty areas (including the

¹⁶ Marzano and Toth, *Teacher Evaluation That Makes a Difference*, 385.

¹⁷ United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform: A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*, (Chicago: Barakaldo Books, 2021), 21. Accessed November 22, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

²⁰ Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, and Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, *Teacher Evaluation: A Study of Effective Practices*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1984), iii. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R3139.html>.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vi.

arts).²²

In contrast to the shortcomings identified in the research conclusions, the RAND report sought to identify the purpose and highlight the positive outcomes of the teacher observation process. Study respondents frequently mentioned that the teacher observation process improved communication with administrators and increased teacher awareness of instructional goals and classroom practices.²³ In the report, types of teacher evaluation frameworks varied by district, but the processes for frameworks included pre-observation conferences, classroom evaluations, and post-observation conferences that strengthened teachers' self-reflection of instructional practices and growth.²⁴ These observational models are similar to the proposed clinical supervision model authored by Goldhammer in 1969 but emphasize teachers' professional practice improvement and development.

In the 1990s, the national drive to improve education quality and increase accountability continued in response to the *A Nation at Risk* report.²⁵ The federal government continued to propose national educational standards and testing, emphasizing increased individual school accountability.²⁶ Teacher observations shifted from focusing on the teacher to investigating student and teacher interactions.²⁷ Teacher observations shifted towards using rubric-based teacher observation systems. Most notably, Charlotte Danielson created her *Framework for Teaching* rubrics for teacher evaluation in 1996. Shaw indicates that the rubrics during this era

²² Wise et al., *Teacher Evaluation*, vi.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁵ Jewell, "From Inspection," 386.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 386.

²⁷ Shaw, "Arts Teacher Evaluation," 3.

were “‘high-inference’ measures- that is, the evaluator had to be trained to make the necessary judgments about the prevalence of certain behaviors and interactions.”²⁸ During this time, educational researchers suggested that these rubric-based systems were not fair or inclusive of all content areas, specifically in the fine arts.²⁹

No Child Left Behind (2002)

Government and politicians pushed for improved quality of education and student achievement towards and into the 2000s. In 2002, the George W. Bush administration enacted the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to provide equal education quality to all students, specifically poor and minority students. It utilized standardized testing to hold schools accountable for achievement.³⁰ In this legislation, teachers were not considered agents of change.³¹ Lawmakers thought that standardized testing would “leave no child behind” in accountability for subpopulations. Schools were threatened with the loss of federal funding and teacher termination if schools did not meet the required performance numbers.³² Overwhelmingly, the NCLB legislation was unpopular and politically contentious.³³

Marzano and Toth credit two sources as catalysts for renewed attention to research into the inadequacies of teacher observation in the 2000s: *Rush to Judgment* (2008) and *The Widget Effect* (2009).³⁴ The authors of *Rush to Judgment*, Toch and Rothman, posit:

²⁸ Shaw, “Arts Teacher Evaluation,” 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁰ Jewell, “From Inspection,” 388.

³¹ Shaw, “Arts Teacher Evaluation,” 3.

³² Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 15.

³³ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁴ Marzano and Toth, *Teacher Evaluation That Makes a Difference*, 2.

A host of factors- a lack of accountability for school performance, staffing practices that strip school systems of incentives to take teacher evaluation seriously, union ambivalence, and public education's practice of using teacher credentials as a proxy for teacher quality- have resulted in teacher evaluation systems throughout public education that are superficial, capricious, and often don't even directly address the quality of instruction, much less measure student's learning.³⁵

Toch and Rothman concluded that comprehensive evaluation frameworks, which include standards, scoring rubrics, and multiple classroom observations by various evaluators, are valuable "regardless of the degree to which they predict student achievement, and regardless of whether they're used to weed out a few bad teachers or a lot of them."³⁶ To support this point, they provide direct quotes from various teachers who support the frameworks for their fairness and objectivity. However, the authors admit that there is always a degree of subjectivity in teaching evaluation.³⁷

The Widget Effect report examines the failure to respond to variations in the effectiveness of teachers. The Widget Effect is a term that "describes the tendency of school districts to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher."³⁸ Daniel Weisberg et al. summarize the issue with The Widget Effect by stating the following:

Our research confirms what is by now common knowledge: tenured teachers are identified as ineffective and dismissed from employment with exceptional infrequency. While an important finding in its own right, we have come to understand that infrequent teacher dismissals are, in fact, just one symptom of a larger, more fundamental crisis—the inability of our schools to assess instructional performance accurately or to act on this information in meaningful ways.³⁹

³⁵ Thomas Toch and Robert Rothman, *Rush to Judgment: Teacher Evaluation in Public Education*, (Washington, DC: Education Sector, 2008), 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁸ Daniel Weisberg et al., *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness*, (New York, NY: The New Teacher Project, 2009), 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

The authors theorize that successful teacher evaluation systems measure teachers' strengths and weaknesses so teachers can get feedback on improving their practice and schools can provide support and resources.⁴⁰ Considering this theory, *The Widget Effect* presents four possible solutions to reverse the effect. The four recommendations are:

1. Adopt a comprehensive performance evaluation and development system that fairly, accurately, and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement and provides targeted professional development to help them improve.
2. Train administrators and other evaluators in the teacher performance evaluation system and hold them accountable for using it effectively.
3. Use performance evaluations to inform key decisions such as teacher assignment, professional development, compensation, retention, and dismissal.
4. Adopt dismissal policies that provide lower-stakes options for ineffective teachers to exit the district and a system of due process that is fair but streamlined and efficient.⁴¹

The 2000s began the large-scale adoption of systematic teacher evaluation frameworks tied to teacher professional development and retention.

Race to the Top (2011)

Responding to the summary and recommendations presented by *The Widget Effect* in 2009, the Obama administration instituted new legislation called Race to the Top (R2T) in 2011. R2T sought to reform NCLB's accountability measures and focused on the goal of "college and career readiness."⁴² R2T legislation was similarly politically charged as NCLB because federal funding was still used as an incentive to reform educational systems.⁴³ Jewell notes, "Although

⁴⁰ Weisberg et al., *The Widget Effect*, 10.

⁴¹ Toch and Rothman, *Rush to Judgment*, 27-30.

⁴² "Race to the Top," The White House, 2012, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/education/k-12/race-to-the-top>.<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/education/k-12/race-to-the-top>

⁴³ Jewell, "From Inspection," 390.

states were encouraged to develop their own teacher evaluation guidelines, R2T rewarded those teachers who generated consistently high test scores.”⁴⁴ The R2T initiative recognized that teachers impact student growth and progress.⁴⁵ A considerable amount of research during this time focused on teacher quality and student scores related to teacher effectiveness, partly due to the philanthropic interest of educational nonprofits.⁴⁶

In 2012, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, which presented an in-depth analysis of classroom observations titled *Gathering Feedback for Teaching* (2012). The project investigated five approaches to teacher observation, including the Danielson FFT. Two criteria were used to evaluate the observation frameworks: (1) the reliability of instrument scores when a variety of raters utilized the tool, and (2) the association of teacher’s performance to student achievement.⁴⁷ Teacher participants for the project taught math or English language arts in grades four through eight.

The MET project authors offer implications and recommendations to policymakers based on study results. First, “Observers should be trained and expected to demonstrate their ability to use an observation instrument accurately before beginning high-stakes classroom observations.”⁴⁸ They add that teachers should be observed during more than one lesson and average scores across multiple lessons and that districts should track the reliability of their classroom

⁴⁴ Jewell, “From Inspection,” 390.

⁴⁵ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 15.

⁴⁶ Shaw, “Arts Teacher Evaluation,” 4.

⁴⁷ Measures of Effective Teaching Project, *Gathering Feedback for Teaching*, (Seattle: WA, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012), 2-3, <https://usprogram.gatesfoundation.org/-/media/dataimport/resources/pdf/2016/12/met-gathering-feedback-research-paper1.pdf?rev=06c2478fc22e434d85e56e009415165f&hash=5CB8D951995B9F1566088965E366CF12>

⁴⁸ MET Project, *Gathering Feedback*, 13.

observation procedures. The previous three suggestions would require significant investment from a school district to implement and maintain. Overall, the authors recognize that teacher observations can be used as a tool to identify professional learning needs for teachers and develop instructional practice.⁴⁹

Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

Following R2T, the Obama administration signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. ESSA continued to focus on college and career readiness and shifted towards state-driven assessments as a measure of progress versus national testing. Jewell summarizes the changes in legislation as follows:

This transition from the one-size-fits-all requirements of the NCLB includes multiple forms of student assessment, state-driven standards, intervention and funding for the lowest-performing schools, state determination and creation of evaluation systems, program to reward effective teachers, commitment to increase the number of STEM teachers, and resources to encourage data-driven system and creative approaches to education.⁵⁰

States now had more power to design and implement teacher evaluation systems focused on teacher growth, reflection, and student engagement over student achievement.⁵¹

Commercial Evaluation Frameworks

Although states have considerable flexibility with implementing teacher evaluation due to ESSA, many utilize an existing commercially available framework. The most commonly used systems are Danielson FFT and Marzano.⁵² These popular frameworks share commonalities.

⁴⁹ MET Project, *Gathering Feedback*, 15.

⁵⁰ Jewell, "From Inspection, Supervision, and Observation to Value-Added Evaluation," 393.

⁵¹ Bernard and Abramo, *Music Teacher Evaluation*, 16.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.

Both frameworks focus on content knowledge, flexible instruction, which includes assessment and support for learners with diverse needs, strong classroom management, teacher reflection, and contribution to the professional community.⁵³ Danielson and Marzano utilize a pre-observation to discuss the lesson plan, a classroom visit to observe the teacher in action, and a post-observation conference to discuss and reflect.

Danielson Framework for Teaching

The Danielson model (first edition) was published in 1996 by Charlotte Danielson based on her work with the Education Testing Service.⁵⁴ In 2007, the second edition was released. The FFT Evaluation Instrument was published in 2013, and 31 states adopted or adapted it.⁵⁵ The 2013 model is built on four domains of teaching responsibility (planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities) with 22 components divided into domains and 76 descriptive elements (Appendix A). Danielson's rubrics allow evaluators to score a teacher as unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished.⁵⁶ In 2018, The Danielson Group was relaunched as a non-profit organization. The third edition of the FFT was released in 2022 with updated components, rubrics, and tools to support teacher growth and development.⁵⁷

⁵³ Bernard and Abramo, *Music Teacher Evaluation*, 21-22.

⁵⁴ Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston, *Effective Supervision*, 23.

⁵⁵ "Our History," The Danielson Group, <https://danielsongroup.org/our-story/>

⁵⁶ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 39.

⁵⁷ The Danielson Group, "Our History."

Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model

The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is based on several works authored by Robert J. Marzano in collaboration with other researchers. In 2011, the initial model was established. The model has four domains: (1) classroom strategies and behaviors, (2) planning and preparing, (3) reflecting on teaching, and (4) collegiality and professionalism.⁵⁸ These four domains are nearly identical to the domains identified by Charlotte Danielson. The Marzano model also has 60 elements across the four domains, with a different emphasis than the Danielson model.⁵⁹ The elements in Marzano are called Design Questions related to the domain category.

Learning Sciences International published the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model in 2017. The updated version streamlines the previous 60 elements into 23 essential behaviors within four areas: standards-based planning (three elements), standards-based instructions (ten elements), conditions for learning (seven elements), and professional responsibilities (three elements).⁶⁰

Additional key changes to the 2017 model include:

1. Increases the specificity and accuracy of observations focusing on student evidence of attaining standards,
2. Reduces the time and complexity burden on principals and teachers,
3. Simplifies the overall evaluation process,
4. Incorporates stronger diagnostic feedback capabilities for teachers, and
5. Prioritizes deeper alignment to the instructional shifts required for new academic standards.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston, *Effective Supervision*, 29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁰ Beverly Carbaugh, Robert Marzano, and Michael Toth, “The Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model: A Focused, Scientific-Behavioral Evaluation Model for Standards-Based Classrooms,” (West Palm Beach, FL: Learning Sciences International, 2017), 9, https://www.farmington.k12.mi.us/cms/lib/MI01808718/Centricity/Domain/65/budget/transparency/marzano_teachers.pdf

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

The 2017 model uses a 5-point rubric to rate a teacher's proficiency as not using, beginning, developing, applying, and innovating. Observation systems utilizing a descriptive rubric where an observer makes judgments and rates a teacher can be described as a subjective, high-inference practice.⁶² Danielson and Marzano remain at the forefront of utilized commercially available frameworks for teacher evaluation.

Criticism

Criticism put forth by some researchers underscores the need for a more tailored and subject-specific approach to evaluating music educators. These perspectives imply that a disconnect exists between the current evaluation models and the intricacies of music education, highlighting the necessity for reform and adaptation to ensure that the evaluation process aligns with the specific demands of the discipline. Ultimately, these viewpoints contribute to the ongoing discourse on developing effective and contextually relevant teacher evaluation models to support better and enhance educators' teaching practices in diverse content areas such as instrumental music.

Commercial Rubrics

Charlotte Danielson admits that particular frameworks require further development. She states, "The frameworks for specialists represent an amalgam of a range of state- and district-developed frameworks but have not drawn extensively on the efforts of any single entity. They reflect, it is hoped, a good first draft that educators can use to formulate their own frameworks."⁶³ The specialist frameworks presented in *Enhancing Professional Practice* are for

⁶² Lavigne and Good, *Teacher and Student Evaluation*, 120.

⁶³ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 110.

instructional specialists, media specialists, school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, and therapeutic specialists (speech, hearing, occupational, etc.).⁶⁴ Danielson considers music, art, and physical education teachers as teachers who do the teaching tasks and can be evaluated on the FFT framework. She adds that of these content areas:

Typically, they organize instruction for large numbers of students- often all the students in an entire school, or even in more than one school. As a result, the degree of their knowledge of individual students, and their interaction with the students' families, is bound to be less than that of classroom teachers, particularly those at the elementary level.⁶⁵

Based on this statement from the FFT designer herself, further research could support the evaluation of the tool specifically for music and the possible development of a rubric that reflects the unique nature of a music specialist teacher.

Dudek et al.'s study published in 2013 examined the relationships between scores of two observational teaching models, the Danielson FFT and the Classroom Strategies Assessment System (CSAS). The authors recognize that most districts utilize a single tool to assess all teachers in a district regardless of grade level, content area, or class type. "This approach assumes that classroom observational assessments are comparable in their measurement of teaching practice and that all teachers should be measured the same regardless of important classroom contextual factors."⁶⁶ They point out that most commercial frameworks claim to work for all teaching contexts and do not report measurement error indices. Still, they question if one tool can reliably and effectively measure classroom effectiveness for all cases.⁶⁷ Their criticism

⁶⁴ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 111.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁶ Dudek et al., "One Size Does Not Fit All," 3.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

of Danielson includes, “Global measures like the FFT can be effective for identifying the broad domains (e.g., instruction, classroom support) in which teachers are excelling or struggling, without providing targeted feedback or changes to make.”⁶⁸ They refer to the FFT as a universal screener for broad improvement. In their conclusions, they remark that reliance on a single classroom observational assessment may harm teachers, specifically those in particular subject areas like music, where instruction looks different than the tool.⁶⁹ They recommend that future research examine how school administrator and/or teacher characteristics and classroom factors may differ and how those results can lead to better teacher evaluation methods and professional development support in those contexts.⁷⁰

Shaw questions the limitations of any observation framework to serve both ends of fostering teacher development and assigning a rating to a teacher that could eliminate teachers who are deemed unsatisfactory. He states:

As long as teacher evaluation systems require a single-number output that corresponds to a single category of effectiveness (e.g., ineffective, minimally effective, effective, highly effective), the richness of feedback possible using multi-faceted evaluation rubrics and professional standards-based systems may be lost in the reductionist rating derivation (Armstrong 2000; Corcoran and Goldhaber 2013).⁷¹

Gabriel and Woulfin categorize this contradiction as a “measure and sort” approach to assess teaching with a rating versus a “support and develop” approach for feedback and development.⁷²

Because of the dual purpose of teacher observations, observers who use the tool for teacher

⁶⁸ Dudek et al., “One Size Does Not Fit All,” 26.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁷¹ Shaw, “Arts Teacher Evaluation,” 7.

⁷² Rachael Gabriel and Sarah Woulfin, *Making Teacher Evaluation Work: A Guidebook for Teachers and Leaders*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2017), xvi.

feedback must have a deep contextual understanding of the learning environment.

Authors Onuscheck, Marzano, and Grice advocate for a nuanced approach to teacher evaluation, emphasizing the importance of content-specific models beyond general frameworks. In their viewpoint, these content-specific models should be tailored to the unique challenges and intricacies inherent in specific subject areas. The authors argue that more than a one-size-fits-all evaluation framework may be needed to capture the nuances of various disciplines effectively. The trio suggests that a content-specific model should delve into crucial aspects of artistic and musical knowledge, procedures, and art and music education instruction. They postulate, “For art and music, such a content-specific model should address important aspects of artistic and musical knowledge, procedures, and instruction, such as vocabulary, artistic and musical literacy, criticism, reflection, artistic and musical process, technique, and expression.”⁷³ By incorporating these domain-specific components into the evaluation process, teacher evaluation could provide a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of educators in art and music.

In 2000, Charles Maranzano investigated and addressed music teacher performance evaluations, calling for a more inclusive and reliable approach to music teacher evaluation. He claims that:

The task of creating and implementing a reliable evaluation process for music educators appears to be more elusive than creating evaluation measures in other areas of teaching, and serves as a source of frustration for teachers, supervisors, and administrators nationwide. Traditional approaches to the evaluation of fine and performing arts personnel have to date failed to supply evaluators with enough comprehensive information needed to make important educational decisions about music teacher performance.⁷⁴

⁷³ Mark Onuscheck, Robert J. Marzano, and Jonathan Grice, *The New Art and Science of Teaching Art and Music* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2019), 6.

⁷⁴ Maranzano, “Music Teacher Performance Evaluation,” 268.

Maranzano recognizes the research limitations and proposes that future research in music teacher evaluation is an opportunity for a longitudinal evaluation study. He advocates for future models that include “performance documentation, emphasizing multiple sources of data, collaboration with administrators self-evaluation, self-reflection, and measurements over broader periods of time.”⁷⁵

Bernard and Abramo also criticize the content-agnostic evaluation models: "Rubrics and criteria often do not specifically address music. Many music educators think evaluation systems do not accurately evaluate music teaching or provide useful feedback to improve their teaching."⁷⁶ In his 2011 article titled “Merit Pay and the Music Teacher,” author and researcher Kenneth Elpus discusses the issue of teacher pay while exposing the lack of research on evaluation methods of music teachers. He posits:

The extant music education research on teacher quality or teacher effectiveness is somewhat inadequate as a basis for designing a compensation scheme that links teacher pay to student achievement. The inadequacy stems from the fact that most research on music teacher quality does not use measures of student achievement in music as the tested outcomes (Taebel 1992). Instead, these studies tend to focus on the ratings made by expert (pre-service or in-service music teachers) or novice (secondary student) judges who view a recorded teaching episode and focus their attention on teacher behaviors rather than student achievement.⁷⁷

He highlights the need for the music education profession to align the definition of teacher quality with student achievement to develop adequate teacher evaluation methods. While this argument is tied to merit pay, it is still relevant to the specificity of frameworks used to evaluate music teachers. He concludes that music educators need to “consider in light of the emergence of

⁷⁵ Maranzano, “Music Teacher Performance Evaluation,” 272.

⁷⁶ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 31.

⁷⁷ Kenneth Elpus, “Merit Pay and the Music Teacher,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 112, no. 4 (August 2011): 186. doi: 10.1080/10632913.2011.592466.

merit pay schemes is the design and development of a fair and transparent system of evaluating music teacher effectiveness that is suitable for determining compensation.”⁷⁸

Evaluator Qualifications

Criticism of teacher observation processes dates back to the 1980s when systems were condemned for being based primarily on principals’ opinions of teacher characteristics and not what they were doing in the classroom.⁷⁹ Lavigne and Good point out that since R2T, the requirements from state to state for classroom observations are inconsistent, from the number of observations required annually to the training of the person evaluating.⁸⁰ Observations can occur between one and four times annually, often depending on the teacher's experience level or previous ratings. A notable concern is the difference in evaluator training. “In some R2T states (e.g., Arizona), the individual(s) eligible to be observers is not specified, but in most cases, superintendents, principals, administrators, or instructional leaders are the designated individuals to be trained to conduct observations.”⁸¹ The training for these observers varies widely at the state, district, and local levels.

Bernard and Abramo summarize the challenge that music educators face while being evaluated by an observer by stating, “Effectively communicating and receiving feedback require a delicate balance of advocating for what is done in music education while remaining open to sound pedagogical advice and an outsider’s perspective that might improve practice.”⁸² They add

⁷⁸ Kenneth Elpus, “Merit Pay and the Music Teacher,” 186.

⁷⁹ Lavigne and Good, *Teacher and Student Evaluation*, 119.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁸² Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 6.

that evaluators often observe music teachers without a music background, heightening an already stressful situation.⁸³ Maranzano echoes the concerns and questions the credibility of subjective judgments “imposed by administrators not specifically trained in music methodology.”⁸⁴ In his opinion, not having a music-trained observer lowers the reliability of the evaluation process in general.⁸⁵ Bernard and Abramo comment on the potential strain on relationships between teachers and administrators throughout the observation process. They offer, “Anger towards the political environment of teacher evaluation and evaluators’ and administrators’ differing interpretations of what counts as good teaching are some of the difficulties music teachers face in pre- and post-observation meetings.”⁸⁶

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions

Research studies examining and comparing administrators' and music teachers' perceptions generally indicate different opinions between the two groups.⁸⁷ In 2016, Berberick et al. conducted a study examining the perceptions of music teacher evaluation from these two perspectives: the principal and the music teacher. A random sample of principals and music teachers was selected for the survey. The survey asked about demographics and current teacher evaluation practices, then asked participants to respond to 41 items on a Likert-type scale,

⁸³ Cara Bernard and Joe Abramo, “But That Doesn’t Work in Music!” *Teaching Music* 28, no. 4 (April 2021): 44, https://digitaleditions.walsworth.com/publication/?i=702943&article_id=3998090&view=articleBrowser

⁸⁴ Maranzano, “Music Teacher Performance Evaluation,” 270.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁸⁶ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 5.

⁸⁷ David M. Berberick, Casey J. Clementson, Jennifer K. Hawkinson, and David M. Rolandson, “A Comparison of Principal Practices and Music Educator Perceptions Regarding Teacher Evaluation,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* no. 209 (July 1, 2016): 45, <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.209.0043>.

followed by the opportunity to share information through open-ended responses. A total of 159 music teachers and 84 principals returned completed survey results. The most common evaluation tool for participants was the Danielson FFT, followed by Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model. Teachers strongly believed that the observer should possess knowledge of music-specific content. They also felt that peer evaluation would be beneficial to receive specific feedback. Teachers also expressed concerns about their content area's logistical and practice challenges and challenges in addressing students with special needs.⁸⁸ Administrators also expressed interest in music teachers serving as evaluators to improve the feedback content, focusing on musical instruction.⁸⁹

Teacher Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy

According to Gardner's 2010 study on music teacher job satisfaction, positive perceptions of administrator relationships and control over evaluation can lead to teacher satisfaction and retention. The study utilized a data set of 47,857 K-12 public and private school teachers representing all types of music (general, choral instrumental). Teachers indicated dissatisfaction with how infrequently their principals discussed their instructional practices.⁹⁰ The authors found "that music teachers' perceptions of administrators' support and recognition, the level of concern about students' social welfare and parental support, and their level of control over instructional delivery and evaluation of students in the classroom all have significant effects

⁸⁸ Berberick et al., "A Comparison," 51.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁹⁰ Robert D. Gardner, "Should I Stay Or Should I Go? Factors that Influence the Retention, Turnover, and Attrition of K-12 Music Teachers in the United States," *Arts Education Policy Review* 111, no. 3 (2010): 116, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/should-i-stay-go-factors-that-influence-retention/docview/746431811/se-2>.

on music teacher retention, turnover, and attrition, which confirms findings from several previous studies.”⁹¹ Teacher evaluation results can influence a teacher’s decision to stay in a position or move to another job. Increasing the positive perceptions of teaching evaluations can lead to higher job satisfaction and stability within instrumental music programs.

Scott Edgar conducted a study in 2012 that examined the disconnect between evaluator expertise and music teacher assessments with a focus on entry-level (EYT) music teachers. He points out that current research has the following limitations: “(a) the research is rarely subject-specific, (b) the research does not discuss the principal/EYT relationship, and (c) the research does not provide a basis for how principals should assess music teachers based on their prior expectations (especially in a value-added model).”⁹² The principal/teacher relationship in the context of music is often different from that of other content areas. Contributing factors are larger class sizes, increased parent and community involvement, frequent events that extend outside of the school day, and student/teacher relationships that continue over a more extended period.⁹³ The study participants included three high schools, and data was collected through interviews with the EYT music teacher and the principal. Edgar concludes that “principals who lacked music subject-specific content knowledge struggled with the assessment of music teachers.”⁹⁴ One possible solution is to utilize peer educators with music expertise to support the assessment of EYTs. The data also supports the need for increased communication between the

⁹¹ Robert D. Gardner, "Should I Stay Or Should I Go?" 119.

⁹² Scott Edgar, “Communication of Expectations between Principals and Entry-Year Instrumental Music Teachers: Implications for Music Teacher Assessment,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 113, no.4 (2012): 139. DOI: 10.1080/10632913.2012.719426

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁹⁴ Edgar, “Communication of Expectations,” 144.

principal and music teachers to work towards more valued music teacher assessment.⁹⁵

Smith et al. investigated teacher perceptions of evaluation feedback to explore teacher self-efficacy related to their instructional practice.⁹⁶ The basis for their research is the limited existing literature on the relationship between teacher perceptions of feedback and self-efficacy, which “has the potential to limit the improvement efforts of evaluation programs,” leading to the continuation of ineffective practices for teacher evaluation and decreased teacher self-efficacy.⁹⁷ The authors posit that evaluation feedback has the potential to improve and motivate teacher practice and increase confidence in classroom instruction.⁹⁸ The study results conclude that specificity of feedback can improve teacher perceptions of the value of feedback, leading to higher levels of reflection and feelings of self-efficacy in teaching practices.⁹⁹

Teacher Voice

Historically, teacher evaluation is driven by federal and state policymakers, with limited voice and control from teachers themselves. “The lack of teacher input into evaluation systems cannot lead to lasting change; excluding teachers from important conversations sends the message that teachers either are not capable of or cannot be trusted to create fair and accurate evaluation systems.”¹⁰⁰ With states having flexibility in determining teacher evaluation methods, it is worth exploring the perceived success of frameworks as they apply to the content area of

⁹⁵ Edgar, “Communication of Expectations,” 145.

⁹⁶ Smith et al., “Teacher Evaluation Feedback,” 673.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 673.

⁹⁸ Smith et al., “Teacher Evaluation Feedback,” 673.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 692.

¹⁰⁰ Jewell, “From Inspection,” 414.

music to determine what is working for educators and what may need adaptation. Existing case study research regarding early-career music teachers and evaluation suggests that greater communication between policymakers and teachers is required to meet the needs of teacher assessment that is contextually appropriate.¹⁰¹

David Potter points out the need for more research investigating evidence of music teacher voice and agency in developing teacher evaluation policies.¹⁰² Potter's case study posed three essential questions to music teachers: (1) How has evaluation impacted you as a music educator in Tennessee? (2) How do you feel about the practices of music teacher evaluation in Tennessee? And (3) How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of music teacher evaluation in Tennessee? Four themes emerged from his research, including (1) "administrative support can lead to empathy or stress," (2) "feedback can encourage collaboration or be used for targeting," (3) "value for music making can lead to authentic music education or fake teaching," and (4) "scores do not generate positive perceptions."¹⁰³ To address these themes, he advocates for further research and teacher voice at the policy table, adding that collaboration is essential at the local, state, and national levels, and music teacher voices must be heard by policymakers and administrators.¹⁰⁴

Gates, Hansen, and Tuttle echo the importance of critically analyzing teacher frameworks in the arts classrooms and expanding teacher voice in developing new tools. They state, "Without

¹⁰¹ Edgar, "Communication of Expectations," 136.

¹⁰² David Potter, "Music Teacher Perceptions of Evaluation: A Case Study of the Tennessee Fine Arts Portfolio Model," *Arts Education Policy Review* (October 19, 2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2021.1992324>.

¹⁰³ Potter, "Music Teacher Perceptions of Evaluation," 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

the inclusion of arts experts in these fundamental decision-making moments, states lose a richness of diverse perspectives that can ultimately change paradigms around the key pillars of reform standards, assessment, curriculum, instruction, and educator evaluation.”¹⁰⁵ These perspectives, drawn from the experiences of professionals deeply entrenched in the arts, have the potential to challenge existing paradigms of commercially recognized teacher evaluation.

Summary

The historical context of teacher evaluation has been characterized by limited teacher input, with federal and state policymakers driving the process. This lack of teacher involvement raises concerns about the fairness and accuracy of evaluation systems. Research studies comparing the perceptions of administrators and music teachers on teacher evaluation reveal notable differences between the two groups. The work of Bernard and Abramo summarizes the challenges of music teacher observation with the following:

Teacher evaluation is difficult because...

1. Although it is politically contentious, teachers are still required to fulfill its mandates.
2. The policies, rules, and interpretations are constantly changing.
3. It is often created to evaluate not specifically music teaching, but rather teaching in general.
4. It potentially creates an adversarial relationship between teachers and evaluators, or evaluators are not effective communicators.
5. Evaluators often do not have a background in teaching music.¹⁰⁶

If the purpose of evaluation tools is to drive teacher performance and professional development, educators and researchers must examine the FFT for its fitness as a tool for music teachers, which requires a deeper study of the use of the framework in music teacher observation. This

¹⁰⁵ Karol Gates, Deb Hansen, and Lynn Tuttle, “Teacher Evaluation in the Arts Disciplines: Three State Perspectives,” *Arts Education Policy Review* 116, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 172, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2015.1068657>.

¹⁰⁶ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 4.

study may contribute to a body of evidence for developing alternative theories for instrumental teacher evaluation and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as a tool for music teacher evaluation.

Chapter Three: Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators' perceptions of the Danielson FFT as it applies in the context of music teacher evaluation. The problem addressed is a need for more research on the utility and fitness of the FFT as a tool for teacher evaluation in instrumental music. This chapter of the report presents the design, procedures, data collection, and analysis procedures.

Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach to allow participants to respond to open-ended questions about their personal experiences with the teacher evaluation process. Qualitative research “involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants’ setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.”¹ The research employed a transcendental phenomenological study that describes the perceived experiences of the participants. According to Moustakas:

The researcher following a transcendental phenomenological approach engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated (known as the Epoche process) in order to launch the study as far as possible free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies—to be completely open, receptive, and naive in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated.²

Participants were offered a semi-structured follow-up interview to elaborate on their initial

¹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 4.

² Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1994), 22. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>.

responses and provide additional information about their experiences.

Research Questions

Teacher evaluation frameworks and policies are primarily for subject areas that are frequently tested and generally do not provide specific structures for the arts. The Danielson FFT provides a comprehensive model for teacher evaluation primarily based on core content classroom teaching like math and English. Teacher evaluation aims to provide teachers with formative and summative feedback and improve teacher development and student achievement.³ In that case, it is essential to investigate if the Danielson FFT meets instrumental music educators' needs. As an exploration of these ideas, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

Research Question One: How do music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

Research question one asks for feedback on the specific domains and components of the FFT based on their experiences as an evaluator or a subject of observation and evaluation. Participants responded about each domain component within the framework, specifically its effectiveness and fitness to the instrumental music classroom.

Research Question Two: What are the key challenges and limitations of using the Danielson Framework to evaluate music teacher performance as perceived by music teachers and administrators?

Research question two asks participants to identify and describe the challenges and

³ Danielson and McGreal, *Teacher Evaluation to Enhance*, 8.

limitations of the FFT as a teacher observation tool for instrumental music. Responses are compared to establish similarities in perspectives and differences that drive future tool development.

Research Question Three: What recommendations do music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

Research question three addresses the need for future research based on the findings of the current research project as an addition to the literature base on music teaching evaluation. Participant responses and conclusions drive questions for policymakers, administrators, and educational systems to collaborate on a more content-specific evaluation system for instrumental music. Edgar's research points out that current research has the following limitations: "(a) the research is rarely subject-specific, (b) the research does not discuss the principal/EYT relationship, and (c) the research does not provide a basis for how principals should assess music teachers based on their prior expectations (especially in a value-added model)."⁴

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to obtain participants currently teaching middle school instrumental music or serving in the capacity of middle school administrator responsible for performing teacher observations. Purposeful sampling selects individuals because they can best help the researcher with the problem.⁵ The researcher advertised to administrators in the Maryland Public School system through email and to both state and national music educators

⁴ Edgar, "Communication of Expectations," 139.

⁵ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 178.

through social media posts. Participants represent a variety of public school settings with differences in years of experience in teaching or administration. Participation was voluntary, and participants were presented with informed consent. Participants were welcome to discontinue participation at any time. Participants could complete the open-ended and semi-structured interviews or only the open-ended survey. Participants were free to answer only some of the questions. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the anonymity of participants. The study records were kept private and stored securely on a password-locked computer. After five years, electronic records will be deleted.

Setting

Research participants completed the online survey through Survey Monkey at their convenience before the researcher's deadline. The link to the survey questions was sent after participants indicated initial interest through email with the researcher. After all participants completed the survey, the researcher contacted them via email to offer an opportunity for a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were completed virtually through Microsoft Teams at the participant's convenience. Virtual interviews were recorded and transcribed using the application Otter.ai.

Data Collection Method

Recruitment emails and social media posts contained a link to the research questionnaire. The researcher received responses via Survey Monkey after participants completed the survey. Survey responses were imported into an Excel spreadsheet and saved to a password-protected folder. Results were organized by participant, and pseudonyms were assigned in the spreadsheet results. Participants were contacted via email to set up a voluntary semi-structured interview with

the researcher. Virtual interviews were recorded and transcribed utilizing the application Otter.ai. Transcriptions were added to the spreadsheet and assigned to the appropriate participant.

Procedures

The researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course “Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research” to begin the project in August 2023 (Appendix B). After CITI completion, the researcher drafted survey questions (Appendix C), recruitment email (Appendix D), social media recruitment post (Appendix E), consent information (Appendix F), and applied to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University. After approval from the IRB (Appendix G), the researcher created the Survey Monkey containing the approved survey questions. The consent form was the first page of the survey, securing permission to proceed to the survey questions. The recruitment letter was emailed to Frederick County Public Schools, Maryland, middle school administrators and posted on the researcher’s personal Facebook. A social media post was also advertised in the Facebook group for the Maryland Band Directors' Association and Maryland Orchestra Directors' Association, two components of the Maryland Music Educators Association and the Middle School Band Director’s Facebook group.

Survey

Participants completed the survey at their convenience via Survey Monkey. Participants identified their roles and experiences by answering the following demographic questions:

1. Which category describes you?
 - Middle School Instrumental Music Teacher
 - Middle School Administrator
2. Which category best describes your experience in your current role as a teacher or administrator?
 - 0-3 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 7-9 years
 - 10-12 years
 - 13-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21-25 years
 - 25 or more years
3. (Administrators Only) What is your content area of certification (ex. Science, Math, Visual Art, etc.)? _____

Next, the researcher asked participants to respond to the following open-ended questions:

1. What are your personal perceptions on the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
2. What components of the Danielson Framework do you feel the most comfortable with?
3. What components of the Danielson Framework do you feel the least comfortable with?

4. What challenges have you experienced with the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
5. What recommendations do you have for improving the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
6. What are your experiences with the pre-observation and post-observation conferences related to instrumental music observations?

Participants could opt out of answering any of the questions presented in the open-ended survey.

Interviews

After collecting the survey results, the researcher identified participants willing to participate in a face-to-face virtual interview. Virtual interviews were scheduled by email between the researcher and the participant at a time convenient to the subject. All interviews occurred via Microsoft Teams and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Although the researcher could recognize respondents through identifiable information, anonymity is maintained for all participants using pseudonyms in the written analysis/thesis. To ensure confidentiality, all data was stored on a password-protected computer and will be destroyed after five years.

Researcher's Role

The researcher's background significantly relates to this study due to her experience as a fine arts supervisor and teacher evaluator, as well as her experience as a public school instrumental music educator. This professional experience has led to questioning the purpose and validity of teacher observations in instrumental music. Peoples explains that "[i]n transcendental

phenomenology, the goal is to illuminate the essence of a phenomenon, the entirety of it, without the corruption of personal bias.”⁶ The researcher refrained from imposing personal assumptions and beliefs in this study through phenomenological reduction. The practice of bracketing within phenomenological reduction is “suspending your judgments to focus on the studied phenomenon.”⁷ Peoples summarizes this experience as the researcher should become a “stranger in a strange land.”⁸ For the integrity of the study, the researcher will allow the literature review, data collection, and analysis to determine recommendations for this research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for the present study followed the six steps outlined by Katarzyna Peoples for transcendental phenomenological studies. The six steps direct the researcher to do the following: (1) read the entire transcript and take out unnecessary language, (2) generate preliminary meaning units, (3) generate final meaning units, (4) synthesize final meaning units into situated narratives under each interview question, (5) synthesize situated narratives in general narratives, and (6) generate a general description.⁹

In step one, the researcher read all survey responses and interview transcripts. The researcher developed an understanding of each participant's narrative and removed unnecessary or irrelevant language for clarity (for example, “um,” or “well”). In step two, the researcher examined responses for “preliminary meaning units.”¹⁰ Preliminary meaning units described

⁶ Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Vol. 56, Sage Publications, 2020), 57.

⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰ Ibid., 60.

overall ideas and themes from participants' experiences. In step three, preliminary meaning units were compared, and final meaning units were determined. This process is also known in data analysis as coding. Creswell and Creswell describe coding as "the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing the category in the margins."¹¹ The researcher utilized the qualitative software program Delve¹² to assist with coding and organizing results. Inductive coding was used to analyze responses and identify themes and keywords that emerged from participant responses. In vivo (verbatim) coding utilized the words and quotations from the transcripts, allowing the researcher to remain unbiased in the analysis process. In step four, situated narrative, the researcher assigned verbatim quotes representing the identified themes. In step five, the research created general narratives from the individual situated narratives for each survey question. In step six, the researcher aimed to discuss themes that were present in most or all the participants' experiences.¹³

Validity and Reliability

The researcher identified potential biases that could be present based on the investigator's profession and responsibilities. The researcher utilized bracketing to suspend judgment throughout the research process. According to Peoples, "Students need to think about the way they are thinking about the phenomenon in order to be less dependent on their subjective mind and to see the phenomenon for what it is, the thing itself."¹⁴ Through journaling, the researcher

¹¹ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 193.

¹² Twenty to Nine LLC, "Delve: Online Qualitative Analysis Software" (New York, NY: Twenty to Nine LLC, 2024), available from <https://delvetool.com>.

¹³ Peoples, *How to Write*, 62.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

noted and analyzed potential bias to suspend and separate her experience from the data analysis. An additional reliability measure utilized in the research process was member checking. Member checking was used for the optional virtual interviews. Participants were given 10 minutes for the optional interviews to review their initial survey responses to check for accuracy. The researcher utilized peer review, allowing a neutral colleague to read the report and ask questions about the method, results, and conclusions.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to understand the perceptions of administrators and middle school instrumental music teachers of the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT evaluation model. A qualitative survey design allowed volunteer music teacher and middle school administrator participants to provide open-ended responses and participate in a optional follow-up interview. This report's chapter reviewed the research design, procedures, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter Four: Results

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to examine the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators on the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as an evaluation tool for instrumental music. Currently, there is a lack of research focusing on the tool's utility to provide feedback for growth in instrumental music. The findings contribute to a body of evidence for developing alternative theories for instrumental teacher evaluation and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as a tool for music teacher evaluation. This chapter of the report presents survey findings, interview findings, and analysis. This chapter also describes the participants who were assigned pseudonyms.

Themes emerged and provided answers to the study's research questions. The primary research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

RQ2: What are the key challenges and limitations of using the Danielson Framework to evaluate *music* teacher performance as perceived by music teachers and administrators?

RQ3: What recommendations do music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?

Data analysis produced the following preliminary meaning units: perceptions, domain comfort, recommendations, pre- and post-observation experiences, purpose, and challenges. Subthemes emerged of feedback, self-reflection, and subjectivity. Themes emerged from both situated narratives, where “the meanings of each participant’s experience were highlighted thematically through direct quotes from the interview and surveys,” and from deriving general

narratives, “unifying participants’ accounts into a general description of all the participant’s narratives.”¹ The meanings of participant experiences support the themes through direct survey and interview quotes.

Setting

Each participant chose the research setting. Surveys were completed at a location and time selected by that participant. Some participants completed the survey in one attempt, and some completed partial responses before finishing at a later date. The researcher emailed participants who indicated they were willing to engage in a follow-up interview with a selection of available times (evening and weekend). Participants selected a time, and the researcher sent a Microsoft Teams calendar invitation with a link. Virtual interviews were all completed via the Microsoft Teams platform.

Participant Demographics

The criteria indicated that participants must be current middle school instrumental teachers or administrators. If they were a teacher, they must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) teaching middle school instrumental music (band or orchestra), have been formally observed using the Danielson FFT, and have received a formal observation within the last 12 months. If they were an administrator, they must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) serving as a principal or assistant/vice principal at the middle school, perform teacher observations for instrumental music (band/orchestra) teachers, utilize the Danielson FFT as the observation tool, and have performed at least one observation within the last 12 months. Teachers employed by Frederick County Public Schools

¹ Peoples, *How to Write*, 61.

(FCPS) Maryland were not eligible to participate in this study due to the researcher's role in the school system.

A total of 17 respondents began the survey, but five were completed with no responses to the survey questions. A total of 12 respondents completed responses to the open-ended questions. Of the 12, six were middle school administrators, and six were middle school instrumental music teachers. The music teachers had various experience levels, with one respondent in each age category: 0-3 years, 4-6 years, 10-12 years, 13-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21-25 years. The middle school administrators also represented a wide range of experiences: one with 0-3 years, one with 4-6 years, one with 7-9 years, one with 10-12 years, one with 16-20 years, and one with 25+ years of experience. No administrators were certified in the area of music before entering administration. Figure 1 provides the demographic information for each participant. Participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Name*	Job Title and Certification Area	Years of Experience as Teacher or Administrator
David	Instrumental Music Teacher	13-15 years
Melanie	Instrumental Music Teacher	4-6 years
Zach	Instrumental Music Teacher	16-20 years
Travis	Instrumental Music Teacher	0-3 years
Brian	Instrumental Music Teacher	21-25 years
Todd	Instrumental Music Teacher	10-12 years
Mark	Administrator (Social Studies)	4-6 years
Donna	Administrator (Elementary Education and Special Education K-Adult)	10-12 years
Miranda	Administrator (Science)	0-3 years
Jeff	Administrator (Social Studies)	25+ years
Colleen	Administrator (Elementary Education with a concentration in Middle School)	7-9 years
Brittany	Administrator (Secondary Math)	10-12 years

*Pseudonyms are utilized for participant anonymity.

Data Collection

The first data collection approach for this research was an open-ended survey. The survey contained three demographic questions and five open-ended questions. It was emailed, posted on social media, and administered via Survey Monkey. The first page of the Survey Monkey link included instructions, requirements, and consent to participate.

Participants were asked if they would be willing to complete a follow-up interview. Two music teachers, David and Travis, and two administrators, Miranda and Jeff, participated in a

follow-up interview. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams at a time selected by the participant. The interviews were transcribed utilizing the Otter.ai application. Transcripts were uploaded into the Delve tool and coded into themes with the survey data to enhance the validity and reliability of initial responses.

Findings

The researcher uploaded survey responses and interview transcriptions into Delve in the first data analysis step. The researcher read each interview transcript in its entirety and deleted unnecessary information or filler words like “um,” “well,” and “so.” Preliminary codes were identified based on the research questions. Then, further codes were developed based on the researcher’s deeper understanding of the participant’s descriptions. Codes were reviewed, sorted, and combined to draw out similarities and differences in responses and summarize experiences through themes. Significant themes are summarized through general descriptions of experiences.² Figure 2 represents the major themes and subthemes identified in the research.

Table 2. Situated Narratives and Subthemes

Situated Narratives	Subthemes
Perceptions	
Challenges	Subjectivity
Purpose	Feedback Self-reflection
Domain Comfort	
Recommendations	

² Peoples, *How to Write*, 62.

Due to the researcher's personal experience as a high school instrumental music teacher and an arts administrator serving as an evaluator, she bracketed her knowledge and circumstances to eliminate bias. The researcher utilized journaling to note and separate her experiences before, during, and after the research process.

Situated Narratives

The researcher identified the initial situated narrative theme related directly to RQ1: How do music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance? Perceptions from both teachers and administrators varied from positive perceptions to negative perceptions about the effectiveness of the tool. Three out of the six teacher participants expressed positive perceptions, and three expressed negative perceptions. Four out of six administrators expressed positive perceptions of the FFT, while the remaining two questioned the effectiveness in the instrumental music classroom.

Positive Teacher Perceptions

Using participants' direct quotes, the following responses indicated positive teacher perceptions of the Danielson FFT. Zach said, "I think that the Danielson Framework can be a wonderful tool to evaluate many aspects of a teacher." Brian indicated, "My initial reaction is that it is useful for the documentation. I can learn from past evaluations." David offered his opinion, "I think Danielson is vague enough to be applicable. In general, the Danielson Framework works across contents." The direct quotes from participants demonstrate positive perceptions of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with respondents acknowledging its utility for evaluation and documentation and its broad applicability across different teaching contexts.

Negative Teacher Perceptions

Three teachers indicated negative perceptions of the Danielson Framework as an observation tool for instrumental music. Travis, a teacher with 0-3 years of experience, stated, “I find that it can be hard to fit a normal band lesson into the Danielson Framework. My experience with Danielson is seven observations so far. I find that I am trying to check each box when I am being observed. I may not check each component on a normal lesson.” Melanie shared:

I believe that many administrators and music educators don't know what the Danielson framework looks like in an instrumental classroom. What is student-centered in other content areas doesn't always work for band students or for the band director. The framework isn't a one-size-fits-all, and there are many different ways to be highly effective. I think we need to highlight highly effective music classrooms and use them as an example when administrators try to shape what they want to see in their music programs.

Todd dislikes Danielson FFT and commercial frameworks and said, “They’re all a scam. Danielson is a steaming hot pile of garbage. It had absolutely nothing to do with good teaching and everything to do with giving incompetent administrators boxes to check. Danielson herself says that her ‘framework’ shouldn't be used that way, but is fully aware of it and keeps cashing the checks anyway.” Three teachers expressed negative perceptions of the FFT’s suitability as an observation tool for instrumental music instruction, citing difficulties in alignment with typical instrumental lessons, a lack of understanding among administrators and educators, and skepticism regarding its effectiveness and authenticity in evaluating teaching practices.

Positive Administrator Perceptions

Four out of the six administrators had positive perceptions of the Danielson FFT. Colleen, an administrator with 7-9 years of experience, felt, “The Framework for Teaching is a great tool to use during observations in instrumental music because it provides ratings, a rubric for each domain, and is a fantastic framework for teachers to effectively understand how they are being measured each day.” Donna said, “The framework allows for general assessing of teacher skills, especially for any ‘specials’ teachers like instrumental music teachers.” Jeff agrees with the effectiveness, stating, “I think the Danielson Framework, especially the 2013 year model that we use, is highly effective.” He continued, “I think the Danielson Framework is a solid tool for both observers and for the individual getting observed. The framework is general enough in each of the domains to cover all curricular areas and yet provides the observer the ability to be very specific when needed.” Mark added from his experience as an administrator for 4-6 years, “I believe there is sufficient language in the Framework to relate to observations for instrumental music.” Four out of six administrators expressed positive views regarding the effectiveness and suitability of the FFT, emphasizing its utility in assessing teacher skills, providing a comprehensive framework for observations, and offering rubric language applicable to instrumental music instruction.

Negative Administrator Perceptions

Two administrators expressed negative perceptions of the Danielson FFT when utilized in instrumental music. Miranda, with 0-3 years of administrative experience, said in the survey, “I think that Domain 2 is effective, but there are parts of Domain 1 and 3 that are not effective.” Domain 2 references the classroom environment. Domain 1 and 3 address planning and instruction. She added in the follow-up interview, “I don't know. I feel like it's more set for the

more than general core for classes.” Brittany has 10-12 years of administrative experience and offered the following perceptions: “I do not feel all the areas as written apply to instrumental music. For example, using questions and discussion is not applicable on a daily basis for band/orchestra.” She added, “Domain 3 does not really apply to performance classes such as instrumental music.” Both administrators specifically address the rubric for Domain 3 Instruction as not fully addressing the scope of the instrumental music classroom.

Administrator Challenges

Participants expressed the challenges of the Danielson FFT through their survey and interview responses. Donna expressed, “Without training and knowledge of the specific content, I feel that I am only assessing general characteristics of specialized teachers, and when a curriculum specialist assesses teachers in their content area, that person can use the Danielson Framework in a more effective manner as it pertains to curriculum and instruction that they are familiar as they usually have experience in teaching in this area as well.” Colleen said, “The biggest challenge is the lack of knowledge of the content and what is considered effective planning and preparation for lessons in all instrumental music classes. Guidelines/exemplars not only for instrumental music but all content areas so administrators have a baseline of what is effective for all domains to ensure consistency in rating across all schools.” She added, “One challenge is the lack of specific examples that align with elective content areas such as instrumental music. I understand effective teaching. However, I am not musically trained, so a specific ‘look-fors’ in our rubric language that aligns with instrumental music would be beneficial when providing feedback to staff.” Miranda commented on the fitness of the rubric, stating, “I think that it is hard to make the instrumental music curriculum fit into the framework. There are pieces of the framework that lend themselves to these classes because they can be

more student-focused, but some are more focused on the core academics.” She expanded her answer with:

I think a lot, like I said, a lot of the pieces are looking at the structure of a normal academic class. And what does that look like versus when you're doing instrumental music? It will be very different, just by the nature of the kids practicing their pieces. You know, sometimes you can work with small groups depending on, you know, if you're going to focus on one section, what does that look like for the other part of the class?

Jeff comments on observer calibration, “I believe that with the Danielson models, especially 2013, there needs to be a great deal of communication both with your administrative team so that there is calibration amongst all of us and that we're coming up with the same type of scores and expectations.” He stated the importance of communicating to new teachers to understand the rubric, saying, “Truly understanding how challenging it is to meet the expectations of the highest ranking of distinguished. If you do not have that communication with teachers, they will feel that the proficient level is a failure and they're not doing well. And for them to understand and get distinguished, that is a 1% level of what teachers are in. So for them to be distinguished from the evaluation is a superior rating, saying you are 1% of all teachers in a school system.”

Teacher Challenges

Teacher participants spoke about their perceptions of challenges experiencing the Danielson FFT. Melanie indicated, “I understand all the components, but depending on the type of class my principal observes, I could be seen as not comfortable based on student behavior or motivation,” and added, “I currently have a mentor teacher even though I've been teaching for six school years and am getting a Masters degree in music education. I think the biggest issue is thinking a math teacher's classroom will be run the same as a band room. We also don't have a clear example of what highly effective classrooms look like, and we often go to the ‘traditional’ rehearsal structure, which is not student-led at all.” Brian had a similar perception, “The model is

more English Language Arts (ELA) focused, and it is sometimes trying to ‘force’ the model on instrumental music. We are more performance than ‘response’ content.” He added an additional perception:

The administrator cannot fully understand what an instrumental instructor experiences. The person observing me almost hardly ever has a musical background. I mean, 0 percent background. And to be honest with you, I want the music part, like the music feedback. We can talk about classroom management and classroom environment planning, preparation, and things like that, but the real feedback I want is my content area, and I don't get that. Nobody. I've never had an administrator that had any musical background whatsoever.

In his interview, Brian elaborated on the challenge of a snapshot model of teacher observation, stating, “It seems like the model is based on a singular class. It’s my perception that it doesn't consider a classroom's intricacies. My class has its own identity, norms, values, etc., and with that administrative personnel, it's a 45-minute snapshot of one day with a teacher prepared to show off.”

Zach, a teacher with 16-20 years of experience, expressed, “I believe that the framework does not address student age/grade levels, the size of the class, or the subject type being taught in the classroom. I don't believe the Danielson Framework addresses teaching skills versus concepts.” He echoed concern about student-led activities, saying, “Administrators have expressed frustration with me concerning giving ‘distinguished’ levels based almost entirely on student-led/run activities, lessons, and assessments. This one concept should not *always* be the measure of a ‘distinguished’ teacher. I think this limits the scope of administrators when observing teachers.” Travis, a teacher with 0-3 years of experience, reflects on one specific framework aspect. He said, “I always struggle with the assessment and learning goal. To me and the students, it is simple... we have a performance to prepare for, and we need to do well. Yet so

many things go into doing well, but in band, we might not focus on one thing in a rehearsal. It feels like my learning goal could be a paragraph.”

Subjectivity of Observers

Travis shared a personal story in his interview to illustrate the potential consequences of the subjectivity of the framework:

One of the questions I answered was how I think Danielson can be subjective. I've been at two schools in my district. I started in elementary school, which was Title 1. I was teaching elementary music there. When I was there, I really just got the idea that Danielson was very subjective based on the administrator. I had a friend there. She wasn't the most professional. But I saw that in her tenure year, she just had to get through two observations, and then she was good to receive tenure. In the fall, she had a decent observation, and then she missed a lot of work...and when the next observation came around, she thought she crushed it and went into her post-observation, and the administrator was like, 'You're not getting tenure. We're going to do another observation. If you pass that one, we'll bring you back next year.' And they like booted her out. I asked her, 'How do you answer your questions?' I just saw so much where if that administrator didn't like her, they could easily pick apart the lesson...They're just going which way they want to go.

Travis recounted a personal situation in which an administrator's biases influenced a colleague's tenure decision, illustrating how subjective interpretations of observations can have significant consequences for teachers' careers.

Purpose

In the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to identify, in their opinion, the purpose of teacher evaluation. From the administrator's perspective, Jeff offered, "So that our teachers align with both our school and our school district's expectations and that we have a consistent teaching delivery model for our students within each classroom." Miranda expanded by saying:

I think that teacher evaluation depends on where you are in your career. So, for the new teachers, it provides an opportunity for coaching and building those skills to help them become effective as they learn to be new teachers in this profession. Whereas for the

veteran teachers, and then people who've been teaching for a long time, I think it's more on what they can improve on to continue with their best practices, or is there an area they want to focus on and grow on? What are their personal and professional development needs besides the kind being provided? So, going in and being able to look at those specific pieces for those teachers.

Administrators bring differing perspectives on the purpose of teacher evaluation. Jeff emphasized the need for alignment with school and district expectations to ensure consistent teaching practices, and Miranda suggested that evaluations serve different purposes for new and veteran teachers, providing coaching and skill-building opportunities for newcomers while focusing on continued improvement and professional development for experienced educators.

Feedback

Travis, a teacher, speaks to feedback as the purpose of teacher evaluation. He discussed the difference between feedback from a music-specific observer and a school administrator by offering:

I would say the most important thing is the administrator's feedback, and if you're getting evaluated, you know, most of the time, someone's getting evaluated because they're early on in their career. As a teacher, I'm looking for feedback on what I can do better. Suppose it's a music specialist evaluating me. In that case, I'm looking at how I can be better as a band director, and if it's an administrator evaluating me, I'm looking more at how I can do better with classroom management or culture. I think it's for administrative feedback.

Travis responded with a personal narrative when asked how effective the Danielson Framework is for the purpose he identified. He added:

“I think that it serves its job when you're trying to get feedback. I don't think it technically serves its job for content specialists (like music). Since I've been with the administrator I have now, I've been flying through my evaluations. Even if I show self-doubt in the meetings, they're like, ‘Oh, you're great, you're doing a good job.’ But the first thing my administrators said to me was, ‘I don't know what you want me to look for, and I know nothing about band.’ It felt like I had to make the rubric for him...I don't think it serves the right purpose regarding anything besides math and English.

Travis' response emphasized feedback as the primary purpose of teacher evaluation, particularly seeking guidance for improvement, whether from a music specialist or an administrator.

However, he expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework, particularly in evaluating specialized subjects like music, citing instances where administrators lacked understanding of band instruction and struggled to provide meaningful feedback beyond general praise.

Self-Reflection

Teacher responses for the purpose of evaluation differed from the administrator's perspective. Brian responded:

I think, in my opinion, it's self-reflection. But that self-reflection, these steps, going through the Danielson model, forcing you to go back and think about what you were doing, you know, questioning, 'Is what I was doing with the kids effective? Am I progressing as a teacher?' That's important. I'm a natural self-reflector?... Not after every lesson, but I self-reflect a lot. I think this model is important because people don't think about it.

When asked how successful the Danielson model is in meeting the purpose of self-reflection, he replied:

I don't think it's very effective, to be honest with you, because it merely just brings up the thought of self-reflection. Self-reflection, once again, can't fit into a box. Okay, so the Danielson model attempts to put things in neat boxes. But when you're self-reflecting, the value of it is like kickstarting that self-reflection. I think it's only successful in kickstarting the thought about self-reflection.

Pre and Post-Conference Perceptions

All participants were asked about their experiences with the pre-observation and post-observation conferences related to instrumental music. Teacher perspectives varied, with some teachers expressing frustration over perfunctory discussions lacking in growth-oriented dialogue, while others found value in explaining their teaching methods to non-musical observers and appreciated immediate feedback following observations. David said, "My administrators have

never felt comfortable observing music rooms. They openly say so. Both pre-and post-observation conferences are simply something to check off, but not a productive or relevant conversation about growth.” Zach offered, “I have had amazing experiences with post and pre-observation conferences. It has always been beneficial to answer questions/explain/defend when meeting observers who are not musicians and people not familiar with instrumental music. But, I think the observations from non-music personnel are the most informative to my teaching.” Travis said, “I love it when we do our post-conference on the same day. I find that I am appreciated at my school, so when we meet, Danielson is thrown out the door, and I am told I did a good job. I always crushed Domain 4 but was picked apart in Domain 3 when I taught general music. The pre-observation is usually me explaining why we do band the way we do band. I find I have to tailor my lesson to meet Danielson when I normally do not worry about this.”

Some administrators shared about their pre and post-conference experiences. Donna offered, “Veteran teachers typically do not invest in this process and want to opt out of these steps. The pre-and post-observation conference provides me answers from observations or clarity in understanding when I may have misinterpreted an action, direction, task, etc., which usually increases the teacher's rating in a domain area.” Colleen expressed, “I have found the conversations in the pre-observation and post-observation conferences to be one of the most critical components of moving forward in the observation process. This is where the true conversation and coaching occur. This is a great time to engage in conversations with the teacher on lesson development and how to propel future lessons.” Miranda stated, “They involved more in-depth conversations. These conversations allow for better feedback to help make the framework fit the instrumental music classes.” Administrators provided insights into their pre-and post-conference experiences, highlighting the importance of these discussions in clarifying

observations, providing valuable feedback, and facilitating meaningful coaching conversations to enhance teaching practices in instrumental music settings.

Domain Comfort

Administrator and teacher participants were asked to identify the domains they are most comfortable with using the Danielson FFT in the teacher observation process. Some participants listed multiple domains in their responses, while others identified one. Figure 3 represents the frequency with which an administrator identified a domain as an area of comfort. Responses indicate greater comfort with Domain 2 (The Classroom Environment) and Domain 3 (Instruction).

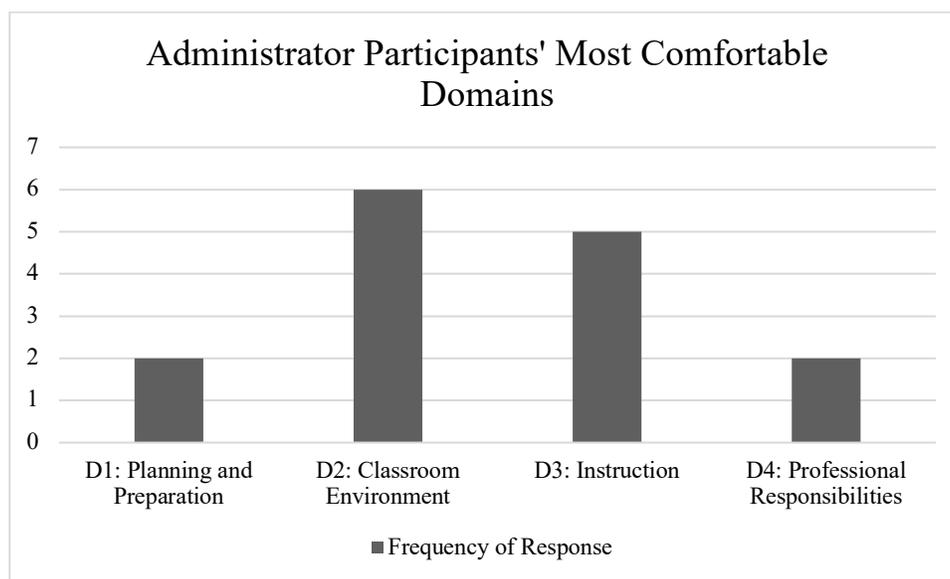


Figure 1. Administrator Response (Most Comfortable Domains)

Figure 4 represents the frequency with which an administrator identified a domain as an area where they are the least comfortable. Responses indicate the least comfort with Domain 1, followed by 3 and 4. Colleen shared, “I feel the least comfortable providing effective feedback in Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. A lot of this domain requires reflection and feedback

from the staff member. One challenge is the lack of specific examples that align with elective content areas such as instrumental music. I understand effective teaching. However, I am not musically trained, so a specific look for our rubric language that aligns with instrumental music would be beneficial when providing feedback to staff.”

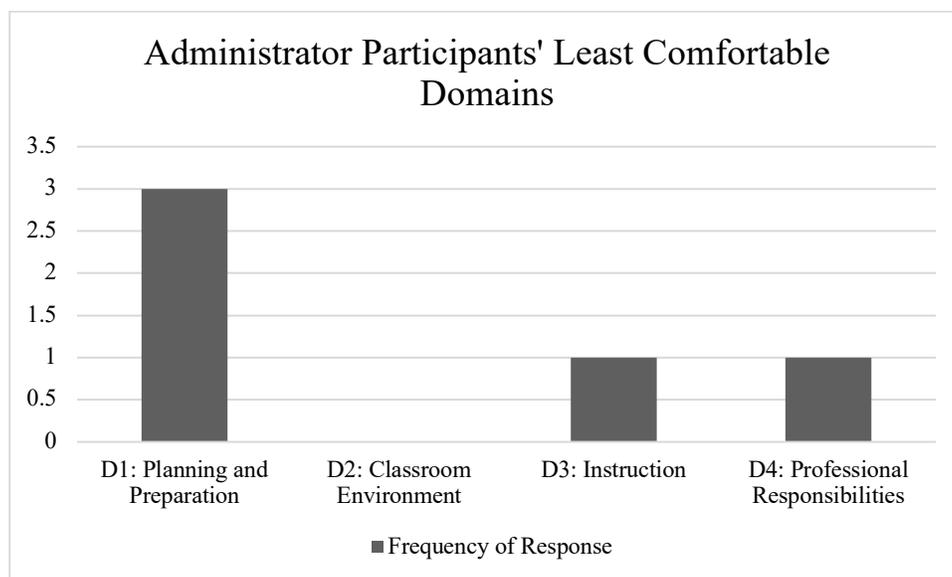


Figure 2. Administrator Response (Least Comfortable Domains)

Teacher Domain Comfort

Teacher participants were asked to identify the domains they are most comfortable with using the Danielson FFT in the teacher observation process. Some participants listed multiple domains in their responses, while others identified one. Figure 5 represents the frequency with which teachers identified a domain as an area of comfort. Responses indicate teacher participants are most comfortable with Domain 2 (The Classroom Environment) and Domain 4 (Professional Responsibilities).

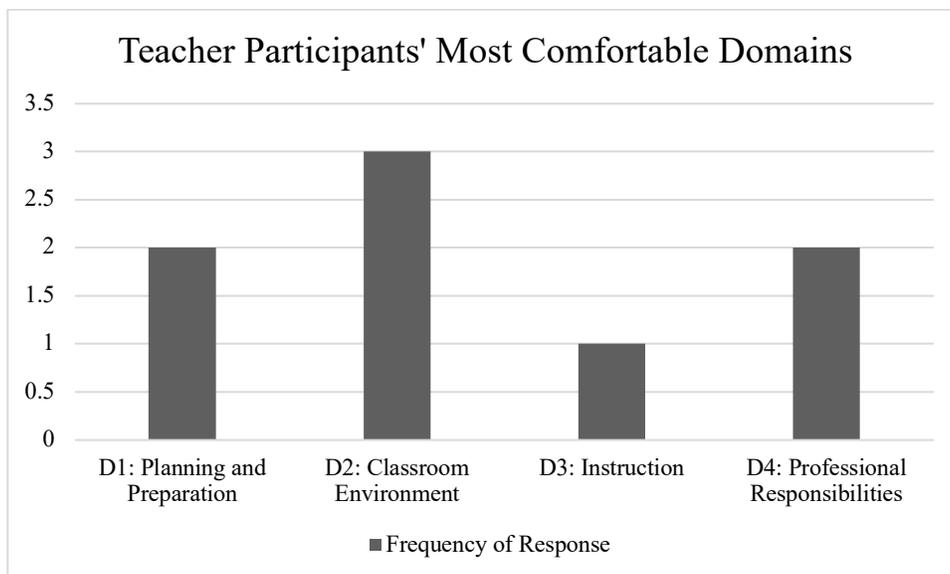


Figure 3. Teacher Response (Most Comfortable Domains)

Figure 6 represents the frequency with which a teacher identified a domain as an area in which they are the least comfortable. Three teacher participants did not answer the survey question. Responses indicate that Domain 1 is the least comfortable.

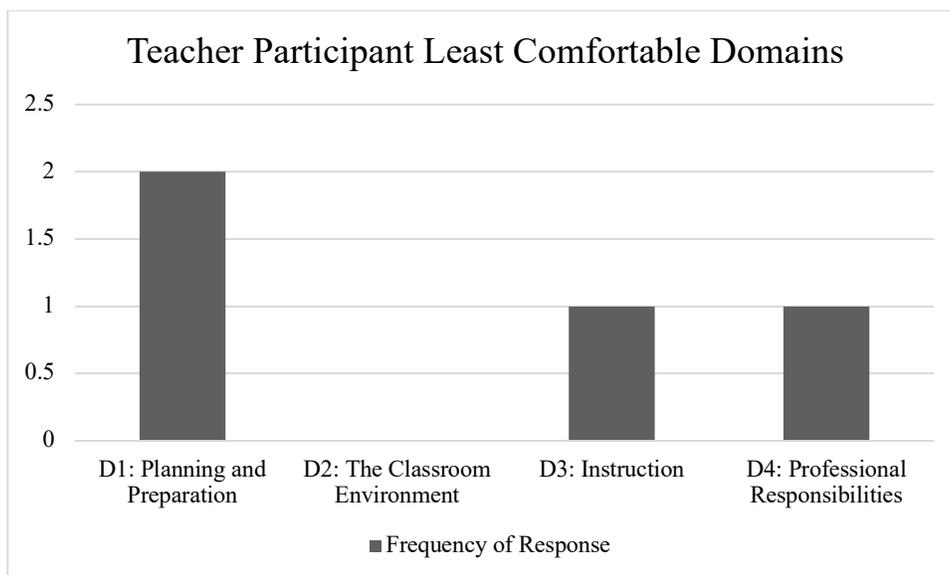


Figure 4. Teacher Response (Least Comfortable Domain)

Administrator Recommendations

Administrator participants provided the researcher with responses to address RQ3: What recommendations do music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance? Colleen posits, “As a principal, it would be helpful to have observable feedback for each domain that administrators could use when providing feedback in a specific domain.” Mark offers a similar perspective, “Potentially some additional resources that could supplement the Framework-specific to music education.” Brittany offers, “I think the phrasing should be modified to be more specific to an instrumental music class. The only value is discussing Domain 2.” Miranda says, “I don't think every teacher should be looked at every single piece of every domain in the framework each time they're observed. I think the observer should be able to pull a couple and focus really on those. So that way, the observer can think, ‘I know this teacher needs to work on classroom management,’ or maybe that's a focus they want to work on... Versus looking at all of it, because I think it does cover a lot and best help our teachers, they need to maybe focus just on one or two pieces.” Some participants did not respond to this question.

Teacher Recommendations

Teacher participants also provided the researcher with responses to address RQ3. Teachers had a variety of perspectives to share. Travis said, “I think we should develop an observation model designed for observing teachers. Not just instrumental teachers but all teachers. I appreciate my results in Danielson, but it's subjective. If an administrator did not like me, I think they could use the Danielson model to pick us apart.” Additionally, in his interview, he shared that he “would prefer to have a music specialist do my observations over my school principal.” Zach offered, “I think adding a supplement to the framework will address more

flexibility in Domains 2 and 3 (and overall). The supplement can address teaching skills versus concepts and emphasize more than *only* student-led events. I would love to see part of the framework have specific elements related to discipline, subject matter, and other variables that influence teaching (class size, class duration, class frequency, etc....).” Melanie said, “Educate special areas teachers differently on what the domains look like in those classrooms. Provide clear examples to new teachers of what administration wants in music classrooms.” Brian offered, “Move from exclusive reliance on rubric scoring in single/classroom assessments. Instead, move towards a more comprehensive evaluation.” David provided a neutral perspective, stating, “None, it is fine. I don’t think the FFT is perfect for music, but it is unrealistic to find a framework that applies K-12.” Todd replied, “Burn it.” Teacher participants offered diverse perspectives in response to RQ3, with suggestions ranging from the development of specialized observation models for teachers to the incorporation of supplements to enhance flexibility and address specific teaching variables. Some advocated for clearer education on domain expectations in music classrooms, while others proposed moving towards more comprehensive evaluations beyond rubric scoring. However, opinions varied, with some expressing neutrality towards the current framework and others advocating for its abandonment.

Interview Findings

Four participants, two teachers, and two administrators, engaged in voluntary interviews. Brian and Zach (teachers) and Jeff and Miranda (administrators) expanded on their initial survey responses. The interview questions addressed the purpose of teacher observation, perceptions of the FFT, and any additional information the participant wanted to share about the music teacher evaluation process.

Brian

Brian, a teacher with 21-25 years of experience, expanded on the purpose of teacher observation. "I think it's teacher self-reflection." He elaborated, "But that self-reflection of these steps, going through the Danielson model, forcing you to go back and start to think about what you were doing. 'Is what I was doing with the kids effective? Am I progressing as a teacher?' That's what I think is important. I'm a natural self-reflector. Not after every lesson, but I self-reflect a lot. And I think this model is important for those people who don't. I think that there's a lot of value in self-reflection. That's the value I perceive in the model."

Brian also wanted to share his perceptions of administrators and potential subjectivity. He avowed:

I think evaluations are just gentle nudges. What I mean by that is, 'Are administrators sugarcoating not to hurt the teacher's feelings?' Because when a person is giving an evaluation, there's a human component, a human in front of them. So, there's an administrator thinking, 'Okay, I'm speaking to a human; I know they have feelings, thoughts, and things like that.' They're going to think, 'They're going to think ill of me if I give them a terrible rating or say something.' Sometimes I want truth. Due to the climate, the administrator might not want to lose a teacher. A poor rating might be the last straw that sends a teacher to greener pastures because of an evaluation. We need to be effective, but are administrators thinking of that?...Is having a warm body in the classroom more important than me giving a poor evaluation? There's that ethical fine line.

Travis

Travis, a teacher with 0-3 years of experience, emphasized the need to bring in music peers and colleagues for feedback in his classroom. He said:

I haven't had much feedback from my music supervisor, so I bring people like former music supervisors and other band directors to try to get them to watch me sometimes. I don't find it very beneficial when it's my assistant principal... I love my assistant principal... every single time, I get the same feedback: 'You're doing a good job. We like you here,' but it's never music-specific like, 'That alto saxophone was out of tune.'

When the researcher asked, "Is it accurate to say you trust your music colleagues to give you feedback?" Travis replied, "I think it's a little scary to put your trust in colleagues just because I

question, ‘What if I’ve been doing all of this wrong?’ I know I’m gonna get direct feedback. But I also think it’s important to put my ego aside and put the students first and if I’m going to be vulnerable, so my students can grow. I would rather have a music education person help me out.”

Jeff

Jeff, an administrator with 25+ years of experience in school administration, offered his perceptions of the purpose of teacher evaluation and the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT. In his opinion, the purpose of teacher evaluation is “So that our teachers align with both our school and our school district’s expectations and that we have a consistent teaching delivery model for our students within each classroom.” When the researcher asked how effective the FFT is in meeting the stated purpose, Jeff responded, “From my experience in the evolution of the evaluation process within my current school system, I think the Danielson Framework, especially the 2013 year model we use, is highly effective. It is much more effective than what I was accustomed to when I first got to the district in 2005, and this is much more highly effective than the first version of Danielson Framework that we used.”

Jeff was provided with an open-ended opportunity to share any additional perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. He concluded:

Yes, I believe that with the Danielson models, especially the 2013 version, there needs to be a great deal of communication, both with your administrative team so that there is calibration amongst all of us and that we’re coming up with the same type of scores and expectations, and then, especially for new teachers coming into the district and truly understanding how challenging how difficult it is to meet the expectations of the highest ranking distinguished. If you do not have that communication with teachers, they will feel that the proficient level is a failure and they’re not doing well. It is important for them to really understand to get to distinguished, only 1% of teachers are in that category, and for them to get distinguished in the evaluation it is saying you are in the top 1% of all teachers in the district.

Miranda

Miranda, an administrator with 0-3 years of experience, commented on specific domains of the Danielson Framework related to instrumental music. She offered:

I think in one part of the Danielson Framework a lot of the things that are ‘distinguished’ are super student-focused, and I don't think are realistic... I think pieces of that aren't necessarily realistic in any classroom. However, I would say for some of the data pieces for instrumental music, it might actually be better because the kids can do more reflective assignments on how they're doing with their own music. I think that actually is better for the kind of classes you're asking about versus the majority of the other classes that I observe.

Miranda continued her feedback, referring to Domain 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records, specifically the element of student progress in learning. The description for “Distinguished” in this element is “Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student progress in learning is fully effective. Students contribute information and participate in interpreting the records.”³ She noted, “I think the student piece of that to make that ‘distinguished’ is not easy for all contents. But for instrumental music, I think a lot of what they're going to be doing is reflecting on their performances. It might be easier for the instrumental classes, versus maybe one of the academic classes, to provide evidence for students contributing and participating in the records.”

General Narratives

Most administrator participants felt that the Danielson FFT provides an adequate rubric to assess instrumental music teachers. However, music teacher participants had split opinions on the framework's applicability. Some teachers feel that the single “snapshot” of one observation does not capture the comprehensive nature of an instrumental music class. Many teachers commented that it is more difficult to demonstrate “student-led” learning in an instrumental music class. Administrators identified calibration and music-specific training challenges that

³ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 97.

prevent consistent practices across observers. Teachers echoed this sentiment, and most indicated they wanted feedback from a music “expert” observer. Some teachers expressed feelings of subjectivity in the process and that administrators can use the FFT for punitive and retaliatory purposes.

General Description

The teacher who desires the observation process to provide feedback on their teaching prefers an observer with musical experience or significant training. Commercial frameworks capture only some of the intricacies of an instrumental music classroom, but there is recognition from teachers that no model is perfect. Administrators utilizing the FFT model recognize that further support or music-specific examples in Domain 1: Planning and Preparation would help them assess and provide feedback for instrumental music teachers.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

The researcher applied the concept of phenomenological reduction in the research analysis process. To focus on analyzing the participant’s experiences and suspend personal judgment, the researcher used a journaling process to express personal beliefs and biases. Journaling personal experiences allowed the researcher to “be less dependent on their subjective mind and to see the phenomenon for what it is, the thing itself.”⁴ Another element of phenomenological reduction that the research applied was intentionality, which “is the fundamental property of consciousness, of looking at something. It is our awareness of something.”⁵ To maintain focus on participant responses, the researcher took frequent breaks

⁴ Peoples, *How to Write*, 63.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

from narrative analysis before returning to re-read the participant responses. Participant responses represent their experience in the present, known in transcendental phenomenology as the horizon. Horizon is the present experience that “cannot be suspended or bracketed because you are currently in it. Everything has a horizon when we look at any phenomenon- there is always this present experience.”⁶

Credibility

The research established credibility and trustworthiness through the survey and interview process. Survey questions were established for consistency, and responses were analyzed verbatim using participant quotes. Follow-up interviews followed a semi-structured script. Each interview lasted less than 30 minutes, and member checking allowed the participants to verify their original survey responses. The researcher engaged in peer review to increase the trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study method and results.

Transferability

The study intended to explore the perceptions of middle school administrators and middle school instrumental teachers perceptions of the Danielson FFT. According to Peoples, “Insights gleaned from the lived experiences of these participants may be similar to insights about other populations with similar experiences.”⁷ The themes and research findings may offer insights for administrators/observers, music teachers, and policy-makers in teacher evaluation.

⁶ Peoples, *How to Write*, 30.

⁷ Peoples, *How to Write*, 85.

Dependability

A detailed explanation of the research process was provided and followed to maintain the study's dependability. Repeating the research would yield similar findings for the same phenomenon within a similar context. The researcher provided a detailed research plan in Chapter 3 and followed each step as described.

Confirmability

The researcher's personal experiences and biases are noted in Chapter 3. To protect the research from bias throughout the process, the researcher utilized journaling to make note of personal experiences and remove personal distractions. The researcher concentrated on the participants' lived experiences and listened to interviews without judgment. Member checking allowed interviewees to confirm their responses. A neutral peer review confirmed the elimination of researcher bias.

Summary

This chapter provided the results from the data acquired from six middle school instrumental music teachers and six middle school administrators who shared their perceptions of the Danielson FFT. Demographic descriptions were provided for the participants. Next, the research described the situated narratives derived from the preliminary and final meaning units and the general narrative and description. Participants' experiences were shared through direct quotes. Finally, the researcher summarized the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the method and results.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators on the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as an evaluation tool for instrumental music. The findings are discussed and connected to the current gap in the literature. This chapter summarizes the research findings and discusses them as they relate to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. This chapter concludes with study limitations, discussion, recommendations for future research, and implications.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of middle school instrumental music teachers and administrators on the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT as an evaluation tool for instrumental music. Currently, there is a lack of research focusing on the tool's utility to provide feedback for growth in instrumental music. Before the study, the researcher developed hypotheses related to the primary research questions.

Hypotheses

Research Question One (RQ1: How do music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?) may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis One: While school administrators may generally feel that the Danielson FFT effectively evaluates instrumental music classrooms, the instrumental teachers may identify issues with specific FFT components that negatively affect their feelings regarding teacher evaluations.

Principals who receive substantial training on using the FFT as a tool for teacher feedback and growth have some belief that the tool works for all disciplines. Their confidence in

using the tool detracts from the nuanced differences in how specific framework components materialize in the music classroom. On the contrary, teachers may feel that administrators with no arts background may need help understanding how the activities in the instrumental music class align with instructional objectives, questioning, and assessment. For example, administrators may need help understanding how certain activities engage students in formative assessment during classroom rehearsal. Edgar posits, “Beyond arts advocacy, a certain level of musical expertise needs to be present when assessing music teachers. The goings-on of the music department, what students should be learning in music, and student’s progress should be included in regular conversations.”¹ Principals may perceive the tool positively, whereas instrumental music teachers may identify several deficiencies.

Research Question Two (RQ2: What are the key challenges and limitations of using the Danielson Framework to evaluate *music* teacher performance as perceived by music teachers and administrators?) may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis Two: Music teachers and principals identify challenges in utilizing the Danielson FFT in an observation scenario. There may be specific components of domains that are not visible in a single class observation, but administrators still select a competency level based on the rubric scoring criteria. Teachers may experience frustration at the feedback received on an observation report if they feel it does not accurately describe the teaching environment. Additionally, teachers may be frustrated that the framework does not consider specific music classroom techniques, processes, and demonstrations of learning that occur over a more extended period.

¹ Edgar, “Communications of Expectations,” 144.

Research Question Three (RQ3: What recommendations do music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance?) may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis Three: Music teachers may desire a more collaborative approach to teacher observation and evaluation that reflects the context and environment of instrumental music.

An observer utilizing the FFT during one specific lesson may need help understanding what is occurring in the classroom and how many processes the students are completing at one time. An observer must understand what is happening and be able to provide appropriate feedback for teacher improvement. Teachers may receive ratings without specific, timely, relevant feedback for development and improvement. States can select or design teacher evaluation processes based on teaching feedback and growth. In that case, instrumental music teachers should advocate for evaluation tools that meet the scope of their classroom environments, processes, and procedures.

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

The research findings of this study extracted multiple themes that were present in existing literature. Teacher participants expressed frustration over the lack of observations from someone with music-specific experience. Some participants discussed current practices of inviting peers into their room for personalized feedback and the idea of establishing peer review groups for a collaborative review of music evaluations. Berberick et al. reached a similar conclusion in their research, noting, “Teachers believed they would benefit from peer evaluation as a method for receiving more specific feedback about their own practice.”² The Danielson FFT provides a

² Berberick et al., “A Comparison,” 51.

general rubric and checklist for a snapshot observation; music teachers feel that the rubric only partially captures the comprehensive nature of the instrumental music classroom.

The result of this research is similar to the results discussed in Bernard and Abramo, where they summarize:

One of the authors, Cara, has conducted research in which she talked with music teachers and evaluators about their experience with teacher evaluation. She found that unfortunately, music teachers perform lower than their colleagues in certain areas in evaluations. As she talked to administrators, she found that they did not know how to communicate about teacher evaluation and music. Music teacher explained to her that they, too, had a hard time rationalizing to their evaluators their pedagogical choices in the music classroom.³

Pre- and post-conferences allow teachers and evaluators to come to a clearer understanding of expectations and allow teachers to discuss the intricacies of their instrumental music class. Smith et al. posit, “Social interactions, observations, and experiences through teacher evaluation settings have the potential to dictate how the teacher responds to future instructional events, such as professional development.”⁴ Administrators in this current study felt that the Danielson FFT applies to the music classroom. Still, some admit they could use more training and content-specific examples for music instruction. Observer training and preparation was a common theme in the existing literature of teacher observations.⁵

Limitations

The study is limited by the number of participants who elected to participate. The research requirements limited participants outside of the middle school level. Only four participants volunteered for a follow-up interview to expand on survey responses. More

³ Bernard and Abramo, *Teacher Evaluation in Music*, 4.

⁴ Smith et al., “Teacher Evaluation Feedback,” 676.

⁵ MET Project, *Gathering Feedback*, 13.

participation in follow-up interviews would have provided more qualitative data to analyze. For greater generability of the research, the study could be replicated with different levels of teaching and administration and without the 12-month restriction for the last observation.

Discussion

The first research question this study attempted to answer was: How do music teachers and administrators perceive the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance? Half of the teacher participants in this study (n=3) felt that the FFT is applicable and can assess many aspects of a teacher. The other half of the teacher participants (n=3) felt the tool was ineffective in assessing instrumental music. Most administrator participants (n=4) thought that the FFT is a great tool to use and allows for a successful teacher assessment. Some feel that the tool is straightforward to use, and there is an understanding between the teacher and the observer. One administrator pointed out that the potential weakness of the framework is the lack of calibration across individual observers.

This study's second primary research question was: What are the key challenges and limitations of using the Danielson Framework to evaluate *music* teacher performance as perceived by music teachers and administrators? Administrator participants indicated the biggest challenge is a lack of knowledge of the content and what is considered effective planning and preparation for instrumental music classes. Two administrator participants expressed difficulty in making the instrumental observation fit into the framework. Teacher participants expressed frustration over applying the framework to a single class observation, which often does not fully document the comprehensive nature of the instrumental music class. For example, the Danielson FFT emphasizes student-led experiences associated with a higher teacher rating. However, depending on the time of year, an instrumental rehearsal may be teacher-led for the entirety of

the class. Teachers in this situation often adapt their original plans to fit the checkboxes of the Danielson observation. A common theme from teachers was the desire to be observed by a music content specialist or a peer who can provide specific feedback in the instruction domain. Lastly, some teachers feel the FFT allows for too much subjectivity from the observer.

The study's third primary research question was: What recommendations do music teachers and administrators have for improving the effectiveness and utility of the Danielson FFT as a tool for evaluating music teacher performance? Some administrators had no recommendations, but a few added that additional resources to supplement the framework specific to music would be helpful as an observer. Exemplars, best practices, or guidelines for observing music would assist the consistency of evaluator feedback. One administrator proposed that the observation process have a more precise focus, perhaps allowing the administrator and teacher to agree on which domains will be observed in a lesson versus all of them comprehensively. Teachers made multiple recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT for evaluating teacher performance. One teacher proposed a collaborative model where music teachers could discuss and share their evaluations in a safe place. Additionally, a balance of observers, such as half school administration and half a content-level specialist, would provide a teacher with a rounded perspective. One teacher proposed a supplement to Domains 2 and 3 to address teaching skills in a music class versus concepts or consider other variables that influence teaching, such as class size, class duration, etc. Previous research indicates that the music classroom often has challenges not present in the traditional core classes.⁶ A common theme was adequately training and educating teachers on what the domains look like in the particular area classrooms (like music).

⁶ Berberick et al., "A Comparison," 51.

The current study investigating the perceptions of the Danielson FFT in instrumental music is lensed through the concept of self-efficacy as a result of confidence in an evaluation tool. Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their success.⁷ According to Alfred Bandura, "Higher levels of perceived self-efficacy are accompanied by higher performance attainments."⁸ One teacher participant shared a personal narrative account of, in their perception, a situation where an administrator used the FFT to get rid of a teacher, scoring the teacher with "unsatisfactory" on their observations after a pattern of demonstrating proficiency. The teacher developed negative feelings about their job performance and environment in this situation. Multiple teacher respondents indicated that their administrators praise them in the observation process, which leads to positive feelings about their job performance.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study was limited to six middle school administrators and six instrumental music teachers. Researchers in the future could replicate this study at multiple levels. Additionally, this study focused specifically on the Danielson FFT. Researchers could replicate the study to examine different commercial or local frameworks to offer teacher and administrator perspectives. Results from these studies can be used to advocate for administrator training, teacher training, and the development of a model tool for music teaching. Collaborative efforts between evaluators and teachers should include all stakeholders in developing a teacher observation tool.

Future research could more deeply examine the administrator's experiences utilizing tools

⁷ Schwarzer, *Self-Efficacy*, 10.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

for teacher observation in the music classroom. A potential area of investigation is investigating support or training that could contribute to feelings of effectiveness as an evaluator in music. Additional phenomenological research could more closely examine the teacher's experience of the evaluation process and its connection to personal feelings of efficacy.

Implications for Practice

This research study illustrated discrepancies in perceptions between teachers and administrators of the music teacher observation process utilizing the Danielson FFT. The implications for practice from this study offer valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers involved in evaluating music teachers using the Danielson FFT. Local, state, and national stakeholders in teacher evaluation should recognize the divergence in perceptions regarding the applicability of the FFT. Districts should acknowledge the potential weaknesses highlighted by administrators regarding the lack of calibration among individual observers, often due to a lack of training or resources specific to music. Evaluators can implement measures to enhance consistency in the application and interpretation of the FFT, ensuring a more reliable assessment across different observers.

Administrators in this study indicated a desire for training, specifically in planning and preparation for instrumental music classes. Bridging this knowledge gap is essential for a more accurate evaluation of music teacher performance, especially as it relates to music teacher perceptions of quality feedback. Addressing administrators' suggestions for additional resources by providing examples, best practices, and guidelines for observing music may enhance the teacher and evaluator's observation experience.

Evaluators should recognize and address teachers' frustration in fitting the comprehensive nature of instrumental music classes into a single observation. Policymakers should consider a

flexible application of the FFT, allowing for adaptations based on the distinctive dynamics of music classes. Additionally, districts should consider incorporating a peer review model for music where teachers can engage in discussion and share evaluations in a supportive environment, fostering professional growth. Incorporating these implications into practice can contribute to a more effective, fair, and supportive evaluation process for music teachers, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of music education. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders should continue to develop comprehensive and nuanced observation tools that address the unique challenges of music teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the perceptions of music teachers and administrators regarding the effectiveness of the Danielson FFT in evaluating music teacher performance, addressing specific challenges and limitations, and proposing recommendations for improvement. The findings revealed a divided perspective among teachers, with some finding the FFT applicable and others expressing concerns, particularly in assessing instrumental music. On the other hand, administrators generally viewed the FFT positively but noted potential weaknesses related to calibration among individual observers.

The study highlighted key challenges, such as the need for more knowledge about instrumental music content among administrators and frustrations from teachers about fitting the comprehensive nature of instrumental music classes into a single observation. Teacher preferences for being observed by music content specialists or peers and concerns about subjectivity in the observation process were also evident. Recommendations for improvement centered around additional resources specific to music within the framework, such as exemplars and best practices. Teachers proposed collaborative models involving school administration and

content-level specialists as observers and suggested supplements to address teaching skills unique to music classes. A recurring theme was the need for thorough teacher training and education on domain application in music classrooms.

The study framed its investigation through the lens of self-efficacy, highlighting the impact of confidence in an evaluation tool on teachers' perceptions and job satisfaction. Instances of negative experiences with the FFT leading to diminished self-efficacy underscored the importance of administrators providing constructive feedback and support during the evaluation process. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and replicating the study at various educational levels. Exploring different evaluation frameworks and conducting deeper investigations into administrators' experiences and the teacher's phenomenological perspective could further enhance our understanding of practical teacher evaluation tools in music education. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders in developing observation tools should be encouraged to create more comprehensive and nuanced instruments that capture the unique challenges and strengths of music teaching.

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Appendix A: Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching

Danielson Framework for Teaching Domains, Components and Elements¹:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

- 1a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
 - Knowledge of content and structure of the discipline
 - Knowledge of prerequisite relationships
 - Knowledge of content-related pedagogy
- 1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
 - Knowledge of child and adolescent development
 - Knowledge of the learning process
 - Knowledge of students' skills, knowledge, and language proficiency
- 1c. Setting Instructional Outcomes
 - Values, sequence, and alignment
 - Clarity
 - Balance
 - Suitability for diverse students
- 1d. Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources
 - Resources for classroom use
 - Resources to extend content knowledge and pedagogy
 - Resources for students
- 1e. Designing Coherent Instruction
 - Learning activities
 - Instructional materials and resources
 - Instructional groups
 - Lesson and unit structure
- 1f. Designing Student Assessments
 - Congruence with instructional outcomes
 - Criteria and standards
 - Design of formative assessments
 - Use for planning

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
 - Teacher interactions with students
 - Student interactions with other students
- 2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning
 - Importance of the content
 - Expectations for learning and achievement
 - Student pride in work

¹ Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, 3-4.

- 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures
 - Management of instructional groups
 - Management of transitions
 - Management of materials and supplies
 - Performance of noninstructional duties
 - Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior
 - Expectations
 - Monitoring of Student Behavior
 - Response to student misbehavior
- 2e. Organizing Physical Space
 - Safety and accessibility
 - Arrangement of furniture and use of physical resources

Domain 3: Instruction

- 3a. Communicating With Students
 - Expectations for Learning
 - Directions and procedures
 - Explanations of content
 - Use of oral and written language
- 3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
 - Quality of questions
 - Discussion techniques
 - Student participation
- 3c. Engaging Students in Learning
 - Activities and assignments
 - Grouping of students
 - Instructional materials and resources
 - Structure and pacing
- 3d. Using Assessment in Instruction
 - Assessment criteria
 - Monitoring of student learning
 - Feedback to students
 - Student self-assessment and monitoring of progress
- 3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
 - Lesson adjustment
 - Response to students
 - Persistence

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

- 4a. Reflecting on Teaching
 - Accuracy
 - Use in future teaching

- 4b. Maintaining Accurate Records
 - Student completion of assignments
 - Student progress in learning
 - Noninstructional records
- 4c. Communicating with Families
 - Information about the instructional program
 - Information about individual students
 - Engagement of families in the instructional program
- 4d. Participating in a Professional Community
 - Relationships with colleagues
 - Involvement in a culture of professional inquiry
 - Service to the school
 - Participation in school and district projects
- 4e. Growing and Developing Professionally
 - Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill
 - Receptivity to feedback from colleagues
 - Service to the profession
- 4f. Showing Professionalism
 - Integrity and ethical conduct
 - Service to the students
 - Advocacy
 - Decision making
 - Compliance with school and district regulations

Appendix B: CITI Completion



Completion Date 11-Aug-2023
Expiration Date 11-Aug-2027
Record ID 57495218

This is to certify that:

Kimberly Hirschmann

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research
(Curriculum Group)

Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research
(Course Learner Group)

1 - RCR
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Liberty University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?we583f18e-97f4-493b-b76a-d66c0eb01864-57495218

Appendix C: Survey and Interview Questions

Questionnaire:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to seek perceptions of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as it relates to middle school instrumental music. Please complete the questionnaire in this SurveyMonkey. The survey has 9 questions and takes no more than 1 hour to complete.

Responses should be completed within 14 days. Thank you for participating.

Instructions: Choose the best response for each prompt below.

4. Which category describes you?

Middle School Instrumental Music Teacher

Middle School Administrator

5. Which category best describes your experience in your current role as a teacher or administrator?

0-3 years

4-6 years

7-9 years

10-12 years

13-15 years

16-20 years

21-25 years

25 or more years

6. (Administrators Only) What is your content area of certification (ex. Science, Math, Visual Art, etc.)? _____

Open-ended Content Questions: Please provide a *detailed* response to each question below.

7. What are your personal perceptions on the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
8. What components of the Danielson Framework do you feel the most comfortable with?
9. What components of the Danielson Framework do you feel the least comfortable with?
10. What challenges have you experienced with the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
11. What recommendations do you have for improving the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for teacher observations in instrumental music?
12. What are your experiences with the pre-observation and post-observation conferences related to instrumental music observations?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

1. Are there any responses from the survey that you wish to expand upon or clarify?
2. In your opinion, what is the purpose of teacher evaluation?
3. How successful is the Danielson Framework for Teaching in meeting the purpose you described in your response to question 1?
4. Do you have any additional perceptions of the teacher evaluation process that you would like to share?

Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree. The purpose of my research is to examine the experiences and perceptions of middle school administrators and instrumental music teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching observation tool, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be a current middle school instrumental music teacher or a middle school administrator. If you are a teacher, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) teaching middle school instrumental music (band or orchestra), have been formally observed using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and have received a formal observation within the last 12 months. If you are an administrator, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) serving as a principal or assistant/vice principal at the middle school, perform teacher observations for instrumental music (band/orchestra) teachers, utilize the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the observation tool, and have performed at least one observation within the last 12 months. Teachers employed by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Maryland will not be eligible to participate in this study. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take a confidential online, open-ended survey and may participate in a voluntary video-recorded virtual interview. It should take no more than 1 hour to complete the survey and no more than 1 hour for the interview. Interview participants will be allowed to participate in member checking to review their survey responses. Member checking will take no more than 10 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed, and pseudonyms will be assigned.

To participate, please [click here](#) to complete the study survey. If you have indicated that you would like to participate in a follow-up interview, I will contact you to schedule an interview.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document on the first page of the survey.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Hirschmann
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix E: Social Media Post

ATTENTION MIDDLE SCHOOL INSTRUMENTAL TEACHERS AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to examine the experiences and perceptions of middle school administrators and instrumental music teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching observation tool. To participate, you must be a current middle school instrumental music teacher or a middle school administrator. If you are a middle school teacher, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) teach middle school instrumental music (band or orchestra), have been formally observed using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and have received a formal observation within the last 12 months. If you are a middle school administrator, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) serving as a principal or assistant/vice principal at the middle school, perform teacher observations for instrumental (band/orchestra) teachers, utilize the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the observation tool, and have performed at least one observation within the last 12 months. Teachers employed by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Maryland will not be eligible to participate in this study. Participants will be asked to complete a confidential online, open-ended survey, which should take no more than 1 hour to complete. Participants may participate in a voluntary follow-up interview which will be video-recorded and should take about 1 hour to complete. Interview participants will be allowed to participate in member checking to review their survey responses, which should take no longer than 10 minutes. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please click the link at the end of this post. A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey.

To take the survey, click here: [Begin Survey](#)

Appendix F: Consent Information

Title of the Project: Middle School Administrator and Instrumental Music Teacher Perception of the Danielson Framework for Teaching Observation Tool

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Hirschmann, Doctoral Candidate, School of Music, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study if you are a middle school instrumental music teacher or a middle school administrator. If you are a teacher, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) teaching middle school instrumental music (band or orchestra), have been formally observed using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and have received a formal observation within the last 12 months. If you are an administrator, you must be 18 years of age or older, currently (school year 2023-2024) serving as a principal or assistant/vice principal at the middle school, perform teacher observations for instrumental music (band/orchestra) teachers, utilize the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the observation tool, and have performed at least one observation within the last 12 months. Teachers employed by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Maryland will not be eligible to participate in this study. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences and perceptions of middle school administrators and instrumental music teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching observation tool.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete a confidential online, open-ended survey that will take no more than 1 hour.
2. Complete an optional virtual interview at your convenience. The interview will take no more than 1 hour and will be video recorded.
3. Interview participants will be allowed to participate in member checking to review their survey responses. Member checking will take no more than 10 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include contribution to a body of evidence for developing alternative theories for instrumental teacher evaluation and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool for music teacher evaluation.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to the online survey and interviews will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for five years and then deleted. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as a Curriculum Specialist at Frederick County Public Schools, Maryland. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, the research will not conduct formal observations of any teacher participants in school year 2023-2024. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kimberly Hirschmann. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at khirschmann@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Brian Stiffler, at bstiffler@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature and Date

Appendix G: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 29, 2023

Kimberly Hirschmann
Brian Stiffler

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-529 Middle School Administrator and Instrumental Music Teacher Perception of the Danielson Framework for Teaching Observation Tool

Dear Kimberly Hirschmann, Brian Stiffler,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office