

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A RATING SCALE FOR
WIND JAZZ IMPROVISATION PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to construct and validate a rating scale for collegiate wind jazz improvisation performance. The 14-item Wind Jazz Improvisation Evaluation Scale (WJIES) was constructed and refined through a facet-rational approach to scale development. Statements descriptive of wind jazz improvisation were collected through analysis of pedagogical materials, jazz educator descriptions, published interviews of jazz musicians, and research articles. Decisions to retain, combine, modify, or reject items were made largely based on input from accomplished jazz musicians and the knowledge and expertise of the researcher. Five wind jazz students and one professional jazz educator were asked to record two improvisations—two choruses of Bb blues and one chorus of *Killer Joe* accompanied by an Aebersold play-along compact disc. Sixty-three adjudicators with varying degrees of jazz experience evaluated the 12 improvisations using the WJIES and the Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Evaluation Measure (IJIEM; May, 2003). Reliability was good, with alpha values ranging from .87 to .95. Construct Validity for the WJIES was confirmed through the analysis of a multitrait-multimethod matrix (MTMM; Campbell & Fiske, 1959). The results of this study indicate that the facet-rational approach is an effective method of developing a rating scale for collegiate wind jazz improvisation performance. The findings also suggest that: (a) advanced jazz improvisation is closely related to elements associated with creativity and expression, and (b) adjudicators might benefit from structured training sessions prior to judging jazz improvisation performance.