

**PERCEPTIONS OF MASTERS GRADUATES REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF
THE MASTER OF MUSIC IN MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAM ON P-12
TEACHING PRACTICE**

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The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions (N=9) of the effect of the master's degree in music education degree on teaching practice and student (P-12) achievement. Research questions included: (a) After the completion of the degree how do graduates discuss the connections between their teaching practices and their coursework?; and (b) What observable changes in P-12 musical achievement do they perceive may be effects of graduate education? Data included: an on-line survey, participant journals, and individual interviews. All data sets were reviewed and coded for common themes. Findings in response to the first research question suggest that all participants value the community created in the master's program. Some participants suggested that the final project (thesis or exam) was an important connection between the coursework and their classrooms. However, it was difficult for participants to trace the connection between coursework and improved or changed teaching practice. With regard to improvement of P-12 achievement, participants did believe that there was a relationship between the graduate degree and student achievement; however, they were unable to pinpoint the direct link. Participants also discuss the difference between "short term" teaching practice changes versus "long term" changes in views and approaches to teaching.