

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES PERTAINING TO  
THE TEACHING OF BEGINNING OBOE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL BAND  
PROGRAMS

by

LISA HAUSER PRODAN

(Under the Direction of Dwight Manning and Clinton Taylor)

ABSTRACT

Learning to play a musical instrument may be both rewarding yet frustrating for the young student. As with many instruments, the oboe presents challenges and difficulties for the beginning student, which may limit the appropriate development of skills necessary for success. Therefore, it may be crucial that oboe students receive proper instruction at the beginning of their study. According to current and previous research, information regarding methodologies used by public school band instructors pertaining to teaching beginning oboe students ranges from limited to non-existent. A greater understanding of these teaching strategies and approaches may improve effectiveness of oboe instruction in public school band programs, thereby increasing successful performance at the beginning level and beyond.

A questionnaire was developed and hosted on the Internet to investigate the strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students. Instructors who taught grades five through eight in the United States participated in the study by completing the on-line questionnaire.

The majority (82.2%) of participating band instructors indicated they permit students to begin oboe study in the middle school grade levels. Although many professionals and specialists have recommended that beginning oboe students first study another instrument (Colwell, R.J. & Goolsby, T., 1992; Kemper, R., 1970; Prodan, J., 1995; Rath, R., n.d.; Robinson, W., 2001; Weiger, M, 1998; Westphal, F., 1990), as well as receive small-group homogeneous (Mayer, R., 1956; Polk, J., 2004) and private instruction (Rothwell, E., 1982; Whittow, M., 1992), many participating band instructors indicated they do not use these strategies and approaches.

Band instructors indicated an overall satisfaction with their primary band method book pertaining to the teaching of fundamental concepts on oboe, although some acknowledged deficiencies and limitations, especially pertaining to proper fingerings and embouchure formation, and indicated the need for supplemental materials and private instruction.

Due to challenges of playing oboe and potential limitations of band method books, band instructors may need to consider various teaching strategies and approaches such as providing oboe instruction beyond the full-band class, implementing materials specifically intended for oboe, and providing aural and visual models for oboe students.

INDEX WORDS: beginning oboe; beginning band; band instructor; public school band; oboe instruction; on-line survey; Internet survey

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LISA HAUSER PRODAN

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LISA HAUSER PRODAN

Major Professor: Dwight Manning  
Clinton Taylor

Committee: Adrian Childs  
Kenneth Fischer  
Stephen Valdez

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of Study.....	4
Need for Study.....	5
Delimitations.....	9
2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
Teaching Oboe.....	10
Teaching Beginning Band.....	20
Band Method Books.....	27
3 METHOD.....	30
Participants.....	30
Materials.....	30
Procedure.....	31
4 ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	33
Demographic Information.....	35
Current Band Programs.....	38
Students Enrolled to Study Oboe.....	39

Required Study on Another Instrument.....	40
Specific Criteria Used in Selecting Students for Oboe Study.....	44
Small-group Homogeneous Instruction and Supplemental Materials.....	46
Private Oboe Instruction.....	52
Primary Band Method Books.....	55
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS .....	61
Grade Level Students May Begin Oboe.....	63
Required Study on Another Instrument.....	64
Criteria Used in Selecting Oboe Students.....	67
Types of Instruction.....	70
Materials Used for Oboe Instruction.....	71
Demographic Trends .....	73
Conclusions and Future Research .....	75
REFERENCES .....	78
APPENDICES .....	88
A Teachers of Beginning Oboe Students Questionnaire .....	88
B Cover Letter: Public School Band Instructors Survey Information .....	91



## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Geographic Regions of Band Instructors.....	36
Table 2: Teaching Experience of Band Instructors.....	37
Table 3: Primary Instrument of Band Instructors .....	37
Table 4: Grade Level Students May Enter Band .....	39
Table 5: Students Enrolled in Beginning Level Band.....	39
Table 6: Instrument Required to Study Prior to Studying Oboe .....	41
Table 7: Duration of Study on Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study .....	42
Table 8: Required Study of Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study, within Each Region .....	43
Table 9: Required Study of Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study, within Years Teaching Experience.....	43
Table 10: Required Study of Another Instrument, within Band Instructor’s Primary Instrument	44
Table 11: Criteria Used in Selection of Students to Study Oboe.....	45
Table 12: Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Each Region .....	48
Table 13: Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Years of Teaching Experience.....	49
Table 14: Small-Group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Band Instructors’ Primary Instrument.....	49
Table 15: Materials Used in Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students.....	50
Table 16: Supplemental Materials Provided for Oboe Students .....	51

Table 17: When Private Study is Required .....	53
Table 18: Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Each Region.....	54
Table 19: Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Years of Teaching Experience.....	55
Table 20: Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Band Instructor’s Primary Instrument .....	55
Table 21: Primary Band Method Book .....	56
Table 22: Criteria Used in Selecting Primary Band Method Books.....	57
Table 23: Perceived Success of Band Method Book Pertaining to Fundamental Concepts .....	58

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

Learning to play a musical instrument may be both rewarding yet frustrating for the young student. As with many instruments, the oboe presents challenges and difficulties for the beginning student, which may limit the appropriate development of skills necessary for success among young players when learning to play oboe. According to current and previous research, information regarding strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe ranges from limited to non-existent.

Although musical instruments in general pose different challenges, the oboe seems to be a mystery to both band instructor and student. Often, young musicians have difficulty developing skills necessary to play and perform on oboe at an acceptable musical level as indicated by the national standards for middle school and high school students. According to these standards devised by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC, 1996), a student in grades five through eight participating in an instrumental ensemble is expected to perform with “good posture, good playing position, and good breath, bow, or stick control,” and with “expression and technical accuracy” at a music difficulty level of two on a scale of one to six (Music Educators National Conference, 1996, 66-67). Specifically, students should be able to perform without hesitation or errors, using appropriate playing position and posture, with accurate intonation and rhythm, and proper tone quality, and “demonstrate an understanding of dynamics, phrasing, style, and expression” (MENC, 1996, 66-67). Current research

indicating strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors to assist oboe students in accomplishing these goals is ambiguous and limited. Investigating strategies and approaches of public school band instructors who currently teach beginning oboe students may reveal strengths and/or weaknesses pertaining to oboe instruction, including instruction regarding fundamentals such as proper embouchure, breath control, posture, articulation, hand position, and fingerings. Further, an investigation of specific methodologies of public school band instructors may lead to a better understanding of effective teaching approaches, and may enhance the overall musical development of oboe players' performance skills.

According to some professionals, developing proper tone production should be a priority in playing the oboe, even at the beginning level (Gekeler, 1940; Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Schuring, 2000; Vaneman, 2002; Whittow, 1992). Schuring (2000) and Whittow have suggested the three main factors affecting tone production are embouchure, breath control, and posture. Rothwell (1982) has suggested that posture and instrument position affect the formation of embouchure, and embouchure, in turn, affects breath control, whereas Roseman has claimed that a combination of embouchure and reed affects breath control (Vaneman, 2003). Due to inconsistent amounts of air pressure required for different pitches, beginning oboe students may experience difficulty in controlling loudness throughout the range of the oboe (Anastasio & Bussard, 1971). Young oboe students may experience difficulty in achieving success in performance due to lack of instruction on fundamentals pertaining to proper embouchure, breath control, and posture, and therefore may benefit from instruction by an oboist, especially for developing these fundamentals (Rothwell, 1982; Whittow).

Some professional oboists have suggested the reed as a source of anxiety to young musicians (Juritz, 2000; Schuring, 2001; Weiger, 1998). Specifically, the delicate and temperamental nature of the oboe reed may seriously hinder a student's ability to perform successfully. Due to extreme fragility of oboe reeds, proper response, dynamic flexibility, and pitch stability are often reduced by atmospheric and humidity changes, age, and careless handling. These frequent variances may challenge oboists at any level, and may hinder a beginner's success by affecting his/her development of a consistently formed embouchure.

Stretched hand-position, due to widely spaced keys common to any wind instrument, may impede an oboe student's ability to cover tone holes and reach various keys, thereby affecting his/her success (Oelrich, 1982; Mack, 1996; Westphal, 1990). Other challenges to beginning study on oboe may include common variations in key mechanism between models (Rath, n.d.), as well as the initial employment of less-desirable pitches (Stycos, 1993) and problematic fingerings (Jellison, 1979), as dictated by heterogeneous-style band method books. Constant pressure that occurs inside the head as a result of forcing large amounts of air through the tiny opening in the reed may cause physical discomfort, hindering a student's success. To alleviate the discomfort, students may be tempted to reduce the amount of air blown through the instrument, as well as reduce breath support, thereby affecting the quality of tone and accuracy of intonation. The beginning oboe student may also face the added demands of being one of few or the only oboist in class, potentially causing the student to feel self-conscious and unsure of performance skills (Garcia-Trabucco & Silnik, 2005; Ryan, 2004). Due to the challenges oboe students may experience, further research is needed in order to determine

appropriate and more effective strategies and approaches pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students.

### *Purpose of Study*

The purpose of this study was to investigate, assess, and analyze current strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students in grades five through eight. Regarding these teaching strategies and approaches, several questions were investigated. Do music instructors avoid or delay using this instrument in their music programs at specific levels? Is the oboe so challenging that some often postpone study until high school, as recommended by some professional oboists? What criteria do public school band instructors use in selecting oboe students? Do oboe students experience greater success if they study another instrument prior to oboe? What type(s) of instruction do oboe students receive (heterogeneous, homogeneous, and/or private instruction), and who provides the instruction? What instructional materials are used for teaching oboe, and how are these materials selected? According to public school band instructors, do the method books currently used with their students in band class provide adequate instructional information pertaining to oboe playing?

An investigation of current practices has revealed teaching trends, strengths, and weaknesses in the methodologies used by public school band instructors, resulting in the ability to project and recommend new and more effective teaching procedures. A questionnaire was developed with the intent of meeting the following objectives regarding strategies and approaches pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students:

1. To investigate at what grade level students begin oboe study
2. To investigate strategies for selecting students to learn to play oboe
3. To investigate whether, and for what duration, students are required to study another instrument prior to beginning oboe study
4. To investigate how students receive instruction on the oboe, i.e., heterogeneous, homogeneous, and/or private teaching
5. To investigate how often students receive various types of oboe instruction
6. To investigate whether private instruction is provided by an oboe specialist and at what point in the students' study this occurs
7. To identify method books used, if any, for teaching oboe and how they are selected
8. To identify which, if any, supplemental materials (for example, audio recordings, video recordings, and computer software) are used for teaching oboe
9. To investigate whether public school band instructors consider the method books they use with their students in band class to be appropriate and sufficient for teaching the fundamentals of oboe playing

### *Need for Study*

Current research and literature related to teaching beginning oboe students in the public schools is limited. As previously stated, MENC suggests students in grades five through eight achieve performance at a music difficulty level of two based on a scale of one to six. Current research is limited in specifying strategies or approaches used by

public school band instructors to assist beginning oboe students in accomplishing this standard.

Playing a double reed instrument poses the constant challenge of finding and maintaining necessary equipment, specifically instruments and reeds. As oboe-maker Alfred Läubin claimed, bore size and material from which the instrument is made affects intonation, quality of tone, and projection (Bukalski, 1990). Depending on budgets, schools may purchase inexpensive equipment or neglect to maintain equipment properly. Inexpensive oboes may contribute to poor intonation and tonal response due to improperly placed and sized tone holes (Bukalski, 1990; T. W. Howarth & Co. Ltd., n.d.), as well as inaccurate intonation due to imprecise bore shape (Backus, 1977). Some oboes may lack necessary or helpful keys, requiring the student to employ undesirable forked-fingerings (Backus, 1977; Polk, 2004) or impractical fingerings, such as closing holes on the bell with the knees to achieve low B-flat. Poorly maintained equipment may also cause inaccurate intonation, undesirable tone quality, and diminished response of tone. The complex mechanism requires the use of numerous adjustment screws to control the relationship of movement between particular keys (McFarland, n.d.), and typically relies on cork bumpers to control height and closure of keys. Depending on handling and changes in humidity, these screws often require adjusting to achieve a proper relationship between keys (Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Westphal, 1990). Keys on inexpensive oboes tend to bend more easily than those on more expensive oboes, affecting the efficiency of the overall mechanism. Bent or poorly adjusted keys affect the response of tone, quality of tone, and intonation of certain notes (Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Westpha, 1990l). An instrument that does not seal properly due to incorrectly adjusted keys, decayed and worn



key pads and cork bumpers, unbalanced pads, or cracks in the wood may consequently exhibit decreased resonance, increased stiffness, poor response of tone (especially in the low register), and overall intonation problems (Weiger, 1998).

Reeds are temperamental and delicate, thereby often hindering even an experienced player's performance. Due to frequent atmospheric changes, inconsistencies imposed on a reed may lead to difficulty and frustration for young players. Atmospheric changes affect the size of opening between the blades of the reed, which in turn affects an oboe reed's response, flexibility, intonation, and quality of tone (Backus, 1977; Vaneman, 2003; Weiger, 1998). Damage to an oboe reed may reduce or eliminate the reed's response, and therefore students should use caution in handling oboe reeds to avoid cracking and chipping the reed tip (Frost, 1998; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Quality of oboe reed craftsmanship may also affect a reed's response, flexibility, intonation, and quality of tone, thereby affecting a student's success. Reeds that are too resistant may hinder endurance, affecting control and reducing variety in tone (Vaneman, 2003). Some professionals have recommended avoiding commercially manufactured oboe reeds, and instead purchasing reeds made by an oboist, increasing the probability of the reeds' vibration and response (Polk, 2004; Rath, n.d.; Reimer, 1957) and suiting the specific needs of the player (Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961).

Many professionals consider proper development of embouchure to be significant in the success of students learning to play oboe (Clemens, 1977; Oelrich, 1982; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Schuring, 2000). The oboe embouchure is challenging to formulate (Prodan, 1995) and maintain due to the small reed (Westphal, 1990) and the large amount of air pressure (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961) it must

accommodate. Due to unconditioned facial muscles students may experience a lack of endurance early in their study (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977), resulting in inaccurate intonation and undesirable quality of tone (Smith, 2004). Students may experience difficulty in determining the proper amount of reed to place in the mouth to achieve and maintain appropriate tone and accurate intonation. Many professionals recommend placing just enough of the reed in the mouth in order to produce a steady tone (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Westphal, 1990). Breath control and articulation are also fundamentals of oboe playing important to a student's development of proper tone (Mack, 1996; Oelrich, 1982; Vaneman, 2002). Incorrect use of air may hinder the overall intonation and quality of tone (Barret, 1862; Polk, 2004; Reimer, 1957; Schuring, 2000; Still, 2002), and improper placement and action of the tongue may result in a harsh, unpleasant inception of tone (Mack, 1996; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961).

Correct hand position and use of appropriate fingerings are important factors in a student's development of oboe technique (Barret, 1862; Jellison, 1979; Mack, 1996; Oelrich, 1982). Students may experience difficulties in maintaining proper hand position due to the irregularly and widely spaced keys, and the right thumb bearing most of the weight of the oboe (Oelrich, 1982; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961). Improper hand position may cause tension and pain, thereby hindering a student's dexterity. Students may also experience confusion in determining appropriate fingerings, including the proper use of octave mechanisms in various musical contexts, especially when consulting incomplete or incorrect fingering charts (Fitch, 1954, 1962; Jellison, 1979; Mack, 1996).

Due to all factors discussed above, it may be crucial that oboe students receive proper instruction in the early stage of their instrumental study. A greater understanding

of the factors influencing beginning oboe students and the methods by which they receive instruction at the beginning level has the potential of making oboe instruction more effective, thereby increasing successful performance at the beginning level and beyond.

### *Delimitations*

The study investigated and focused on the strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors in the teaching of beginning oboe students within their first year of study. For the sake of manageability, only the teaching of oboe students in grade levels five through eight in the United States was considered. According to Hartley (1996) these are the grades in which most band programs offer beginning level instruction. Not included were teaching strategies and approaches used with students in grade levels one through four or grade levels nine through twelve, nor the teaching of students at private schools and academies.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

A review of background literature for this study has revealed information provided by professional oboists and instructors pertaining to performance approaches on oboe and teaching beginning band students, popular band method books used in public school band programs, and popular solo oboe method books used frequently in the private sector. A number of diverse, but often dated, sources have provided advice given by professional oboists or woodwind specialists on the teaching of beginning oboe students. Many of these sources have been directed toward public school band instructors encouraging them to accept the challenge of teaching students to play oboe. No known empirical studies discussed strategies and approaches used in the teaching of beginning oboe students. Other materials discuss teaching beginning level band students, including both published recommendations provided by public school band instructors as well as results from experimental studies regarding various aspects of teaching beginning level band students.

### *Teaching Oboe*

As with studying any musical instrument, challenges associated with playing oboe may be difficult and frustrating to young students. According to Sichivitsa (2004), students' self-concepts of musical ability may influence continued participation in musical study. A strong foundation in the fundamentals of playing oboe, including embouchure formation, breath control, posture, articulation, hand position, and fingering

technique, may be significant in achieving success in performance and continuing study on oboe beyond the beginning level.

Some professionals have agreed that appropriate tone production is a result of correctly formed embouchure and proper breath control (Oelrich, 1982; Schuring, 2000; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961), as well as quality of reed (Still, 2002; Vaneman, 2003). Many professional oboists and band instructors have considered the oboe embouchure to be one of the most important and difficult fundamentals to develop (Clemens, 1977; Oelrich, 1982; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Schuring, 2000) and maintain due to the large amount of air pressure against the lips while playing (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961). The embouchure is partly responsible for the quality of tone and, depending on formation, can help or hinder a student's progress. Although some discrepancies exist regarding the amount of pressure supplied by the lips, there has been near consensus that the embouchure should employ roundness in shape with the corners of the mouth pulled in toward the reed (Clemens, 1977; Hedrick, 1969; Hewitt, 1995; Oelrich, 1982; Polk, 2004; Porter, 1968; Prodan, 1995; Robinson, 2001; Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Schuring, 2000; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Many professional oboists and specialists have recommended pulling the lips minimally over the teeth, forming a cushion-like surface on which to place the reed, and using sufficient pressure from the lips to create an airtight seal, thus requiring appropriate air support and speed to control intonation and tone production (Barret, 1862; Clemens, 1983; Fitch, 1954, 1962; Ledet, 1981; Oelrich, 1982; Schuring, 2000). Some professional oboists and specialists have advised holding the reed with the lips and not with lip-covered teeth in order to achieve greater control of the tone (Mack, 1996; Schiltz & Katz, 1997). Ledet (1981) has

emphasized the importance of eliminating tension in order to maintain flexibility in the embouchure. The lips need to be placed symmetrically on the reed to allow sufficient vibration and efficiency of air passing through the reed and to achieve proper tone and accurate intonation (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Mack, 1996; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003).

An alternative but less popular embouchure formation (Gekeler, 1940) requires pulling more of the lips over the teeth and into a smiling position, which creates a tighter and harder cushion on which the reed is placed (Hedrick, 1969; Westphal, 1990). This type of embouchure may cause a pinched, thinner, brighter, more nasal tone (Ledet, 1981; Oelrich, 1982; Schiltz & Katz 1997; Vaneman, 2003; Weiger, 1998). According to Ledet (1981), individual physical characteristics such as thickness of lips may affect the formation of embouchure. For example, students with thick lips will naturally cover the reed more than students with thin lips, thus requiring a more freely vibrating reed (Ledet, 1981).

Roseman has suggested an embouchure that combines principles of those already discussed, producing the shape of a semi-circle, resulting in flexibility of tone and control of pitch (Vaneman, 2003). When forming this embouchure, the lower lip should be firm and flat, used to create resistance and dampen the lower blade of the reed, and the top lip should be round and flexible to allow vibration of the top blade of the reed.

Many professionals agree that the amount of reed placed in the mouth when forming the embouchure affects production and quality of tone, and intonation (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Polk, 2004; Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003; Westphal, 1990). Proper balance between the reed and embouchure is

necessary in producing a good tone. Too little reed in the mouth creates too much resistance, insufficient vibration (Vaneman, 2003), and overall flatness of pitch (Westphal, 1990). Too much reed in the mouth, an issue considered to be more common among young players, creates a “blatant” tone (Vaneman, 2003, p. 46) and causes overall pitch to be sharp (Polk, 2004; Westphal, 1990).

According to some professionals, the breath controls overall intonation and tone quality (Polk, 2004; Reimer 1957; Schuring, 2000) and therefore, the fundamental concept of breath control should be emphasized in the beginning stages of oboe study (Oelrich, 1982). A student’s success in producing proper tone on oboe may be helped or hindered not only by his/her formation of embouchure but also through the use of breath, and therefore, a lack of proper breath support may result in poor tone quality and inaccurate intonation (Barret, 1862; Polk, 2004). Some have recommended that students understand the muscular action involved in playing oboe (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961). Gaunt (2004), however, has argued that most sources discussing breathing and breath control contain anecdotal information, rather than information based on systematic investigation, requiring more research. Some professionals have discussed the sensation of breathlessness when air remains in the lungs, unique to oboists among woodwind performers (Gaunt, 2004; Polk, 2004; Thomas, 1981; Weiger, 1998). This sensation occurs as a result of the large amount of air pressure involved in playing oboe, consequently requiring the player to expel old air before inhaling new air. Neglecting to exhale old air may result in discomfort, exhaustion, and poor quality of tone (Gaunt, 2004; Thomas, 1981). Other important aspects of proper breath control include an open throat (Ledet, 1981) and erect, relaxed (Prodan, 1995;

Vaneman, 2002; Weiger, 1998), and stable (Schuring, 2000) posture, whether the student is sitting or standing while playing.

Students using improper posture, thereby compromising the embouchure and breath support, may experience problems with quality of tone and intonation (Gekeler, 1940; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2002; Westphal, 1990). The oboe should be held at a comfortable position approximately 40 (Westphal) to 45 (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999; Oelrich, 1982; Polk, 2004; Prodan, 1995; Schiltz & Katz, 1997) degrees away from the body, with arms held out to the sides in a relaxed manner and the head held upright (Schuring, 2000). Weiger (1998) has suggested a wider range of acceptable position, 30 to 45 degrees from the body. Students should avoid resting the bell of the oboe on the knee or beating time with the bell, as this may compromise the formation of embouchure (Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990).

Inception of tone and articulation of sound on oboe may be approached in different ways. Most professionals have recommended using the tongue as a means of releasing the air (Barret, 1862; Berndt, 1969; Fitch, 1954; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Hewitt, 1995; Oelrich, 1982; Reimer, 1957; Vaneman, 2003; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). According to Fitch (1954), beginners tend to strike the reed with the tongue to initiate the sound. Striking the reed should be avoided, however, by reminding students to place the tip of the tongue on the tip of the reed, establish air pressure, and pull the tongue away to release the air, thereby producing the tone. The player should touch the bottom blade of the tip of the reed with the front and top of the tongue (Polk, 2004; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990), then pull the tongue away from the reed quickly to achieve clarity in the initial sound (Mack, 1996; Vaneman, 2003; Westphal, 1990),



whereas Sprenkle & Ledet (1961) have recommended touching only one corner of the reed in order to avoid a harsh and unpleasant tone. Many have contended that avoiding tension in the throat and embouchure (Vaneman, 2003; Westphal, 1990) and maintaining a constant air stream while temporarily interrupting its flow with the tongue to articulate the next tone (Gekeler, 1940; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Hewitt, 1995; Oelrich, 1982; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990) is effective in achieving good articulation. Although slight differences exist in the concept of the necessary syllable used to articulate tone, whether “too” (Berndt, 1969), “du” (Fitch, 1954), or “tah” (Oelrich, 1982), the objective of initiating the tone with the tongue while using a constant air stream remains consistent among professionals. A differing and less popular approach to producing an articulated tone on oboe involves beginning and ending the tone with the tongue (Hedrick, 1969; Colwell & Goolsby, 1992; Ledet, 1981), using the syllable “toot.”

Correct hand position and fingerings are considered to be significant in an oboe student’s development of technique (Barret, 1862; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Jellson, 1979; Oelrich, 1982; Robinson, 2001; Westphal, 1990). According to many professionals, proper hand position includes straight wrists (Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Weiger, 1990), relaxed fingers that are comfortably curved over the keys (Barret, 1862; Fitch, 1954; 1962; Mack, 1996; Oelrich, 1982; Polk, 2004; Prodan, 1995; Robinson, 2001; Sawhill & McGarrity, 1962; Westphal, 1990), especially the left third finger (Niblock, 1995), with the little fingers resting over the keys on each side of the oboe (Polk, 2004; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Weiger (1998) has recommended selecting the position that is most comfortable, allowing the greatest amount of dexterity, and least

amount of tension. The ball of the finger, not the tip, should be used to ensure proper closure of keys (Polk, 2004; Weiger, 1998). Finger pressure on keys, however, should be light and finger motion should not alter the embouchure (Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961). Due to the disproportionate and widely spaced keys, and the weight of the oboe resting on the right thumb, holding the oboe may seem unnatural (Oelrich, 1982; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Weiger, 1998). Poor hand position may lead to tension and cramps in the hands, wrists, and/or arms, and the inability to completely cover keys with the fingers, hindering a student's technical facility (Oelrich, 1982; Mack, 1996; Westphal, 1990). Niblock (1995) suggests teaching the left-hand E-flat fingering as the primary fingering to build flexibility and assist in proper development of left-hand position. Although subtle differences exist regarding position of the right thumb under the thumb rest, whether it is placed at the nail between the tip of the thumb and the first joint (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Lautzenheiser et al., 1999; Robinson, 2001; Sawhill & McGarrity, 1962), at the base of the nail (Fitch, 1954; Mayer, 1956; Schiltz & Katz, 1997; Westphal, 1990), or behind the thumbnail (Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961), the hand position described above is widely accepted.

Use of proper and precise fingerings may also assist in developing smooth and efficient technique. Confusion often exists regarding which octave mechanism to use, resulting in students capriciously selecting the half-hole, thumb octave key, and side octave key (Fitch, 1962; Jellison, 1979; Niblock, 1994). On the semi-automatic-octave system oboe favored in the United States, students should use the half-hole for D-flat<sub>5</sub>, D<sub>5</sub>, D-sharp<sub>5</sub>, D<sub>6</sub>, and D-sharp<sub>6</sub>, the thumb octave key for notes E<sub>5</sub> to A-flat<sub>5</sub>, and the side octave key for A<sub>5</sub> to C<sub>6</sub>. Another fingering problem that may occur is imprecise

placement of the left index finger on the half-hole, resulting in less desirable tone quality and intonation (Jellison, 1979). Proper finger placement and employing a rolling motion, rather than a sliding motion, on the half-hole may enhance efficiency of technique (Polk, 2004; Robinson, 2001; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Niblock (1995), however, has recommended the sliding motion in order to avoid distorting the left-hand position. Oboe students may also experience less desirable tone quality and intonation due to use of the forked-F fingering. Some fingering charts indicate this fingering to be the primary fingering for F-natural (Froseth, 1997; Gekeler, 1940; Lautzenheiser, et al., 1999; Pearson, 1993), although it is actually an alternate fingering to be used only when the instrument lacks a left-side F key and F-natural is preceded or followed by D-flat5, D5, or E-flat5, E-flat4, D4 or any note lower than D4. The forked-F fingering usually creates intonation problems (Jellison, 1979), and undesirable quality of tone, especially if the instrument does not include an F-resonance key (Weiger, 1998). In the absence of this resonance key, adding the E-flat key may improve the intonation and tone quality, but this forked-fingering should be used only when necessary (Mack, 1996; Weiger, 1998). Students should also be encouraged to use the left-side E-flat key when E-flat is preceded or followed by D-flat5, or D-flat4 or any note lower than D-flat4, eliminating the need to slide the right-hand little finger from one key to the other (Jellison, 1979; Polk, 2004). Fingerings for notes above C6 are complex and may differ among instruments (Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Students should determine and use proper fingerings for these notes (Jellison, 1979; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990), avoiding trill fingerings that employ fewer fingers but usually create intonation problems. Manning (1995) has

recommended using harmonic fingerings to assist in teaching proper intonation and tone when playing pitches A5 to D6.

Recommendations vary regarding the appropriate age or grade level at which one should begin oboe study. According to some professionals, students may benefit from studying another instrument, especially another woodwind instrument, prior to learning to play oboe, and postponing oboe study until they are more mature (Kemper, 1970; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990) and have learned other aspects of music including notation, rhythm, and ear training (Rath, n.d.). Colwell and Goolsby (1992) have discussed the advantage of studying an instrument such as clarinet or saxophone prior to oboe study since many heterogeneous-style beginning level band method books are designed for these instruments to play in technically desirable tonalities, providing a potentially more enjoyable initial experience in instrumental music study (Weiger, 1998). Some have argued that although an oboe will add variety and color to the beginning instrumental ensemble, the older beginning oboe student will have more success in developing the strong muscular control needed for a proper embouchure (Kemper, 1970) and reed management (Rath, n.d.). Westphal (1990) has supported this philosophy by stating that the oboe is not an instrument for beginning musicians and oboe study should be delayed until seventh grade, whereas Sprenkle and Ledet (1961) have recommended postponing oboe study until high school in order to more successfully cover the keys and control the instrument. Hedrick (1969) has disagreed with postponing oboe study, claiming it to be impractical, and has contended that a student transferring from another instrument will experience problems with developing proper embouchure.

When selecting an oboe student, some professionals have recommended choosing a student with a combination of the following qualities: (a) previous experience playing flute, clarinet, or saxophone; (b) enthusiasm for playing the oboe; (c) strong understanding of music fundamentals and musicianship; and (d) perseverance to catch-up to other students in the ensemble (Kemper, 1970; Polk, 2004; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001). Rath (n.d.) and Weiger (1998) both have recommended selecting a student who is persistent and self-sufficient. Some also have suggested choosing a student with adequately sized lips and hands to accommodate the embouchure and stretched hand position (Kemper, 1970; Rath, n.d.; Weiger, 1998). Double-jointed students may experience difficulty in covering holes, especially while employing side keys with the little fingers (Polk, 2004; Rath, n.d.; Schiltz & Katz, 1997). Prodan (1995) has argued that these less desirable physical qualities can be overcome.

Type(s) of instruction and selection of instructional materials may influence the progress of beginning oboe students. Many professionals have agreed that beginning oboe students may benefit from private study with an oboist in order to more effectively develop the fundamentals of playing oboe (Joppig, 1981/1988; Mayer, 1956; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Rothwell, 1976; Whittow, 1992). To avoid experiencing technical and tonal difficulties due to playing in less desirable tonalities as dictated by heterogeneous band method books, some have recommended teaching beginning oboe students in homogeneous groups for the first few lessons (Mayer, 1956; Polk, 2004). Some have emphasized the importance of teaching fundamentals of proper oboe playing in the initial lesson in order to avoid development of inappropriate production of tone, hand position, fingerings (Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977),

embouchure, and breath control (Clemens, 1977). Although some professionals consider available method books to be insufficient for appropriate oboe study at the beginning level (Hedrick, 1969; Westphal, 1990), Prodan (1995) has stated that compromises found in heterogeneous method books for oboe study are insignificant. According to some professionals, however, study with a private instructor using a solo oboe method book may be more effective (Prodan, 1995; Rothwell, 1982; Whittow, 1992). Fitch (1954) and Weiger (1998) have listed only solo method books as recommended for beginning oboe study.

### *Teaching Beginning Band*

Beginning level band instructors employ numerous strategies and approaches to provide a meaningful musical experience and to lead their students to success in instrumental music performance. Instructors must consider various aspects of instrumental music study and determine strategies and approaches appropriate for their students. These aspects of instrumental music study include fundamentals of performance skills on specific instruments, music notation reading, audiation,<sup>1</sup> aural skills, types of instruction, and selection of instructional materials. In anticipation of a new beginning level band class, instructors must determine criteria for recruiting students and selecting instruments for each.

When recruiting students for beginning level band, Klinedinst (1991) has recommended accessing academic records and administering a music aptitude test to assist in finding students with greater potential for success. Students with high scholastic

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon defines audiation as “hearing and comprehending in one’s mind the sound of music that is not physically present,” (381).

ability and achievement, especially in reading and math, may experience higher achievement in instrumental music performance (Klinedinst, 1991). Further, higher achievement in instrumental music performance may lead to a higher rate of retention of beginning level students. Results of Klinedinst's (1992) second year study support the original study findings, indicating that scholastic and academic success affect instrumental music performance achievement.

Aspects influencing band instructors in assigning instruments to students include the need for a balanced ensemble and physical characteristics of students, such as size, weight (Bayley, 2004), and physical strength (Turner, 2004). Turner has recommended considering personality, musical style preference of the student, length of fingers, and size of lips when selecting appropriate instruments for students. Klinedinst (1991), however, has contended that physical characteristics may not be reliable predictors of success on musical instruments. Some band instructors may exclude oboe from initial instrument choices presented to students (Bayley, 2004). Reasons for exclusion include lack of availability of oboes in their schools and lack of familiarity with teaching double reed instruments. Cost (Bayley, 2004) and gender identification (Johnson & Stewart, 2004) have not appeared to significantly affect instrument assignments made by band instructors.

Proper embouchure, breathing, and posture are regarded as high priorities when teaching beginning level band (Lenzini, 1999; Stycos, 1993; Worthy, 2002), as well as developing proper quality of tone (Worthy, 2002). Accurately formed embouchure and posture, combined with efficient and consistent use of air, are important aspects of producing appropriate tone and accurate intonation on band instruments (Worthy, 2002).

Developing a strong, proper embouchure requires close attention and constant reminding from the instructor to be certain students implement correct formations (Stycos, 1993; Worthy, 2002). Consulting a variety of sources, including books, articles, or sessions with colleagues or professional specialists, may provide helpful information on proper formations of embouchures. Whereas some professionals emphasize the importance of teaching accurate intonation in the beginning of instrumental music study (Lenzini, 1999; Stycos, 1993; Worthy, 2002), Smith (2004) has argued that aspects of intonation should be addressed only when students have learned notes and rhythms of their study material, and have developed fundamental performance skills such as proper formation of embouchure and production of tone. Further, students should learn tuning adjustments that should be made with the embouchure in correlation with fingerings (Smith, 2004).

Although many professionals have agreed that students may benefit from exposure to a reduced number of concepts in the beginning stages of their study, methods for introducing concepts differ. To avoid overwhelming beginning level students by simultaneously focusing on too many concepts, some professionals have advocated teaching the fundamentals of reading music notation, including note reading, rhythm reading, accidentals, and key signatures, before learning to play instruments (Banister, 2002; Conway, 1997). Students may also benefit from developing aural skills through rote-instructed singing, exposure to tonal and rhythmic patterns, and movement activities involving duple and triple meters (Conway, 1997). Once students learn the basics of reading music and developing aural skills, Banister (2002) has recommended teaching proper breathing, breath control, and embouchure techniques on their mouthpieces or reeds before using entire instruments. These techniques may better prepare students in



producing desirable tone and accurate intonation on their instruments from the earliest possible moment. Another strategy used by some beginning level band instructors is delaying use of printed music and teaching by rote method for the first several lessons in order to focus on developing proper embouchure and breath control (Lenzini, 1999; Stycos, 1993). Students may better develop skills by concentrating on fundamental aspects of instrumental music performance, rather than simultaneously processing visual symbols while playing. Stycos (1993) however, has advocated providing students with written fingering sequences in place of music notation when needed. Teaching initially by rote may lead students to achieve proper production of tone and accurate intonation early in their study before incorporating other concepts (Stycos, 1993). Comparison of these approaches has revealed that although selection of initial concepts varies, desired outcomes of proper production of tone and accurate intonation remains consistent.

Comprehensive music instruction and whole music instruction are widely accepted alternatives to traditional performance skill instruction (Edwards, 1971; Gleason, 1998; Kvet & Tweed, 1996; MENC, 1996; Whitener, 1982). Some suggest that comprehensive music instruction, including the teaching of music theory, music history (Whitener, 1982), as well as physical design of band instruments and aspects of proper production of tone (Edwards, 1971), may be more effective than teaching only specific performance skills through a traditional band method book. Gleason (1998) has suggested that whole music instruction, including a comprehensive approach combined with interdisciplinary and multi-cultural aspects, may enhance cognitive music learning while not hindering performance ability. Kvet & Tweed (1996) have provided strategies to incorporate comprehensive music instruction into the school curriculum. These strategies

are intended for use with a variety of literature and materials and are designed to comply with the national standards devised by MENC (1996) for middle school band students. No known literature indicates whether public school band instructors implement the strategies or approaches discussed above pertaining to beginning band instruction.

Gordon (1993) has contended that it is best to delay teaching notation in order to allow students to develop tonal and rhythmic pattern audiation skills to better comprehend the music studied (Conway, 1997; Dalby, 1999). Dalby (1999) has agreed, suggesting that students may struggle if asked to simultaneously read music notation and contend with physical challenges posed by instruments. Audiation skills learned through singing may improve intonation and phrasing by eliminating the physical challenges of their instrument and allowing students to focus on what they hear in their minds (Dalby, 1999). Audiation and vocalizing may also lead to more accurate rhythm in music performance (Conway, 2003), improved intonation, and more efficient rehearsals due to students hearing and correcting their own mistakes (Robinson, 1996). Students should sing and chant patterns before performing patterns on their instruments (Gordon, 1993). Schleuter (1997) has supported this philosophy by emphasizing the importance of aural/oral and verbal association of tonal and rhythmic patterns. Students who do not receive adequate instruction in developing audiation skills may associate music notation symbols with specific fingerings rather than with musical sounds, thereby hindering instrumental music performance (Schleuter, 1997). Popular beginning level band method books often neglect the instruction of pitch relationships, emphasizing instead the visual aspects of technical development (Bernhard, 2004). Tonal development emphasized within the context of traditional beginning level band instruction may affect melodic ear

playing achievement, thereby reducing reliance on discrete visual symbols (Bernhard, 2004).

According to some professionals, beginning instrumental music students may benefit from tonal pattern instruction. Tonal pattern instruction may be an effective method for teaching music notation reading, especially for the development of sight-reading skills (Grutzmacher, 1987; MacKnight, 1975), and may also improve melodic ear playing achievement among beginning level instrumental music students (Bernhard, 2004). Students may develop stronger auditory/visual discrimination skills through tonal pattern instruction (Bernhard, 2004; MacKnight, 1975), and incorporation of tonal patterns in their study may help students develop skills in aurally identifying major and minor sonorities (Dalby, 1999; Grutzmacher, 1987).

Although research indicates that beginning level music students experience no difference in achievement when receiving individual or group instruction (Schleuter, 1997), some band instructors incorporate homogeneous-instrument teaching in their band programs. Although Gordon (1993) has suggested that students may benefit from heterogeneous instruction by which they may develop musicianship more quickly, homogeneous instruction may provide an environment for students to play notes that better suit their instruments in terms of comfortable response and fingerings, as well as allow students to associate with other like instruments (Lenzini, 1999; Stycos, 1993). Some professionals have recommended using peer teachers as another form of instruction to supplement beginning level students' study, to recruit new band students (Lenzini, 1999; Mills, 2003; Staley, 2004), and to strengthen retention in the band program (Staley, 2004). The use of peer instruction with beginning level instrumental music students may

also enhance motivation, practice technique, and production of tone (Staley, 2004). Chamber music and large-ensemble sectional settings may provide opportunities for students to gain insights regarding performance skills, including production and quality of tone, intonation, and articulation. No known literature discusses the potential benefits of students receiving private/solo instruction from either the band instructor or a professional specialist.

Some professionals have recommended using a variety of instructional materials, selecting those most appropriate for their students (Heresniak & Woitach, 2001). Research indicates that using supplemental materials such as audio and/or video models may contribute to students' success. According to Puopolo (1971), students may experience more efficient individual practice sessions when using recorded audio models, instructions, and accompaniments. Employment of audio-recorded practice assistance may lead students to more efficient classroom rehearsals and greater success in instrumental music performance. Schleuter (1997) has supported the use of modeling materials, including incorrect models along with correct models, for purposes of comparing and contrasting and developing students' critiquing skills. Video-recorded models may help students to achieve proper and accurate embouchure, hand position, instrument position, and posture (Linklater, 1997). Linklater's study also indicated more successful development of accurate intonation and quality of tone in students who included video-recorded models in their instrumental study. Williams' (1978) study has suggested that video-recorded models of oboe embouchure and reed adjustments provided effective instruction.

### *Band Method Books*

Although the survey revealed the use of various method books, the investigator has reviewed four popular band method books used in public schools today, as determined by the instrumental education curriculum at the University of Georgia. Each of these books, *Essential Elements 2000* (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999), *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson, 1993), *Do It!* (Froseth, 1997), and *Accent on Achievement* (O'Reilly and Williams, 1997), follows similar organization, providing material that is intended for the entire beginning level band to play in unison, and a portion written for each individual section of the band. Material written exclusively for oboe in each method book introduces the oboe student to more desirable notes in a more comfortable range than the material written for entire band.<sup>2</sup> These method books logically progress through rhythmic concepts, although *Do It!* (Froseth, 1997) uses more complex rhythms, advancing to compound meter. Each method book explores a range of at least D4 to C6 for oboe, does not exceed tonalities of three flats, (excepting *Accent on Achievement*, which also uses tonalities of four flats), and completely ignores sharp keys.

These method books provide brief instructions regarding the fundamentals of oboe playing, although not every book discusses each topic. Each book provides pictures to indicate proper posture, instrument position, and hand position, all emphasizing curved fingers. Only *Accent on Achievement* (O'Reilly and Williams, 1997) and *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999) provide instruction pertaining to breathing, breath control, and articulation. *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson, 1993), *Do It!* (Froseth, 1997),

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<sup>2</sup> Initial notes oboe students must play in unison with the ensemble include D5, E-flat5, and F5, requiring the use of awkward and tonally undesirable fingerings.

and *Accent on Achievement* (O'Reilly and Williams, 1997) all demonstrate the round embouchure that many professional oboists have recommended, whereas *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999) describes the tighter and firmer embouchure discussed by both Hedrick (1969) and Westphal (1990). *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser et al., 1999) also includes a video recording that demonstrates the fundamental concepts covered in the beginning pages of the method book (hand and instrument position, embouchure, breathing, breath control, and articulation).

Due to the lack of information pertaining to fundamentals of playing oboe, and the use of tonally undesirable and awkward fingerings, exclusive use of the full-band sections of these method books may be insufficient for a successful start on oboe. Band instructors may consider other materials and strategies to be helpful in the teaching of beginning oboe students, including the use of solo method books, audio recordings, video recordings, CD-ROM materials, small-group instruction, and/or private instruction.

#### *Solo Method Books*

Three method books designed for solo or small-group instruction of beginning oboe students are the *Rubank Elementary Method for Oboe* (Hovey, 1934) *Method for Oboe: Book One* (Gekeler, 1940), and *Oboe Student* (Edlefsen and Weber, 1969). These books, although more than 36 years old, are currently used by many private oboe instructors to teach beginning oboe students. Instructional material begins in a more desirable range than the full-band method books listed above, and each method book includes proper fingerings and indicates which are to be used as primary or secondary fingerings. Tonalties advance through keys of three sharps and up to five flats and explore more complex rhythms and meters, including the use of triplets in simple meter,

and eighth- and sixteenth-note rhythms in compound meter. Exercises employing long tones are provided to develop embouchure muscles and proper production of tone, and each book explores a variety of articulations including slurs, staccato, legato, and accented notes.

Information pertaining to fundamentals of playing oboe, including posture, instrument position, hand position, fingerings, breath control, articulation, and embouchure is limited in each of these method books. *Method for Oboe* (Gekeler, 1940) and *Oboe Student* (Edlefsen and Weber, 1969) provide brief descriptions of these aspects of playing oboe in their beginning pages and provide written instruction reinforcing this information within the context of the musical exercises, whereas *Rubank Elementary Method for Oboe* (Hovey, 1934) has relied entirely on the instructor to provide information on the fundamentals of playing oboe.

## Chapter 3 - Method

### *Participants*

Public school band instructors who taught grades five through eight in the United States, identified through their state music education associations and school websites, were invited to participate in the study. Band instructors of all levels of experience were included. Participants will receive a copy of the research results, analysis, and conclusions if they desire.

### *Materials*

A questionnaire was constructed to investigate current strategies and approaches pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students in public school band programs (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was developed and hosted on the Internet and included six sections: (a) demographic information, (b) general information, (c) selection of oboe students, (d) type(s) of instruction, (e) instructional materials, and (f) success of method books. Band instructors were asked to complete the questionnaire based solely on their experiences with teaching oboe students in public schools. The first section was designed to gather demographic information in order to identify regional teaching trends, if any. Respondents were also asked to indicate how many years they have taught instrumental music and to identify their primary instrument in order to reveal trends among various levels and types of experience. Instructors were asked to provide general information regarding their band programs, including the grade level that students are invited to begin



instrumental study, the total number of students enrolled, and the number of oboe students enrolled.

The remainder of the questionnaire was designed to investigate strategies and approaches used by band instructors to teach beginning oboe students in grades five through eight. Instructors were asked to provide information for the following: (a) criteria used in selecting students to play oboe, (b) the type(s) of instruction used for beginners, (c) method books and other instructional materials used to teach beginning oboe students, and (d) how successful these method books are in teaching beginning oboe students according to the public school band instructors who participated in the study.

### *Procedure*

After construction of the online questionnaire, a pilot study was implemented to assess the clarity of instructions and validity of the questions for the purpose of this study. Professors in the music education, instrumental music, and band departments at the University of Georgia received and completed the questionnaire. Following the pilot study, e-mail addresses and phone numbers were collected through state music education associations and school websites in order to contact public school band instructors in the United States. Initial contact was established by means of an e-mail cover letter to invite public school band instructors to participate (see Appendix B). This cover letter invitation contained an Internet navigation link to the questionnaire, which was hosted on the Internet. The host website for the on-line questionnaire, and the transportation and collection of data, were managed by the Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia. A follow-up e-mail message was sent to those who did not respond within three weeks, and final reminder e-mail messages were sent two weeks later. Any instructors

not responding to the follow-up e-mail message were contacted by phone or an alternative e-mail address to request their participation in the study.

Subjects participating in the study accessed the questionnaire by navigating to the host website and entering their assigned pass code, completed the questionnaire on-line and submitted their responses electronically. Alternatively, they might have chosen to print a hard copy of the questionnaire and submit their responses via the United States postal system. The questionnaire required approximately 15 minutes to complete. Survey responses remain confidential and were used for the sole purpose of providing information pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students in grades five through eight in public school band programs.

## Chapter 4 – Analysis of Data

For the purpose of addressing the objectives of the current study, a questionnaire was developed to investigate current practices of public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students, focusing on the teaching of oboe students in grades five through eight. Through state music education associations and school websites, public school band instructors who teach grades five through eight were identified and e-mail addresses and telephone numbers were obtained in order to request participation in the study, which involved the completion of an on-line questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed to investigate current strategies and approaches pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students, and responses were intended to provide foundational information regarding current and innovative teaching practices of public school band instructors across the nation. Two thousand one hundred ninety-five public school band instructors throughout the United States were contacted; 393 band instructors viewed the questionnaire by navigating to its host website and entering a pass code that was assigned to each band instructor who was contacted. Of the 393 band instructors who viewed the questionnaire, 264 (12.0%) participated in the study by actually completing at least one item on the questionnaire. One hundred twenty nine band instructors submitted a questionnaire with no data and were therefore eliminated from the data analysis.

Aspects of teaching oboe specifically addressed in the questionnaire include the following:

1. At which grade level students are permitted to study oboe
2. Whether students are required to study another instrument prior to studying oboe, and which instruments are required for study
3. Specific criteria used in selecting students to study oboe
4. Types of instruction provided and/or required for oboe students
5. Instructional materials used in teaching oboe students
6. Whether band instructors consider their primary band method book to be adequate for teaching the basic fundamental concepts of playing oboe
7. Trends, if any, among the teaching of strategies and approaches of public school band instructors within various regions of the United States, among various levels of teaching experience, and among areas of musical instrument expertise

Responses derived from the questionnaire were tabulated, summarized, and examined in sequence of the survey items as presented on the questionnaire. Data are reported in frequencies and percentages, and cross-tabulations were calculated to determine if any relationship existed between demographic variables and specific strategies and approaches used in the teaching of beginning oboe students. Due to the nature and intent of this study, frequencies and percentages were determined to be sufficient in providing a descriptive analysis of the data. Results were then employed to form a synthesis of current strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students. Responses were

recorded using single-response items, multiple-response items, Likert-type scale items,<sup>3</sup> and comment box items via the on-line questionnaire. In compliance with the objectives, the study is foundational and preliminary in nature; therefore, the results reported should be viewed accordingly.

### *Demographic Information*

Band instructors provided demographic information concerning the state in which they taught, years of experience teaching beginning level band, and their primary instrument. States in which band instructors taught were tabulated and organized by the investigator into the following six regions: New England, Middle Atlantic, South, Midwest, Southwest, and West,<sup>4</sup> and are listed in Table 1. Levels of teaching experience among band instructors varied from 1 – 3 years to more than 20 years (see Table 2). Band instructors were also asked to indicate their instrument of primary experience by selecting from a list. These responses were organized by the investigator into six categories in order to reflect instrumental families, including woodwind, brass, string, keyboard/other, percussion, and voice. Most band instructors indicated either woodwind (n = 112, 42.4%) or brass (n = 124, 47.0%) as their primary instrument, as presented in Table 3.

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents were asked to rate their perceived level of effectiveness regarding the teaching of fundamental concepts to oboe students through the use of their primary band method book on a scale of 1 (unsuccessful) to 5 (successful).

<sup>4</sup> Pearson Education, Inc. determined these regions by identifying states that comprise “similar climate, geography, traditions, and history.” (Pearson Education, Inc., 2005).

Table 1

*Geographic Regions of Band Instructors (N = 264)*

Region	Frequency	Percentage
New England	7	2.7 %
Middle Atlantic	30	11.4 %
South	99	37.5 %
Midwest	58	22.0 %
Southwest	24	9.1 %
West	44	16.7 %
Did not respond	2	0.8 %

*Note.* New England = CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT; Middle Atlantic = DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA; South = AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, MO, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV; Midwest = IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI; Southwest = AZ, NM, OK, TX; West = AL, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY.

Table 2

*Teaching Experience of Band Instructors (N = 264)*

Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than ten (n = 134, 50.8 %)		
1 – 3	46	17.4 %
4 – 7	56	21.2 %
8 – 10	32	12.1 %
More than ten (n = 127, 48.1 %)		
10 – 20	63	23.9 %
More than 20	64	24.2 %
Did not respond	3	1.1 %

Table 3

*Primary Instrument of Band Instructors (N = 264)*

Instrument Category	Frequency	Percentage
Woodwind	112	42.4 %
Brass	124	47.0 %
String	1	0.4 %
Keyboard/Other	5	1.9 %
Percussion	20	7.6 %
Voice	2	0.8 %
Did not respond	0	0.0 %

### *Current Band Programs*

Band instructors were asked to provide general information regarding their current band programs. According to the responses, grade levels in which students may enter band ranged from fourth through seventh grades, with most (n = 143, 54.2%) permitting students to enter in sixth grade (see Table 4). Some band instructors indicated, by means of a comment box item, a range of grade levels in which students might enter band, such as sixth through eighth grades. Responses also indicated the use of alternative instruction for beginning students entering the band program, including summer-start programs, after-school programs, and Pre-Band classes. According to the data, grade levels of band taught by respondents ranged from first through twelfth grades. Responses indicated that most instructors teach more than one grade level of band, whereas one instructor indicated that he or she teaches choir as well. Regarding grade levels on which this study focused, responses indicated that 76 band instructors (28.8%) teach fifth grade band, 215 (81.4%) teach sixth grade band, 224 (84.8%) teach seventh grade band, 223 (84.5%) teach eighth grade band, and 2 band instructors (0.8%) did not respond to this item. Number of students currently enrolled in beginning level band programs varied from less than 10 (n = 4, 1.5%) to more than 100 (n = 81, 30.7%), as indicated in Table 5.



Table 4

*Grade Level Students May Enter Band (N = 264)*

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
4 <sup>th</sup>	35	13.3 %
5 <sup>th</sup>	62	23.5 %
6 <sup>th</sup>	143	54.2 %
7 <sup>th</sup>	22	8.3 %
Did not respond	2	0.8 %

Table 5

*Students Enrolled in Beginning Level Band (N = 264)*

Students	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10	4	1.5 %
10 – 20	8	3.0 %
21 – 49	59	22.3 %
50 – 100	107	40.5 %
More than 100	81	30.7 %
Did not respond	5	1.9 %

*Students Enrolled to Study Oboe*

According to participating band instructors, oboe study may begin as early as first grade or as late as ninth grade, and most often begins in middle school grade levels.

Responses indicated that 40 band instructors (15.2%) permit students to begin oboe study

in fifth grade, 121 (45.8%) permit students to begin in sixth grade, 50 (18.9%) permit students to begin in seventh grade, and 6 (2.3%) permit students to begin in eighth grade. Thirty-three band instructors (12.5%) permit students to begin in first through fourth grades, and 2 (0.8%) permit students to begin in ninth grade. Only 2 (0.8%) band instructors indicated they do not permit students to study oboe at all,<sup>5</sup> and zero respondents indicated they permit students to begin oboe study as late as grade levels ten through twelve. An equal number of band instructors reported either zero (n = 100, 37.9%), or 1 – 2 (n = 100, 37.9%) oboe students enrolled in beginning level band programs. Responses indicated that 41 (15.5%) band instructors have 3 – 4 oboe students enrolled, 11 (4.2%) have 5 – 6 oboe students enrolled, 7 (2.7%) have more than 6 oboe students enrolled, and 5 (1.9 %) did not respond to this item.

Band instructors who reported zero oboe students currently enrolled in their beginning level band program provided a variety of reasons, such as postponing oboe study beyond beginning level band and finding no suitable candidates for oboe study. Lack of equipment, staff, and funds were also reasons provided by the band instructors for reporting zero students enrolled to study oboe, and some indicated that their oboe students had either decided to drop out of the band program or transferred out of the district.

#### *Required Study on Another Instrument*

Band instructors were asked to indicate whether they require students to study another instrument prior to studying oboe. According to the responses, 83 band

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents who indicated they do not permit students to study oboe at all were automatically directed to the final page of the on-line questionnaire.

instructors (31.4%) require students to study another instrument, 173 (65.5%) do not require students to study another instrument (although several indicated they recommend it), and 8 (3.0%) did not respond to this item. Of those who require study of another instrument (n = 83) many indicated they require study of specific instruments prior to studying oboe, with most requiring clarinet (n = 77, 92.8%) or flute (n = 73, 88.0%). Instruments required for study prior to studying oboe were organized by the investigator into instrumental categories and are presented in Table 6. According to the responses, duration of required study on another instrument prior to oboe study varies from one half of a semester (n = 2, 2.3%) to 2 years (n = 12, 13.6%), with most (n = 47, 53.4%) requiring one year of study on another instrument prior to studying oboe (see Table 7). Some band instructors added that duration of study on another instrument varies, depending on success and progress of individual students.

Table 6

*Instrument Required to Study Prior to Studying Oboe (n = 83)*

Instrument category	Frequency	Percentage
Woodwinds	78	94.0 %
Brass	15	18.1 %
Percussion	6	7.2 %
Keyboard/Guitar	6	7.2 %
Voice	2	2.4 %

Table 7

*Duration of Study on Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study (n = 88)*

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
1/2 semester	2	2.3 %
1 semester	12	13.6 %
1 year	47	53.4 %
2 years	12	13.6 %
Other	15	17.0 %

Band instructors who require students to study another instrument prior to oboe study varied from 14.3% to 45.2% within specific regions of the United States (see Table 8). Of the band instructors who have been teaching for 10 years or less (n = 130), 49 (37.7%) require study on another instrument prior to oboe study, but only 34 (27.4%) of band instructors with more than ten years teaching experience (n = 124) require study on another instrument prior to oboe study. Table 9 presents responses regarding requirement of study on another instrument prior to oboe study, based on years of teaching experience. Of the 111 band instructors who were identified as woodwind players, 36 (32.4%) require study on another instrument prior to oboe study. Forty-two (35.6%) of the 118 band instructors who were identified as brass players require study on another instrument prior to oboe study. Responses regarding requirement of study on another instrument prior to oboe study based on the primary instrument category of the respondents are presented in Table 10.

Table 8

*Required Study of Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study, within Each Region*

Required study of another instrument	New England (n = 7)	Middle Atlantic (n = 28)	South (n = 96)	Midwest (n = 58)	Southwest (n = 24)	West (n = 42)
Yes	1 14.3%	8 28.6%	37 38.5%	9 15.5%	9 37.5%	19 45.2%
No	6 85.7%	20 71.4%	59 61.5%	49 84.5%	15 62.5%	23 54.8%

Table 9

*Required Study of Another Instrument Prior to Oboe Study, within Years of Teaching Experience*

Required study of another instrument	10 years or less (n = 130)	More than 10 years (n = 124)
Yes	49 37.7%	34 27.4%
No	81 62.3%	90 72.6%

Table 10

*Required Study of Another Instrument, within Band Instructor's Primary Instrument*

Required study of another instrument	Woodwinds (n = 111)	Brass (n = 118)	Other (n = 27)
Yes	36 32.4%	42 35.6%	5 18.5%
No	75 67.6%%	76 64.4%	22 81.5%

*Specific Criteria Used in Selecting Students for Oboe Study*

Responding band instructors indicated differences in criteria used when selecting students to study oboe, often considering multiple characteristics. These characteristics, summarized and arranged into categories and descriptors by the investigator, include specific qualities pertaining to study habits and behavior, physical attributes, academic achievement and intelligence, musical experience and ability, and availability of equipment and support (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Criteria Used in Selection of Students to Study Oboe*

Category	Frequency
<b>Student study habits and behavior</b>	
Desire/interest/motivation	130
Good work ethic	45
Maturity and responsibility	12
Independence	7
Perseverance and patience	6
Discipline in behavior	4
Discipline non-specific	2
Other (e.g., “personality,” “perfectionist,” “not afraid of standing out”)	15
<b>Student physical characteristics</b>	
Embouchure formation & size/shape of lips/mouth	18
Size/structure of fingers and hands	13
Finger/hand agility	6
Other (e.g., “lung capacity,” “physical aptitude”)	5
<b>Student academic achievement and intelligence</b>	
Above average academic achievement	57
Above average intelligence	31
Standardized test scores	4
Quick learner	3

Category	Frequency
<b>Student musical ability and experience</b>	
Ability to hold/produce sound on oboe reed/instrument	52
Success/skill on another instrument	41
Strong basic aural skills	38
Overall music ability	33
Strong basic music skills (reading, theory)	9
<b>Availability of equipment and support</b>	
Willingness/ability to afford private instruction	29
Strong support from parents	11
Ability to afford reeds/accessories	8
Recommendation by another teacher	6
Availability of instrument	1
<b>Other</b>	
Personal interview	4
Instrumentation of band conducive to oboe	2
No criteria	2

### *Small-group Homogeneous Instruction and Supplemental Materials*

Band instructors were asked to indicate whether they provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students. According to the responses, 133 (50.4%) provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, 122 (46.2%) do not provide small-group homogeneous instruction, and 9 (3.4%) did not respond to this item.



Although 133 band instructors indicated they actually provide small-group homogeneous instruction for their oboe students, several others submitted responses pertaining to regularity of this instruction. Band instructors reported small-group homogeneous sessions as weekly (n = 71, 49.3%), every other week (n = 12, 8.3%), and monthly (n = 14, 9.7%). Forty-seven band instructors (32.6 %) reported variable scheduling of small-group homogeneous instruction based on necessity, availability of time, availability of clinicians, and availability of funds. Of the band instructors who indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction (n = 133), several indicated they implement it more often during the beginning of oboe study, whereas others provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students during the summer, on a six-day cycle, twice per week, every other day, or daily. Three band instructors indicated small-group sessions for oboe students were provided in combination with other woodwind instruments, such as flute or saxophone. Length of small-group homogeneous sessions varied from 15 minutes to 60 minutes. Responses indicated that 11 band instructors (7.9%) teach 15-minute sessions, 81 (57.9%) teach 30-minute sessions, 39 (27.9%) teach 45-minute sessions, and 9 (6.4%) teach 60-minute sessions.

Band instructors who indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students varied from 16.7% to 78.6% within specific regions of the United States (see Table 12). Of the band instructors who have been teaching for 10 years or less (n = 130), 53.8% provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, and 49.6% of respondents with more than ten years teaching experience (n = 123) provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students. Table 13 presents responses regarding those who provide small-group homogeneous instruction provided

for oboe students, based on years of teaching experience. Of those who provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, responses varied among band instructors within their instruments of primary experience, with 65 woodwind players (58.0%) and 58 brass players (50.0%) providing small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students. Responses regarding those who provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, and those who do not provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, based on primary instrument, are presented in Table 14.

Table 12

*Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Each Region*

Provide small-group	New England (n = 7)	Middle Atlantic (n = 28)	South (n = 94)	Midwest (n = 58)	Southwest (n = 24)	West (n = 43)
Yes	3 42.9%	22 78.6%	48 51.1%	36 62.1%	4 16.7%	19 44.2%
No	4 57.1%	6 21.4%	46 48.9%	22 37.9%	20 83.3%	24 55.8%

Table 13

*Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Years of Teaching Experience*

Provide small-group	10 years or less (n = 130)	More than 10 years (n = 123)
Yes	70 53.8%	61 49.6%
No	60 46.1%	62 50.4%

Table 14

*Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students, within Band Instructors' Primary Instrument*

Provide small-group	Woodwinds (n = 112)	Brass (n = 116)	Other (n = 27)
Yes	65 58.0%	58 50.0%	10 37.0%
No	47 42.0%	58 50.0%	17 63.0%

According to the band instructors who indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students (n = 133), a variety of instructional materials are used in the sessions. For the sake of manageability, the investigator summarized and arranged responses regarding these instructional materials into the following categories:

solo oboe method books, band method books, scales and technical exercises, and other materials (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Materials Used in Small-group Homogeneous Instruction for Oboe Students*

Materials	Frequency
<b>Solo oboe method books</b>	
Rubank series	14
Belwin's <i>Oboe student</i>	11
<i>Breeze easy for oboe</i>	6
Other (Gekeler <i>Method for Oboe, Student Instrumental Course</i> )	5
<b>Band method books</b>	
<i>Standard of excellence</i>	44
<i>Essential elements</i>	41
<i>Accent on Achievement</i>	11
Other	15
<b>Scales and technical exercises</b>	
Scales sheets	6
Other	3
<b>Other</b>	
Instructor-designed materials	5
Other (e.g., solos/duets, video-recording, tuner)	7

Supplemental materials provided for oboe students varied from sheet music and method books to informational materials pertaining to playing oboe. Responses indicated that 90 band instructors (34.1%) provide supplemental materials to oboe students, 156 (59.1%) do not provide supplemental materials to oboe students, and 18 (6.8%) did not respond to this item. Band instructors were asked to list supplemental materials they provide for oboe students, and the investigator summarized and arranged these items into categories as presented in Table 16.

Table 16

*Supplemental Materials Provided for Oboe Students*

Category	Frequency
<b>Solo method books</b>	
Rubank series	9
Belwin's <i>Oboe student</i>	5
Gekeler's <i>Method for oboe</i>	3
Other	3
<b>Band method books</b>	
Supplemental music found in band books	5
Other	4
<b>Scales/Exercises/Sheet music</b>	
Solos	15
Scales	9
Technique books and exercises	4

Category	Frequency
Warm-up and breathing exercises	4
Other	11
<hr/>	
Informational materials	
Fingering charts	12
Materials from clinics/workshops/college methods class	6
Other	6
<hr/>	
Other	
Method books/Instructor designed materials	11
Private lessons	8
Other (e.g., audio/video recordings, “various”)	10

### *Private Oboe Instruction*

Band instructors were asked to indicate whether they require or do not require oboe students to receive private instruction. Responses indicated that 67 band instructors (25.4%) require oboe students to receive private instruction, 183 (69.3%) do not require private instruction (although many indicated they do recommend it), and 14 (5.3%) did not respond to this item. Although only 67 band instructors indicated they actually require their oboe students to receive private instruction, several others submitted responses to items on the questionnaire regarding when private instruction should occur, who provides this instruction, and regularity of private instruction. According to the responding band instructors (n = 96), oboe students are required to begin private instruction at different points in their study (see Table 17). As indicated by those

responding (n = 104), oboe students receive private instruction from various specialists, including oboe specialists (n = 63, 60.6 %), woodwind specialists (n = 10, 9.6 %), band instructors (n = 15, 14.4 %), and peer teachers/high school students (n = 3, 0.8%). Band instructors (n = 13, 12.5 %) who indicated other types of teachers (category, Other) reported that private oboe instruction was often provided by a combination of specialists, depending on availability. According to those who responded, most oboe students receive private instruction weekly (n = 123, 87.9 %), although some band instructors indicated students receive private oboe instruction every other week (n = 7, 5.0 %), and others (n = 10, 9.6 %) indicated private oboe instruction occurs when students display need, when schedules permit, and during the summer. One band instructor added that his or her students are unable to afford regularly scheduled private instruction, and no band instructors reported students receiving private oboe instruction monthly.

Table 17

*When Private Study is Required (n = 96)*

Starting point	Frequency	Percentage
Immediately	61	63.5%
Within one month	6	6.3%
Within six months	4	4.2%
Within one year	1	1.0%
Within two years	2	2.1%
Other	22	22.9%

Band instructors who require students to receive private oboe instruction ( $n = 67$ ) varied from 0.0% to 41.7.0% within specific regions of the United States (see Table 18). Of the band instructors who have been teaching for 10 years or less ( $n = 127$ ), 26.8% require oboe students to receive private instruction, and 26.7% of band instructors with more than ten years teaching experience ( $n = 120$ ) require oboe students to receive private instruction. Table 19 presents responses regarding requirement of private oboe instruction, based on years of teaching experience. Of those who require oboe students to receive private instruction, responses varied slightly from 25.0% to 28.8% among respondents with differing instruments of primary experience. Table 20 presents responses regarding requirement of private oboe instruction, based on primary instrument of the responding band instructors.

Table 18

*Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Each Region*

Required private instruction	New England ( $n = 6$ )	Middle Atlantic ( $n = 27$ )	South ( $n = 93$ )	Midwest ( $n = 58$ )	Southwest ( $n = 24$ )	West ( $n = 40$ )
Yes	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	32 34.4%	10 17.2%	10 41.7%	14 35.0%
No	6 100%	27 100%	61 65.6%	48 82.8%	14 58.3%	26 65.0%



Table 19

*Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Years of Teaching Experience*

Required private instruction	10 years or less (n = 127)	More than 10 years (n = 120)
Yes	34 26.8%	32 26.7%
No	93 73.2%	88 73.3%

Table 20

*Required Private Oboe Instruction, within Band Instructor's Primary Instrument*

Required private instruction	Woodwinds (n = 111)	Brass (n = 111)	Other (n = 28)
Yes	28 25.2%	32 28.8%	7 25.0%
No	83 74.8%	79 71.2%	21 75.0%

*Primary Band Method Books*

Band instructors indicated a variety of method books used in their beginning level band programs, with most band instructors reporting *Essential Elements* (n = 97, 36.7%) or *Standard of Excellence* (n = 85, 32.2%) as their primary band method book. Responses regarding primary band method books used by participating band instructors are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

*Primary Band Method Book (N = 264)*

Method book	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Essential Elements</i>	97	36.7%
<i>Standard of Excellence</i>	85	32.2%
<i>Accent on Achievement</i>	28	10.6%
Other	39	14.8%
Did not respond	15	5.7%

According to responding band instructors, criteria used in selecting primary band method books varied. This variation included overall effectiveness for the entire band or specific groups of instruments, pedagogical issues, overall organization, availability of ancillary materials, cost, various district, state, and/or national standards addressed, or district mandates. One band instructor reported “too many to name,” and another reported selection based on knowing the author personally. Criteria used in selecting primary band method books were summarized and arranged into categories by the investigator and are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

*Criteria Used in Selecting Primary Band Method Books*

Category	Frequency
<b>Works best/ease of use</b>	
Instructor/student ease of use/familiarity	47
Best for entire band	36
Best for oboe	2
Best for specific instruments (e.g. clarinet, trumpet, horn, percussion)	14
<b>Pedagogy</b>	
Progression of concepts	73
Ancillary materials (CD, DVD, Smart Music Technology)	34
Addresses standards/determined by district, state, national	32
Quality of materials	25
Variety of materials	10
Instrument-specific examples	10
<b>Other</b>	
Cost	3
“Too many to name”	2

Perceived effectiveness regarding the teaching of fundamental concepts to oboe students through the use of the primary band method books varied among responding band instructors. The instructors were asked to rate their perceived level of success with

teaching each fundamental concept to beginning oboe students, based on a Likert-type scale, and provide additional information for each response. Response choices were 1 – 5, with 1 being unsuccessful and 5 being successful. Examination of distributions revealed a negative skew for most of these items; therefore, both the mean and the median are reported for each. Responses regarding perceived effectiveness of teaching fundamental concepts to beginning oboe students through the use of band method books are listed in Table 23.

Table 23

*Perceived Success of Band Method Book Pertaining to Fundamental Concepts (N = 264)*

Concept	Perceived success						Mean	Median
	Unsuccessful			Successful				
	1	2	3	4	5	DNR		
Embouchure	1	19	64	89	54	37	3.78	4.00
	0.4%	7.2%	24.2%	33.7%	20.5%	14.0%		
Hand position	0	6	46	105	68	39	4.04	4.00
	0%	2.3%	17.4%	38.8%	25.8%	14.8%		
Posture	1	3	29	63	128	40	4.40	5.00
	0.4%	1.1%	11.0%	23.9%	48.5%	15.2%		
Breathing	4	15	60	72	70	43	3.86	4.00
	1.5%	5.7%	22.7%	27.3%	26.5%	16.3%		
Air support	6	15	62	80	58	43	3.76	4.00
	2.3%	5.7%	23.5%	30.3%	22.0%	16.3%		

Perceived success								
Concept	Unsuccessful			Successful			Mean	Median
	1	2	3	4	5	DNR		
Tone	7	21	68	80	47	41	3.62	4.00
production	2.7%	8.0%	25.8%	30.3%	17.8%	15.5%		
Intonation	11	32	85	64	30	42	3.32	3.00
	4.2%	12.1%	32.2%	24.2%	11.4%	15.9%		
Fingering	0	8	33	91	96	36	4.21	4.00
	0.0%	3.0%	12.5%	34.5%	36.4%	13.6%		
Articulation	4	13	53	89	66	39	3.89	4.00
	1.5%	4.9%	20.1%	33.7%	25.0%	14.8%		
Rhythm	0	2	23	81	122	36	4.42	5.00
	0.0%	0.8%	8.7%	30.7%	46.2%	13.6%		
Pitch-reading	3	4	32	78	108	39	4.26	4.00
	1.1%	1.5%	12.1%	29.5%	40.9%	14.8%		
Dynamic	2	17	58	95	54	38	3.81	4.00
range	0.8%	6.4%	22.0%	36.0%	20.5%	14.4%		

*Note.* DNR = Did not respond

Several band instructors indicated that the sole use of band method books for the teaching of fundamental concepts to oboe students might not be sufficient. Eighty-four band instructors provided comments regarding the use of band method books for the

teaching of fundamental concepts to beginning oboe students. Exactly half of those providing comments (n = 42) indicated that their perceived effectiveness regarding these fundamental concepts was influenced more by their actual instruction rather than information and materials found in the band method books, indicating they spent time in class discussing and perhaps demonstrating performance skills (e.g., embouchure, breath control, hand position) of various instruments. Band instructors also indicated the need for supplemental materials and private instruction, due to limitations of band method books. Some band instructors considered the video-recordings, audio-recordings, and pictures that are included with band method books to be appropriate aids in the teaching of fundamental concepts such as embouchure, hand position, posture, breathing, and production of tone. According to responses, several band instructors indicated limitations and deficiencies regarding fingerings provided by band method books. Specifically, instructors considered fingering charts to be unclear, incomplete, and lacking sufficient information regarding the proper use of the forked-F fingering and half-hole fingerings. Some band instructors indicated that particular fundamental concepts such as articulation, air support, and dynamic range were challenging for oboe students, and therefore the teaching of these concepts was often postponed beyond the beginning level.

## Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusions

According to the data obtained, the teaching of beginning oboe students in public school band programs throughout the United States varies greatly. Although challenges related to the playing of oboe often limit appropriate development of performance skills necessary for success among young students, previous research related to methodologies used in teaching oboe students within a beginning level band ranges from limited to non-existent. The purpose of this study was (a) to investigate the strategies and approaches used by public school band instructors pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students; (b) to reveal strengths and weaknesses pertaining to oboe instruction; and (c) to make suggestions based on the findings to enhance teaching approaches, oboe students' performance skills, and their overall musical development. Specific issues addressed include criteria used in selecting students for oboe study (grade level, prior experience, and personal qualities), types of instruction implemented, and materials used for instruction.

Following the initial invitation to access and complete the on-line questionnaire, two reminder electronic messages were sent, and phone calls were made to those who had not responded to the questionnaire. Despite these efforts, the response rate in this study was low, although response rates of Internet surveys are typically lower than mail surveys (Mangione, 1998; Solomon, 2001). A number of possibilities may explain this poor response rate. First, due to the large number of unwanted solicitations that occur through electronic mail, many public schools have installed strict "spam" filters on their

computer networks. Such filters may have prevented the questionnaire invitation from being read by the intended recipient. Some band instructors confirmed this suspicion when contacted by phone, stating they had never received the invitation. Second, public school Internet servers may have interfered or were incompatible with technology used for the questionnaire (Solomon, 2001), thereby causing failures in transporting the data to the University of Georgia Survey Research Center. This may partially explain the number of band instructors ( $n = 129$ ) who accessed the survey by navigating to the questionnaire website and entering their pass code, but failed to submit data for a single item on the questionnaire. Finally, band instructors who viewed the electronic invitation may have decided not to respond due to a lack of interest or time, perhaps due to the length of the study (approximately 15 minutes).

Demographics of responding band instructors pertaining to years of experience and instrument of primary experience appear to be diverse and representative of the expected population of public school band instructors across the nation, although geographic representations of the sample were unbalanced among specific regions of the United States. Band instructors were often asked to elaborate or explain their responses to items on the questionnaire. These responses were occasionally incomplete and/or vague, making it difficult to accurately draw conclusions from the responses. Discrepancies among responses to items on the questionnaire also occurred. Due to the overall low response rate, the lack of responses from particular states, and the incomplete, vague, or conflicting responses, results and conclusions of this study should be viewed with caution.



### *Grade Level Students May Begin Oboe*

Consistent with research (Hartley, 1996), responses revealed a majority of band instructors permit students to enter their band programs (86.0%) as well as permit students to begin study on oboe (82.2%) in the middle school grade levels (fifth through eighth grades), implying that many band instructors permit students to begin study on oboe within their first year of participation in band. This appears to oppose the recommendations of many professional oboists and specialists who have advocated postponing oboe study beyond the beginning level until students are more mature and more adequately prepared in other aspects of music such as notation, rhythm, and development of aural skills (Kemper, 1970; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Discrepancies occurred in which some responding band instructors indicated first grade as the earliest grade level they teach as well as the earliest grade level that oboe study is permitted, although no instructors indicated any grade level prior to fourth as the earliest grade in which students may enter their band program. No explanation can be provided for these discrepancies except to speculate that respondents either (a) provide instrumental instruction independent of their band program; (b) did not fully comprehend the question; or (c) had little, if any, experience with online questionnaires, simply resulting in errors.

Although many instructors permit students to begin study on oboe during their beginning level band participation, a majority (75.8%) indicated they have two or fewer oboe students currently enrolled in their band program. Some band instructors indicated they do not have oboe students currently enrolled due to lack of suitable candidates for

oboe study,<sup>6</sup> lack of available equipment and support, or oboe students dropping out of the band program. These responses may indicate trends regarding the large number of band instructors who have fewer than two oboe students currently enrolled in their band programs. Band instructors may be more discriminating when selecting students for oboe study than when selecting students for other instruments, as revealed in their responses regarding the diverse criteria they consider. Further, band instructors may not consider obtaining and maintaining necessary equipment (instrument and reeds) to be a priority, or may not feel adequately trained or prepared to properly teach beginning oboe students, as supported by research pertaining to influencing factors on band instructors selecting appropriate instruments for students (Bayley, 2004). Sustaining interest in oboe study and retaining oboe students in band programs may be challenging due to lack of necessary equipment and/or lack of proper instruction.

#### *Required Study on Another Instrument*

Although many professional oboists and instrumental specialists (Colwell & Goolsby, 1992; Kemper, 1970; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990) have recommended study on another instrument prior to oboe study, the majority of band instructors (65.5%) who participated in the survey indicated they do not require study on another instrument prior to studying oboe. Several added that although they do not require study on another instrument, they do recommend it. Strategies pertaining to study on another instrument prior to oboe study varied among responding

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<sup>6</sup> Participating band instructors indicated specific qualities they prefer in their oboe students, including strong desire to play oboe, previous musical experience, strong music skills, and strong academic achievement.

band instructors, including the required duration of study on another instrument, and which instruments they consider appropriate for study. A majority (53.5%) of responding band instructors indicated they require one year of study (often considered the beginning level of instrumental study) prior to transferring to oboe. One year of instrumental study may be sufficient in developing students' basic music reading and performance skills, as indicated by national standards in music education (MENC, 1996).

Consistent with recommendations of professionals (Kemper, 1970; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990), most band instructors who indicated they require study on another instrument prior to oboe study (94.0 %) specified a woodwind instrument as required for study, with clarinet and flute selected most often. Requiring study of these woodwind instruments prior to oboe study seems logical considering the somewhat similar hand positions among oboe and clarinet or flute, and fingerings among oboe and especially flute (Ott, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Development of fundamental concepts pertaining to performance on another wind instrument, including air support and breath control, may assist students in achieving success on oboe. When transferring from clarinet, however, embouchure formation on oboe may be challenging due to use of different facial muscles in forming clarinet (Kirkbride, 1998) and oboe embouchures (Hedrick, 1969; Weiger, 1998; Westphal, 1990). Students transferring from flute to oboe may experience difficulty due to the great difference in air pressure involved in playing these instruments. Playing flute involves using a large quantity of air but lacks any means of restricting the air flow, thereby necessitating a small amount of air pressure and requiring the player to carefully control the amount of air expelled at one time (Ott, 1998); playing oboe involves a small quantity of air but a large degree of air pressure due

to resistance created by the small reed opening (Weiger, 1998) and requires the player to expel old air before inhaling new (Gaunt, 2004; Thomas 1981).

Several band instructors indicated brass instruments as appropriate for study prior to studying oboe. Although learned hand position and fingerings would not transfer from any brass instrument to oboe, air support and breath control are concepts that could be learned on a brass instrument and then applied on a woodwind instrument, specifically oboe. Some band instructors indicated they require study of a keyboard instrument, guitar, or percussion instrument, or they require vocal study prior to studying oboe. No explanations were provided for selecting these instruments for study prior to studying oboe, although consideration of criteria used by participating band instructors in selecting students for oboe study may reveal possible intentions. Many band instructors indicated they select students to study oboe according to the student's musical ability and experience, specifically strong basic music skills (reading and theory) and strong basic aural skills. These skills may be enhanced from study on a keyboard instrument or guitar, especially due to the typically young age at which students may begin study on these instruments. Study on percussion instruments may enhance rhythmic reading as well as pitch reading (pitched percussion). Breathing and breath control (Rosewall, 1984) as well as aural skills may especially be developed through vocal training, which may lead to greater success when studying oboe, given the often inconsistent intonation due to poor quality of equipment (Backus, 1977; Bukalski, 1990; Schilz & Katz, 1997; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003; Westphal, 1990) and/or lack of proper performance approaches (Barret, 1862; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Polk, 2004; Reimer, 1957; Schuring, 2000; Smith, 2004; Sprenkle & Ledet; Westphal, 1990). A strong foundation in

the fundamentals of music notation, theory, and aural skills may enable beginning students to focus attention on developing proper performance skills on oboe.

### *Criteria Used in Selecting Oboe Students*

Consistent with recommendations of professional oboists, responding band instructors considered a variety of criteria when selecting students to study oboe, including specific qualities pertaining to study habits and behavior, physical attributes, academic achievement and intelligence, musical experience and ability, and availability of equipment and support. Qualities pertaining to study habits and behavior, especially strong interest in learning to play oboe and good work ethic, were most often indicated as criteria considered by band instructors when selecting students to study oboe.

Many instructors indicated specific physical attributes, such as size of fingers and hands, and size and shape of lips and mouth, as qualities considered in selection of a student who is suitable for oboe study. Several specified that fingers and hands should be large enough to properly reach and cover the keys on the oboe, indicating their acknowledgement of the stretched hand position produced when holding the oboe (Oelrich, 1982; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Weiger, 1998). Band instructors did not provide specific information regarding their preferred size and shape of lips and mouth, and one instructor indicated he or she considers “lung capacity” when selecting students for oboe, although the investigator was unable to determine the connotation of this response. Whereas some professional oboists and specialists (Kemper, 1970; Rath, n.d.; Weiger, 1998) have recommended consideration of these physical attributes, Prodan (1995) has argued that this is unnecessary.

Some participating band instructors also indicated they consider perseverance and patience to be preferred qualities in an oboe student, implying their anticipation of potential difficulties and setbacks. One instructor responded that he or she selects a student for oboe study who is “not afraid of standing out,” perhaps acknowledging either the likelihood of the student being the only oboist in class, or the piercing and loud tone (Vaneman, 2003) often produced by beginning oboe students due to an untrained embouchure (Oelrich, 1982; Schuring, 2000; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003) and/or poor quality reeds (Still, 2002; Vaneman, 2003).

Several band instructors indicated they select students for oboe study who exhibit above average academic achievement and intelligence, as determined by students’ grade averages and standardized test scores. This strategy may lead to greater success in overcoming challenges when learning to play oboe, as supported by research related to scholastic ability and achievement influencing higher achievement in musical performance (Klinedinst, 1991). Some band instructors also indicated they select students for oboe study who exhibit independence, and one instructor indicated he or she considers students who pay “meticulous attention to detail.” Reasons for band instructors selecting students with these qualities were unclear, but it may be inferred that some band instructors recognize the likelihood of the oboe student being the only oboist in class, or that band instructors prefer oboe students to ascertain their own solutions to challenges posed by playing oboe, rather than rely on the instructor for close attention.

Many participating band instructors indicated a preference for students with strong basic music skills, overall musical ability, strong basic aural skills, and/or success and skill on another instrument when determining a student suitable for oboe study.

Instructors may consider oboe students with previous experience in music and strong basic music skills to have greater potential for success, in that they may focus on specific performance aspects of playing oboe (embouchure, hand position, production of tone) rather than also simultaneously processing musical notation and rhythms. This approach is similar to techniques indicated by some specialists (see Chapter 2), whereby they reduce the number of concepts in the beginning stages of instrumental study (Banister, 2002; Clemens, 1977; Conway, 1997; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Lenzini, 1999; Stycos, 1993). These specialists have contended this strategy may better prepare students in developing proper performance skills on any instrument, including oboe. Selection of students for oboe study based on their demonstration of strong aural skills may indicate band instructors' anticipation of potentially inconsistent production of tone and intonation due to improperly formed embouchure (Oelrich 1982; Schuring, 2000; Sprenkle & Ledet, 1961; Vaneman, 2003) and poor quality of equipment (Backus, 1977; Bukalski, 1990; T. W. Howarth & Co. Ltd., n.d.; Still, 2002; Vaneman, 2003). Some responding band instructors also indicated they select students for oboe study based on financial means to obtain quality reeds (oboe reeds tend to cost more than single reeds and require frequent replacement), quality instruments, and private lessons.

Responses pertaining to the desirable qualities mentioned above may indicate not only acknowledgement of the challenges, but also an attempt at combating those challenges presented to beginning oboe students, including hand position, embouchure formation, breathing and breath control, production of tone, and technical facility (Barret, 1862; Clemens, 1977; Goossens & Roxburgh, 1977; Jellison, 1979; Oelrich, 1982; Polk, 2004; Prodan, 1995; Rath, n.d.; Robinson, 2001; Schuring, 2000; Westphal,

1990). Consideration of these items may imply that band instructors perceive the oboe to be more challenging than more widely-used band instruments, such as flute, clarinet, trumpet, and percussion. Only three responses indicated no criteria to be used in selecting students for oboe study. Further research is needed to determine whether band instructors consider criteria similar to those reported in this study when selecting students for study on other instruments.

### *Types of Instruction*

Although research indicates beginning level instrumental students experience no difference in achievement when receiving individual or group instruction (Schleuter, 1997), some responding band instructors indicated they provide learning opportunities for oboe students outside of band class. A slight majority (50.4%) of band instructors indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, most often reporting thirty-minute sessions. Only a small number of band instructors indicated they require oboe students to receive private instruction (several indicated they recommend but do not require private instruction). Although no known research has discussed the potential benefits of students receiving private instruction, some professional oboists have recommended private instruction to ensure proper development of fundamental performance skills (Rothwell, 1982; Whittow, 1992), such as embouchure formation, breathing and breath control, production of tone, intonation, hand position, and proper fingerings. Small-group and private instruction were most often reported as occurring weekly, although both types were also reported as provided to students in accordance with student necessity, availability of time, availability of an instructor, and availability of funds (either in school budgets or students' personal budgets). Band



instructors may consider recommendations of others to implement peer teacher programs as a means of supplementing beginning oboe students' study (Lenzini, 1999; Mills, 2003; Staley, 2004), especially when faced with time and budget constraints. Some band instructors indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction more often during the beginning of study, and a majority (63.5%) of those who require private instruction indicated they require it to begin immediately. These requirements may indicate band instructors' acknowledgement of challenges imposed on students learning to play oboe and of the significance of providing oboe students a solid foundation of basic fundamental concepts early in their study.

#### *Materials Used for Oboe Instruction*

Band instructors reported a variety of materials used in teaching beginning oboe students. Materials most often reported for use in small-group homogeneous sessions were actually beginning level band method books, seemingly the same books most often used in band class: *Essential Elements*, *Standard of Excellence*, and *Accent on Achievement*. This result was unexpected due to the number of responding band instructors who acknowledged the inadequacy of these books in providing appropriate material for beginning oboe students. When asked about overall satisfaction with their primary band method book, some instructors indicated deficiencies and limitations regarding fingering charts provided in these books, as well as less desirable range and tonalities imposed on the oboe student early in their study.

Solo oboe method books were also reported as being used in small-group sessions, and were indicated as supplemental materials provided for oboe students, with *Rubank Elementary Method for Oboe* (Hovey, 1934) and *Oboe Student* (Edlefsen and

Weber, 1969) most often listed. Responding band instructors indicated they often provide their oboe students informational materials pertaining to performance approaches and fundamental concepts of playing oboe, as well as fingering charts. Distribution and use of solo oboe method books and informational materials may imply recognition by participating band instructors of the challenges posed on beginning oboe students to develop proper fundamental performance skills, as well as a means of compensation for deficiencies found in method books designed for use with a full-band class.

The majority of band instructors who provided responses use either *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser, et. al, 1999) or *Standard of Excellence* (Pearson, 1993) as their primary method book for band class. Many band instructors indicated they consider pedagogical issues to be significant in selection of their primary band method book, such as (a) progression of concepts; (b) availability of ancillary materials; (c) fulfillment of district, state, and national standards; and (d) the quality and variety of materials. Instructors also indicated selection of their band method book was determined by its convenience and overall usefulness, and only three instructors indicated cost as a factor in their decision.

Many instructors indicated an overall satisfaction with their primary band method book. When asked to rate their perceived level of success with teaching fundamental concepts to beginning oboe students on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 5 being successful and 1 being unsuccessful, median responses were mostly 4 or 5, with only one concept, intonation, receiving a median score of 3. Exactly how the band instructors arrived at their selected responses is unclear. Review of the band method books, specifically *Essential Elements* (Lautzenheiser, et. al, 1999) and *Standard of Excellence*

(Pearson, 1993), revealed several of the fundamental concepts specified in the questionnaire to be inadequately addressed or explained, leading one to wonder how responding band instructors determined their perceived level of success with these method books (See Chapter 2). Many band instructors who provided comments regarding the use of band method books for the teaching of fundamental concepts to beginning oboe students indicated they believe their perceived level of success was influenced more by their own instruction rather than by the particular method book. Further, they indicated the need for supplemental materials and private instruction due to limitations of their band method book, especially pertaining to proper fingerings and formation of embouchure. Some considered video-recordings, audio-recordings, and pictures included with the method books to be helpful in the teaching of fundamental oboe performance skills. Current research supports this, indicating aural and visual models may contribute to students' success (Heresniak & Woitach, 2001; Linklater, 1997; Puopolo, 1971; Schleuter, 1997; Williams, 1978).

### *Demographic Trends*

Responses also indicated variance among demographics of band instructors, including (a) the region in which they taught, (b) years of teaching experience, and (c) their instrument of primary experience. No apparent trends were revealed among band instructors based on geographic region, with the exception of a high percentage of band instructors in the Middle Atlantic (78.6%) and the Midwest (62.1%) who provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students. Due to the unbalanced response rate among various regions of the United States, however, it is difficult to make observations and draw conclusions based on regional trends.

Band instructors who have more than ten years of teaching experience indicated they were less likely to require study on another instrument prior to studying oboe (72.6% indicated they do not), and slightly less than half this group indicated they provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students. These instructors may have discovered throughout their years of teaching that requiring study on another instrument prior to oboe study and providing small-group homogeneous instruction are not helpful to the oboe student, although this defies recommendations of some professional oboists (Rothwell, 1982; Whittow, 1992). Another possible explanation for this is that the instructors may have become more comfortable and knowledgeable regarding oboe performance skills, making classroom instruction more effective, and may consider strategies such as requiring study on another instrument and providing small-group homogeneous instruction to be unnecessary. The less experienced band instructor may feel compelled to address the challenges presented to beginning oboe students outside of a large band class and therefore may be more likely to provide small-group homogeneous instruction for oboe students, in which he or she may provide more focused attention.

Almost equal percentages of band instructors who identified themselves as brass players (35.6%) or woodwind players (32.4%) indicated they require study on another instrument prior to oboe study. Results may imply that woodwind and brass players alike have discovered that study on another instrument prior to oboe study may not effectively assist in developing skills on oboe. According to the responses, band instructors who identified themselves as woodwind players more often provide small-group homogeneous instruction on oboe (58%) than those identified as brass players (50%). This may imply that band instructors with a woodwind background may feel more

comfortable and confident in their own pedagogical skills on oboe (Bayley, 2004), thereby more effectively providing beginning oboe students the necessary information regarding fundamental concepts of playing oboe.

Years of experience and primary instrument did not seem to affect band instructors' decisions pertaining to requirement of private oboe instruction. Almost equal percentages among band instructors with ten years experience or less (73.2%) and band instructors with more than ten years experience (73.3%) indicated they do not require oboe students to receive private instruction. Similarly, 74.8% of band instructors identified as woodwind players, and 71.2% of band instructors identified as brass players indicated they do not require oboe students to receive private instruction.

#### *Conclusions and Future Research*

As with any musical instrument, proper development of fundamental performance skills at the beginning level of study may lead a young student to greater success in performance, may improve his or her musical development, and may enhance his or her enjoyment of instrumental music study. Due to the nature of the instrument, oboe study may be challenging and frustrating for the beginning student, especially when attempting to discern the proper approaches to production of tone, accurate intonation, and development of technical facility. Fundamental concepts involved in playing oboe are symbiotically related (see Chapter 2), and therefore a lack of instruction or improper instruction on one fundamental concept may affect proper development of the others, thereby hindering students' success.

Although some responding band instructors indicated they either require or recommend study on another instrument prior to oboe study, it is uncertain whether or

not this is an effective strategy for teaching beginning oboe students. Many professionals have recommended this experience, although others have warned of the potential problems in developing a properly formed embouchure when transferring from another wind instrument to oboe. Further research is needed in determining the effectiveness of this strategy, which instruments are appropriate for study prior to studying oboe, and which duration of study on another instrument is most effective in developing proper performance skills on oboe.

Some band instructors may perceive oboe as more challenging than other band instruments, as supported by responses in this study (specific criteria used in selection of oboe students and specific requirements posed on oboe students), as well as corresponding research (Bayley, 2004). Further, band instructors may lack the time for supplemental instruction or simply lack the confidence to provide instruction on oboe to interested students. Receiving more focused attention on fundamental oboe pedagogical skills in college methods courses and attending instructional clinics on playing oboe may serve band instructors in better addressing challenges presented to beginning oboe students. Additionally, band instructors may consider recommendations from professional oboists and instrumental specialists by implementing video and audio models more often in their instruction and by requiring or providing private oboe instruction.

Due to the challenges of playing oboe and possible limitations within band method books, band instructors may need to consider various teaching strategies and approaches in order to better equip their oboe students with performance skills necessary to achieving success. These strategies and approaches pertaining to the teaching of beginning oboe students may include providing oboe instruction beyond the full-band

class, such as in small-group homogeneous or private settings, in which students may receive more focused attention. Band instructors may also provide more effective and appropriate instruction by implementing materials specifically intended for oboe and by providing aural and visual models for oboe students.

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Appendix A  
*Teachers of Beginning Oboe Students Questionnaire*

1. In what state do you teach beginning-level band?
  - DROP DOWN BOX
  
2. How many years have you been teaching beginning-level band?
  - 1-5 years
  - 6-10 years
  - 11-20 years
  - More than 20 years
  
3. What is/was your primary instrument?
  - DROP DOWN BOX
  
4. At what grade level may students enter your band program?
  - Fifth
  - Sixth
  - Seventh
  - Eighth
  - Other
    - . If other, please explain: TEXT BOX
  
5. What grade levels do you teach? Indicate all that apply.
  - 5
  - 6
  - 7
  - 8
  - Other
    - . If other, please explain: TEXT BOX
  
6. Currently, how many students are enrolled in your beginning-level band program?
  - Less than 10
  - 10-20
  - 21-49
  - 50-100
  - More than 100
  
7. How many oboe students are enrolled in your beginning-level band program?
  - Zero
  - 1-2
  - 3-4
  - 5-6
  - More than 6

8. Are your oboe students required to study on another instrument prior to oboe study?
- Yes
  - No
9. If yes, what instrument is required to study first and for what duration?
- . TEXT BOX
10. What criteria do you use in selecting a student to begin study on oboe?
- . TEXT BOX
11. Do you provide any small-group, like-instrument instruction for oboe students in your band program?
- Yes
  - No
12. If yes, how often do they receive small-group instruction?
- Weekly
  - Bi-weekly
  - Monthly
  - Other
- . If other, please explain.
  - . TEXT BOX
13. If you provide small-group instruction for oboe students, please list method books and other materials used in these sessions.
- . TEXT BOX
14. Are your beginning oboe students required to receive private instruction with you or an applied oboe teacher? If yes, please indicate at what point they begin private study.
- Yes
  - No
- . TEXT BOX
15. If yes, who is the private instructor?
- You, the band instructor
  - Applied oboe teacher
16. If your students receive private instruction, how often?
- Weekly
  - Bi-weekly
  - Monthly
  - Other
- . If other, please explain: TEXT BOX

17. What specific method book(s) do you use with your oboe students?

. TEXT BOX

18. What criteria do you use in selecting these method books?

. TEXT BOX

19. Do you provide any supplemental materials for your oboe students?

- Yes
- No

20. If yes, please list what these materials are in the text box provided.

. TEXT BOX

21. How successful is the method book that you use for teaching each of the following concepts to beginning oboe students? Select a number from the scale to show your opinion. Enter additional comments in the space provided.

Unsuccessful	1	2	3	4	5	Successful
Embouchure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Hand position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Posture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Breathing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Air Support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Tone Production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Intonation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Fingering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Articulation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Rhythm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Pitch-reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						
Dynamic range	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
TEXT BOX						

## Appendix B

### *Cover Letter: Public School Band Instructors Survey Information*

Dear Colleague:

My name is Lisa H. Prodan and I am a doctoral student in the School of Music at the University of Georgia, pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Oboe Performance. I am beginning my dissertation research and your expertise and experience is vital. Your assistance in the study “Current Techniques, Strategies, and Methods Used in Teaching Beginning-level Public School Oboe Students” is related to research that may be published. I am conducting this research under the direction of Dr. Dwight Manning, professor of Oboe, and Dr. Clinton Taylor, professor of Music Education, in the School of Music at the University of Georgia. Dr. Manning can be contacted at the University of Georgia, School of Music, 250 River Road, Athens, GA 30602, or by phone at 706-542-2770. His email address is [dmanning@uga.edu](mailto:dmanning@uga.edu). Dr. Taylor can be contacted at the University of Georgia, School of Music, 250 River Road, Athens, GA 30602, or by phone at 706-542-2776. His email address is [cftaylor@uga.edu](mailto:cftaylor@uga.edu). You may contact me at 678-425-0103 or [lhprodan@uga.edu](mailto:lhprodan@uga.edu).

Current research and literature related to teaching beginning oboe students in the public schools is limited. The purpose of this study is to assess and analyze current teaching techniques, strategies, and methods used by public school music instructors to teach beginning oboe students in grades five through eight. An investigation of current practices is expected to reveal new teaching trends, strengths and/or weaknesses in the techniques, strategies, and methods currently practiced. Survey responses from public school music instructors pertaining to the techniques, strategies, and methods used to teach beginning oboe students in grades five through eight are needed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty by not submitting this survey or contacting me to request that your submission not be used. You may also skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. Participants are asked to complete a 24-item survey and supply general personal information. The survey takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Survey answers will remain confidential, although Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, once the completed survey is received by the investigator standard confidentiality procedures will be employed. For instance, the survey answers will be used for the sole purpose of providing information pertaining to teaching beginning oboe students in public schools, and the survey respondents' identities will be kept confidential in all resultant manuscripts by the use of a pseudonym. The survey results will be kept in my private archive under lock and key to be used in future research articles written by me, or will be destroyed upon completion of this study, as per the wishes of the survey respondents. These research records, however, may be obtained by court order. Alternatively, you may print the survey, complete it by hand, and send it via U.S. mail with no return address to Lisa H. Prodan, 520 Mackinaw Drive, Bethlehem, GA 30620.

Upon completion of the investigation, participants may receive a copy of the research results, analysis, and conclusions via U.S. Postal Service, if requested. We encourage your participation in this research, which is essential to the overall future and development of effective and reliable procedures in teaching beginning-level oboe students. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any questions do not hesitate to ask now or at a later date. You may contact me at 678-425-0103 or [lhprodan@uga.edu](mailto:lhprodan@uga.edu).

Sincerely,

Lisa H. Prodan,  
Researcher  
678-425-0103  
[lhprodan@uga.edu](mailto:lhprodan@uga.edu)

Dr. Dwight Manning,  
Dissertation Advisor  
706-542-2770  
[dmanning@uga.edu](mailto:dmanning@uga.edu)

Dr. Clinton Taylor  
Dissertation Advisor  
706-542-2776  
[cftaylor@uga.edu](mailto:cftaylor@uga.edu)

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu).