Chapter 7 – Harmonizing Instruments Model Cornerstone Assessment

By Wendy Matthews and Daniel Johnson

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes a pilot study of the Harmonizing Instrument Model Cornerstone Assessment – Proficient for Creating (MCA) designed for middle school and high school classrooms that incorporates harmonizing instruments (e.g. piano, guitar). This MCA is part of a larger project supporting the new National Core Arts Standards in providing formative and summative assessments for PK-12 music learning. The steps of the MCA include asking students to harmonize a recorded major (do-based) pentatonic folk song by analyzing the melody aurally and from written notation, utilizing peer feedback to evaluate and revise their harmonization, and present their harmonization to their class. This chapter describes how six music teachers from across the country pilot-tested this MCA in a variety of settings including piano, guitar, and steel drum classes, supplemented the MCA with technology, and adapted it to special learners. The teachers provided feedback with quantitative ratings and pre and post comments. Teachers’ responses from the pilot tests were positive and demonstrated creative adaptations to fit their particular setting. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future use of this MCA.