

Characteristics of Teachers Participating in Voluntary
Music Integration Professional Development

Dr. Diana Wagner
Salisbury (MD) University
Program Evaluator

Jessica Baron
Founder & Executive Director
Guitars in the Classroom

Fall 2008

List of Tables

Table	Page
Characteristics of Teachers and Schools	
Table 1. GITC Course Enrollments	3
Table 2. Grade Level Teaching Assignments of Respondents	4
Table 3. Length of Time Teaching	4
Table 4. Teachers' Enthusiasm Toward School	5
Table 5. Number of Students Impacted by Teacher Participants	5
Table 6. Subject Areas Taught by GITC Participants	6
Special Populations Served by GITC	
Table 7. GITC Participants Who Teach in Title I Schools	6
Table 8. English Language Learners in GITC Classrooms	7
Table 9. Students in GITC Classrooms Receiving Disability Accommodations	7
Music Availability in Schools	
Table 10. Percent of Schools with Weekly Music Program	7
Table 11. Lack of Music as Influence to Participate in GITC	8
Table 12. Support of Administration for Music Integration	8
Table 13. Frequency of Music Integration in Class	8
Reasons for Pursuing GITC	
Table 14. Importance of GITC Impacting Achievement	9
Table 15. Importance of GITC Impacting Teaching Effectiveness	9
Table 16. Importance of GITC Impacting Classroom Community	9
Table 17. Importance of GITC Impacting Classroom Management	9
Teachers' Musical Ability and Aspirations	
Table 18. Guitar Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program	10
Table 19. Singing Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program	10
Table 20. Song-leading Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program	11
Table 21. Teachers' Prior and Future Ownership of Guitars	11

Characteristics of Teachers Participating in Music Integration

Introduction

In Fall 2008, the national Guitars in the Classroom program undertook a comprehensive program evaluation plan. This plan includes entrance and exit surveys of teacher participants. The surveys are administered online and invitations to teachers are communicated via local program coordinators.

This report summarizes the characteristics of teachers completing the entrance survey in Fall 2008. The survey is completed by participants before or very early in their participation in Guitars in the Classroom instruction.

Characteristics of Respondents

An entrance survey was disseminated via program coordinators. There were 96 respondents representing programs in the California, Vermont, Maryland, Oregon, Michigan, Nevada, and North Carolina.¹

The respondents represented five different levels of instruction in GITC, with the vast majority taking their first guitar course, Beginner (Table 1).

Table 1. GITC Course Enrollments

Course Enrolled	n	Percent
Beginner	78	81.3
Beginner Plus	10	10.4
Songleader 1	4	4.2
Strummer 1	3	3.1
Songleader 2	1	1.0

As indicated in Table 2, the respondents' teaching assignments, though primarily in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, represented a diversity of grade levels and special assignments.

¹ Because participants could decline answering individual questions and because some questions allowed more than one response, the n reported for each survey item will not always total 96.

Table 2. Grade Level Teaching Assignments of Respondents

Grade Level	n	Percent
1-3	29	30.2
PK-K	27	28.1
4-6	15	15.6
7-12	2	2.1
6-12	2	2.0
Student Teacher	2	2.0
Special Education	2	2.0
1-6 Learning Center	1	1.0
2-6	1	1.0
6-8	1	1.0
Early Intervention	1	1.0
K-2	1	1.0
K-6 Library	1	1.0
K-6 Special Education	1	1.0
K-8	1	1.0
Physical Education Pre-K	1	1.0
Physical Education	1	1.0
PK-12	1	1.0
PK-5	1	1.0
Religious Education	1	1.0
Spanish	1	1.0
Special Education, Full Inclusion	1	1.0
Special Education, Resource	1	1.0
Substitute	1	1.0

Respondents were asked how long they had been in the teaching profession. It is interesting to note the teachers across a range of experience choose to participate in *Guitars in the Classroom*. As reflected in Table 3, the largest representations came from those just beginning in their careers and those with more than 20 years of experience.

Table 3. Length of Time Teaching

Time Teaching	n	Percent
1-5 years	28	29.2
6-10 years	19	19.8
11-15 years	15	15.6
16-20 years	11	11.5
20+ years	21	21.9

Teachers were also asked about their enthusiasm for going to school each day. The responses support the hypothesis that teachers who self-select to participate in supplemental professional development like Guitars in the Classroom are enthusiastic about their profession. These responses are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' Enthusiasm Toward School

Enthusiasm Toward School	n	Percent
Very enthusiastic	50	52.1
Somewhat enthusiastic	43	44.8
Ambivalent	1	1.0
Very Unenthusiastic	1	1.0

GITC Student and Curricular Impact

Participants were asked how many students would be impacted by their GITC participation both within their normal teaching assignment and in other activities (extracurricular clubs, community or worship groups, scouts, etc). Additionally, teachers were asked about the specific curricular areas they address in their teaching assignments.

As indicated by Table 5, the number of students being impacted by GITC in and out of school is substantial.

Table 5. Number of Students Impacted by Teacher Participants

Setting	Total Students Impacted	Average Students Impacted per GITC Teacher
In School Only	6456	69
In School & Extracurricular	9163	99

Some teachers indicated that they taught multiple subjects areas. Most GITC participants taught English/Language Arts or held teaching duties across all subject areas. It is interesting to note in Table 6 that the next largest representation of GITC participants come from special areas or programs in special education, English as a second language, creative arts, computer science, and music.

Table 6. Subject Areas Taught by GITC Participants

Subject	n	Percent
English/Language Arts	27	28.0
All Subject	7	8.0
Art	7	7.3
Special Education	6	6.3
ESOL/ESL/ELL	5	5.2
Creative Arts	5	5.2
Computer Science/Technology	4	4.1
Music	3	3.1
Kindergarten	3	3.1
"ESOL/ESL/ELL	1	1.0
Adventure Education	1	1.0
Early Intervention	1	1.0
Foreign Language	1	1.0
Health/Physical Education	1	1.0
History/Social Studies	1	1.0
Liberal Studies/I.B.	1	1.0
Library	1	1.0
Mathematics	1	1.0
Pre-Kindergarten/Pre-school	1	1.0
Reading	1	1.0
Science	1	1.0
Speech Language Pathology	1	1.0

Special Populations Impacted by GITC

To measure GITC's reach to students with special instructional needs, teachers were asked to identify three special populations: English Language Learners, students receiving disability services through Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans, and students in Title I schools. Title I schools are those schools that have at least 40% of their student population living in poverty or low-income status.

Table 7 shows that half of the children impacted by their teachers' GITC participation attend low-income, Title I schools.

Table 7. GITC Participants Who Teach in Title I Schools

Title I School	n	Percent
Yes	48	50.0
No	42	43.8
Not sure	5	5.2

Although nearly half of the GITC participants report a small percentage of ELL students, these results (Table 8) reflect primarily regional differences. The teachers who report high numbers of ELL students are on the West Coast, primarily in California programs.

Table 8. English Language Learners in GITC Classrooms

% of Students Who are ELL	n	Percent
0%-11%	47	49.0
12%-27%	16	16.7
28%-49%	9	9.4
50%-84%	11	11.5
85%+	10	10.4

Table 9 shows that GITC participants reach a range of students with special needs. None of the respondents selected the 51%-75% answer choice.

Table 9. Students in GITC Classrooms Receiving Disability Accommodations

% of Students with Disabilities	n	Percent
0%-25%	67	69.8
26%-50%	10	10.4
76%-100%	10	10.4
Not sure	7	7.3

Access to In-School Music Programs

Teachers were asked to report the availability of music instruction in their schools. Table 10 shows that one in five children has *no* access to at least weekly music programs in their schools. Of those schools that do have music programs, almost all are traditional music programs, offering band and choral opportunities for children. Only 12 percent of teachers who reported having weekly music programs indicated that they also have guitar programs available to their students.

Table 10. Percent of Schools with Weekly Music Program

Weekly Music	n	Percent
Yes	74	77.1
No	20	20.8

Teachers were further asked if a lack of musical opportunities for their students influenced their decision to pursue Guitars in the Classroom. As reflected in Table 11, a lack of musical opportunities for their students influenced 40 percent of the participants to pursue GITC.

Table 11. Lack of Music as Influence to Participate in GITC

Lack of Music Influenced Participation	n	Percent
No	55	57.3
Yes	40	41.7

Despite the lack of musical opportunity as a motivation for participation, more than three-fourths of teachers indicated that they had strong support from their administration to pursue GITC instruction (Table 12). It would seem that the absence of music opportunities, then, is a resource problem, but not necessarily a problem of philosophical support from school leaders.

Table 12. Support of Administration for Music Integration

Administrative Support	n	Percent
Very supportive	48	50.0
Supportive	32	33.3
Neutral	10	10.4
Unsupportive	2	2.1
Very Unsupportive	1	1.0

Levels & Purposes of Music Integration

Nearly all GITC participants indicated that they were integrating music in the subjects that they teach at least weekly (Table 13). They also indicated that there were several classroom needs that they hoped to meet by integrating Guitars in the Classroom into their instruction.

Table 13. Frequency of Music Integration in Class

Frequency	n	Percent
<1 time per week	24	25.0
Daily	23	24.0
Once per week	22	22.9
Several times per week	20	20.8
Never	6	6.3

Participants were then asked how important it was that their participation in GITC impacted four classroom areas: student achievement, teaching effectiveness, classroom community, and classroom management.

As reflected in Table 14, three-fourths of teachers thought that impacting students achievement was important or very important.

Table 14. Importance of GITC Impacting Achievement

Importance-Achievement	n	Percent
Very Important	40	41.7
Important	34	35.4
Somewhat Important	17	17.7
Unimportant	2	2.1

As reflected in Table 15, almost all of GITC participants thought that it was important that GITC impact their teaching effectiveness.

Table 15. Importance of GITC Impacting Teaching Effectiveness

Importance-Teaching	n	Percent
Very Important	45	46.9
Important	38	39.6
Somewhat Important	9	9.4
Unimportant	2	2.1

As shown in Table 16, nearly all of GITC participants thought it was important that GITC impact their students' sense of belonging in the classroom community.

Table 16. Importance of GITC Impacting Classroom Community

Importance-Community	n	Percent
Very Important	52	54.2
Important	32	33.3
Somewhat Important	7	7.3
Unimportant	2	2.1

As reflected in Table 17, nearly three-quarters of teachers thought it was important that GITC impact their classroom management effectiveness.

Table 17. Importance of GITC Impacting Classroom Management

Importance-Classroom Management	n	Percent
Very Important	41	42.7
Important	26	27.1
Somewhat Important	17	17.7
Unimportant	7	7.3
Very Unimportant	1	1.0

While teachers elect to participate in GITC for a variety of reasons, one thing is consistent: All teachers pursue GITC because they wish to improve multiple areas of their own or their students' effectiveness.

Teachers' Self-Assessment of Music Skills

Teachers were asked to rate their ability in several areas of musical skill which are taught and emphasized in GITC classes: guitar ability, singing ability, and song-leading ability.

It is notable that nearly 60 percent of participants have no prior guitar experience and another 24 percent of participants bring only minimal guitar experience (Table 18). Clearly, GITC is providing a new opportunity to these teachers and is not merely attracting people who are already guitarists.

Table 18. Guitar Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program

Guitar Ability	n	Percent
Complete beginner	57	59.4
Beyond beginner (know some strum chords)	23	24.0
Advanced beginner (know and can easily change strum chords)	11	11.5
Intermediate (can easily change chords; can pick)	1	1.0
Advanced (can improvise easily on guitar)	2	2.1

It is interesting to note in Table 19 that more than half of GITC participants are hesitant, though willing, singers. This indicates that the singing exercises in GITC classes are appropriate to the needs of participants.

Table 19. Singing Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program

Singing Ability	n	Percent
Able/willing to sing	25	26.0
Very confident	13	13.5
Very hesitant singer	15	15.6
Willing; not very confident	40	41.7

Table 20 shows that the GITC instruction in song-leading also has a ready audience. 60 percent of GITC participants report being hesitant or inexperienced song leaders.

Table 20. Song-leading Ability of GITC Participants at Start of Program

Song-leading Ability	n	Percent
Capable leader/conductor	12	12.5
Able and willing to lead songs	24	25.0
Do lead songs, but hesitant	33	34.4
Have never led songs before, but willing	25	26.0

Access & Ownership of Guitars

Finally, GITC participants were asked about their prior access to guitars and whether they planned to acquire a guitar for their personal use (Table 21). Approximately half of program participants owned a guitar before they began GITC. Several participants purchased a guitar for the purposes of GITC. A large number of participants—more than one-fourth—indicated that they planned to buy a guitar for their personal use within one year of beginning GITC.

Table 21. Teachers' Prior and Future Ownership of Guitars

Guitar Ownership	n	Percent
Owned Guitar Before GITC	49	51.0
Bought Guitar for GITC	7	7.3
Plan to Buy a Guitar	26	27.0

Summary

Teachers who choose to participate in Guitars in the Classroom represent a diversity of subject areas, skills, and needs. They tend to have strong administrative support and are enthusiastic about going to school each day. They reach a wide spectrum of students, including those in poverty and with special instructional needs. GITC teachers typically have little guitar experience, but are slightly more experienced in singing. Even so, teacher-participants are hesitant to assume their role as song leaders. Subsequently, the song-leading opportunities taught throughout the GITC curriculum is appropriate and necessary for this audience.

About the Authors

Diana Wagner

Diana Wagner is a faculty member in the Department of Education Specialties at Salisbury (MD) University. Dr. Wagner holds the doctorate in educational leadership from University of Delaware, where her dissertation focuses on effective survey techniques for evaluating educational programs. Dr. Wagner teaches educational research methods in the Master of Education program and specializes in stakeholder feedback in educational evaluation.

Diana Wagner is also an acoustic musician and folksinger with an interest in preserving and sharing historic and traditional folk music. As an historian, collector, and performer of historic and traditional music, Diana is known for performing music of the Civil War and the women's experience. In 2008, Diana Wagner released her CD, *Tradition Bearer*, a moving collection of traditional music.

Diana Wagner brought *Guitars in the Classroom* to Salisbury University in 2008, where she teaches a new cohort of public school teachers each semester.

Jessica Baron

Jessica Baron founded and serves as Executive Director for *Guitars in the Classroom*, an organization that brings music making to education by integrating singing, strumming and songwriting with learning throughout the school day and across the curriculum. Jessica created the first developmental guitar instruction method and she has written six groundbreaking books in the field of music and guitar education.

Jess spent several years in California teaching music in public and private schools; she also worked for a long time as both a human development educator (at Crossroads School of Arts and Sciences) and as a private educational therapist treating children and teens with learning disabilities.

Jess co-authored the highly successful *MusicMakers* curriculum for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, as well as the International House of Blues Foundation's *Make an Impression* guitar program. Her best-selling guitar method, *SmartStart Guitar* as well as her parenting book, *YOUR MUSICAL CHILD: Inspiring Kids to Play and Sing for Keeps* (Hal Leonard, 2004) and *The Green Songbook & CD* from Alfred Music Publishing (2011).