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PREDICTING SUCCESS IN
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

by

Charles A. Baughman

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
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PREDICTING SUCCESS IN
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Charles A. Baughman, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 1973

This paper represents a study of the predictability of several types of music tests given to the fourth grade students in East Grand Rapids, Michigan. The tests studied were the "Selmer Music Guidance Survey," a Teacher's Evaluation, and an investigator-developed self-concept test. The study showed that the correlation coefficient between the self-concept test and the achievement level of the students at the time of the study was the highest. The correlation coefficient between the "Selmer Music Guidance Survey" and the achievement level was the lowest. There were 595 students surveyed in the study, which was conducted between the years 1968 and 1972.

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Charles A. Baughman

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

It has long been a concern of the author of this paper that some music teachers have been screening students for their instrumental music programs with little knowledge of the reliability, and much less knowledge of the ability to predict, of the testing programs that they have been using. This was first questioned by the author while student teaching. The answer the author received at that time was, "I don't know how or why it (the testing program) works, but it does."

During the early 1960's several authors questioned the reliability of prediction of several of the tests in use at that time. It is the purpose of this thesis to look at the predictability of the testing the author has been using at the East Grand Rapids Public Schools for the past five years.

A Survey of Literature

Anastasiou and Shambaugh¹ report that the "Kwalwasser-Ruch Test of Musical Accomplishment" and the "Kwalwasser-Dykstra Musical Aptitude Test" are fairly reliable. The aptitude test was given twice for their study with a correlation of .73. They also found

¹Anastasiou, Nicholas J., and Shambaugh, Robert F., "Experimental Use of the Pre-Instrumental Melody Instruments." Journal of Research in Music Education, XIII (Winter, 1965), 246-248.

that the test was not a significant predictor of success in music. Their study pointed out that the participation in a pre-instrument class did more to insure success in the instrument class than did a high score on either of the tests.

In his study, Young¹ finds that standardized achievement tests and standardized intelligence tests are more reliable predictors of achievement in all areas except that of being able to improvise a familiar melody.

Grieneeks² finds that self-concept is at least as good a predictor of grade point averages as academic aptitude and academic achievement tests for college sophomores at the University of Oklahoma.

Greenberg³ reports that five out of ten boys' ability to sing in tune was markedly improved when they were placed in the choir, a group not previously available to them because of their inability to sing in tune. He attributes this to improved self-concept.

¹Young, William T., "The Role of Musical Aptitude, Intelligence, and Academic Achievement in Predicting the Musical Attainment of Elementary Instrumental Music Students." Journal of Research in Music Education, XIX (Winter, 1971), 385-398.

²Grieneeks, Laurabeth, "Measures of Self-Perception as Predictors of Scholastic Achievement," Journal of Educational Research, LXIII (January, 1970), 201-203.

³Greenberg, Marvin, "Musical Achievement and the Self-Concept." Journal of Research in Music Education, XVIII (Spring, 1970), 57-64.

Farnsworth¹ says in an article on testing:

"The task as seen by the music teacher, then, is shifting from that of uncovering a child's native traits to that of ascertaining which child will probably profit more from training in music and which would better devote his time to other sorts of endeavor."

Ward² cites two exceptions where children who failed the aptitude tests were allowed to enter the music program. These two students were very successful. He gives no reason for this turn of events and suggests that a teacher be very cautious about accepting this type of student. Obviously these two students possessed something that Ward's testing did not uncover.

There is only one test that is a reliable measure of musical performance. This is the Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale.³ Being the only test of this type, it becomes difficult to assess success in music and therefore the value of the predictors.

¹Farnsworth, Paul R., "Testing for Music Talent." The Instrumentalist, XVI No. 3 (November, 1961), 34-37.

²Ward, Norman, "Selecting Instrumental Beginners." The Instrumentalist, XV No. 11 (August, 1961), 43-45.

³Madsen, Clifford K. and Madsen, Charles H., Jr., Experimental Research in Music. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970. P. 32, citing J. G. Watkins and S. E. Farnum, The Watkins-Farnum Performance Scale (Winona, Mich.: Leonard Music, 1962).

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

This research was conducted in grades four, five, six, seven, and eight of the East Grand Rapids Public Schools. The data was collected between the fall of 1968 and the spring of 1973.

East Grand Rapids is not a typical community.

"The East Grand Rapids School District is a suburban residential community of approximately 15,000 people adjacent to the city of Grand Rapids. Its residents are mostly of the high upper-middle economic class, who hold professional, managerial, and executive positions, with approximately 75 percent of the parents having had a college education. . .

"During the last twenty years, East Grand Rapids High School has sent an average of 94 percent of its graduates to colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. The median I.A. of the student body is 117."¹

The author of this paper finds the typical fourth grade student at East Grand Rapids to be able to progress at a much faster rate on the pre-instruments than the typical fourth grade student from other school systems where its author has been employed. The parental support for the program in the elementary schools at East Grand Rapids is much stronger, in the view of the author, than it was in other school systems where the author has been employed. During the 1972-73 school year, 47 percent of the fifth graders elected to attempt to play a musical instrument at school. In 1973-74, 53 percent

¹Ruwitch, George, _____, Untitled Information Sheet for Prospective Employees. East Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan. October, 1973.

elected to attempt to play a musical instrument at school. Approximately 15 percent more of the students each year were studying instruments not taught at school, such as the piano.

CHAPTER III
TEACHING OF THE FOURTH GRADE
RECORDER CLASS

During the school years 1968-69 through 1972-73 an effort was made to teach all of the fourth grade recorder classes in as nearly the same manner as possible. The same text was used in all classes. The presentation of materials was always in the same order and at the same frequency except when classes were interrupted by things outside of the experimenter's control. When these interruptions occurred an attempt was made to bring that class back to the master schedule as soon as possible.

The Selmer Music Guidance Survey¹ was always administered during the first part of May. The record that comes with the test was always used to administer the test. If students were not in class when the test was given no effort was made to make up the test and those students were not included in the analysis of data.

The investigator-developed self-concept test was always administered at the last class session of the school year. Data from students who were absent from class at this time were not included in this study. The test (a copy of which appears in Appendix A), was administered in the following way:

1. The answer blanks were passed out and the students were told to fill in their name and their teacher's name.

¹_____, The Selmer Music Guidance Survey. Phonograph Record, Record #TAC-63047-7, 33 1/3 RPM, two sides. H. and A. Selmer Inc., Elkhart, Indiana, 1959.

2. While this was being done the students were told that the purpose of this set of questions was to help the instructor do a better job of teaching.
3. The students were told to answer all questions as best they could.
4. The question booklet was then passed out and the students were instructed to read the questions as the instructor read them aloud.
5. A 10-second pause followed each question to enable each student to mark his answer sheet.

Because, as will be shown later, the self-concept test, and the student rating, are significant predictors of success, the author of this paper will go into some detail as to how these scores were arrived upon.

The Development of the Self-Concept Test

The self-concept test was developed for the Project on Student Values under the direction of Dr. Walter Thomas. After reading the Thomas Self-Concept Values Test,¹ and also Paterson's evaluation of the test,² the author of this paper attempted to write and evaluate a Self-Concept Values test pertaining to Instrumental Music. The first attempted test was a rewording of some of the questions asked

¹Thomas, Dr. Walter, "Self-Concept of Ability and School Achievement Test." Educational Service Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1967. p. 44.

²Paterson, Ann L. C., "An Evaluation of an Instrument Designed to Measure the Construct 'Self-Concept of Academic Ability'". Unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1966.

as part of the above mentioned research project. In addition to these questions several questions of the author's design were added. Most of the questions were worded four ways to test self-concept in relation to self, peer, parent, and teacher. There were twelve questions in each of the four areas, for a total of forty-eight questions.

The forty-eight questions were given to all of the fourth grade students at Breton Downs Elementary School and to one class of fourth grade students at Lakeside Elementary School. Both of these schools are a part of the East Grand Rapids School System. All of these students were currently enrolled in a recorder class which had been meeting for one half-hour a week.

The answers to the questions were scored as follows: one point for the lowest concept to five points for the highest concept. On this basis the author extracted the top fifteen from each reference factor and analyzed the answers. The same was done for the lowest fifteen, and also a random fifteen. By studying the way that the various groups of students answered the questions, thirty-three questions were selected which produced the most consistent answers. By this it was meant that the high concept students tended to answer much higher on the scale than the low concept students.

The thirty-three questions were used as the Self-Concept test which was administered to all fourth grade students who attended the East Grand Rapids Public Schools from 1968 through 1973.

The Teacher's Appraisal of the Student

The student rating was compiled over the entire school year and was arrived at in the following manner:

1. Six tests of playing ability on the recorder are scored and added together. Each test was scored as follows:
 - A. 0 points- student refuses to take test.
 - B. 1 point- student refuses to take test but makes some sound after a moderate amount of cajoling.
 - C. 2 points- student makes unrecognizable sounds.
 - D. 3 points- student makes unrecognizable sounds but is moving correct fingers on instrument.
 - E. 4 points- student plays correct rhythm but wrong notes.
 - F. 5 points- student plays correct rhythm and moves fingers correctly but fails to cover holes tightly, therefore playing incorrect pitches.
 - G. 6 points- student plays a poor but recognizable sound.
 - H. 7 points- a better performance.
 - I. 8 points- a good performance with no major mistakes.
 - J. 9 points- a performance with no obvious mistakes.
 - K. 10 points- perfect musical performance complete with proper articulation and phrasing.
2. In addition to the six tests, five points are awarded for each of three songs memorized. The students had to memorize the songs to be eligible to play in the Spring All-Elementary Instrumental Concert.

The playing tests were administered throughout the fourth grade school year. The first test was given during the third class period. The students were not allowed to practice the song except during class time. The second test was the same song as the first test and was administered one week later. The students were allowed to practice the song between the two tests. Tests number three and five were given with no prior knowledge on the part of the student. Test four was given with one week's preparation. For test number six the students were given several songs to practice and were told that they would be asked to perform one of them for the class.

The total score for each student was calculated and rank ordered in relation to the other students' scores. Unless there were obvious breaks in the scores, a bell-shaped curve was constructed and students were rated one through five, one being high. Students were not placed in Group One unless their score on the "Selmer Music Survey" was over 100 points. Students were not placed in Group Five unless their score on the "Selmer Music Guidance Survey" was less than 90 points.

CHAPTER IV

DATA COLLECTION

The following data were collected and coded onto I.B.M. punch cards for 595 students from East Grand Rapids:

Field #1 - Students' names in alphabetical order

Field #2 - The elementary school attended

Field #3 - The name of the classroom teacher

Field #4-5-6-and 7- The sub-scores of the Selmer Music Guidance Survey

Field #8 - The author's evaluation of each student's performance in recorder class

Field #9-41- The answers to the Self-Concept test by question

Field #42 - The grade level of the student at the time of coding

Field #43 - The sex of the student

Field #44 - The instrument the student played, if any, as follows:

1-Flute	9-Bassoon
2-Clarinet	10-Drum
3-Saxophone	11-Violin
4-Cornet	12-Viola
5-French Horn	13-Cello
6-Trombone	14-Bass
7-Baritone	15-No instrument
8-Oboe	

Field #45 - The score on the Watkins-Farnum test, or, in the case of string students, for which no test of this type has been developed, a teacher evaluation.

Field #46 - The level of achievement of the student in the music program at school ranked as follows:

1- Students who played successfully for three years or more

Field #46 - (Con't)

- 2- Students who played successfully for two years
- 3- Students who are not in instrumental music classes but are in school choir or play an instrument outside of school
- 4- Students who played one year but not two years
- 5- Students from numbers 1, 2, and 4 who were not successful
- 6- Students who played for more than two months but less than one year
- 7- Students who played for less than two months
- 8- Students presently enrolled in instrumental music
- 9- All students who did not fit in any other category

Students were given the highest number for which they qualified.

Field #47 - The same as number 46 except the reference was restricted to achievement in instrumental music

Field #48 - A control showing which form of the Self-Concept test was taken. It was later determined that this control was unnecessary as both forms of the test showed the same results.

The 595 students represent all of the students who were in the author's fourth grade recorder classes with these exceptions:

- 1. Students who moved from the school district prior to November, 1972.
- 2. Students who missed significant parts of the testing procedures; therefore, the author was unable to complete an I.B.M. card for those students.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

A correlation matrix was computed on all previously mentioned information. The correlation coefficient between each variable and field 46 (achievement) was as follows:

CHART A

FIELD NUMBER	DEFINITION OF FIELD	CORRELATION WITH ACHIEVEMENT
1	Student's Name	0.041
2	School Attended	0.062
3	4th Grade Teacher	0.043
4	Selmer Sub-tests	0.195
5		0.179
6		0.255
7		0.104
8	Author's Evaluation	0.387
9	Self-Concept Test Scores	0.274
10		0.247
11		0.209
12		0.281
13		0.277
14		0.249
15		0.308
16		0.257
17		0.277

CHART A (Con't)

FIELD NUMBER	DEFINITION OF FIELD	CORRELATION WITH ACHIEVEMENT
18	Self-Concept Test Scores (con't)	0.322
19		0.271
20		0.317
21		0.293
22		0.252
23		0.313
24		0.352
25		0.309
26		0.173
27		0.302
28		0.293
29		0.286
30		0.349
31		0.342
32		0.283
33		0.293
34		0.244
35		0.275
36		0.342
37		0.263
38		0.334
39		0.233
40		0.291
41		0.309

CHART A (Cont'd.)

FIELD NUMBER	DEFINITION OF FIELD	CORRELATION WITH ACHIEVEMENT
42	Grade Level of Student	0.031
43	Sex of Student	0.216
44	Instrument Played	0.459
45	Watkins-Farnum Test	0.570
46	Achievement	1.000
47	Achievement Revised	0.768
48	Form of Self-Concept Test	0.005

The scores of the Self-Concept Test were then pooled and the Correlation Coefficient between this score and Field 46 was 0.421.

The very low correlation coefficient (0.041) for Field #1 fails to show that the alphabetical ranking of the student has a high degree of relationship to the student's level of achievement. This is important for an educator, since it is easy to "play favorites" by operating alphabetically and thereby influencing the achievement of his students.

The low correlation coefficient (0.062) for Field #2, as well as an analysis of the data for the individual schools attended shows that the test scores are about equal for all 5 elementary schools in East Grand Rapids (see Chart B). This correlation coefficient is revealing in that it shows that the Self-Concept test is useful because this investigator taught instrumental music to students in four of the schools for two years after the tests were given, whereas the students in the fifth school were taught for those two years

by another staff member.

Field #3's correlation coefficient (0.043) would tend to indicate there is little relationship between the effects of the fourth grade classroom teacher (the grade where the testing was done) and the achievement levels of the students.

Fields #4, 5, 6, and 7 show that the third part of the Selmer Music Guidance Survey (the chord change section) is the most useful (0.255), while the fourth part of the test - the rhythm section - is the least useful (0.104) predictor of success. The value of 0.255 is significant at the 0.01 level whereas the value of 0.104 is significant at the 0.05 level.

Field #8 (the author's evaluation) having a correlation coefficient of 0.387, makes it the most useful predictor in the preliminary analysis.

Fields #9 through 41 (the Self-Concept Test Scores) show a lower level of predictability than the teacher evaluation; however, the pooled scores, with a correlation coefficient of 0.421, show the highest level of predictability arrived at by this study. It was suggested that a higher level of correlation coefficient might be found by pooling selected scores from the data. This may well be true, but if a person looks hard enough and long enough a relationship could be established for almost any set of numbers. This type of hunting for favorable results is not valid research.

The remaining fields were intended to be used as controls and therefore a discussion of the correlation coefficients is not relevant. It is interesting to note that the correlation coefficient for sex

of the student and achievement (0.216) was higher than all but one of the sub-scores on the Selmer Music Guidance Survey. However, this value is so low in terms of predictability that neither sex nor the Selmer sub-scores would be useful for recommending students for the instrumental class.

CHART B

Correlation Coefficient Between
Teacher Evaluation and Achievement

School #	Correlation Coefficient
1	0.426
2	0.397
3	0.365
4	0.356
5	0.388

When correlation coefficients were computed between Teacher Evaluation and Achievement Level and between the pooled Self-Concept Scores and Achievement Level, for each type of instrument played (see Chart C), the number values varied so greatly that an analysis of them did not seem to be worthwhile. This may be due to the small number of samples in each group. A person could generalize and say that the teacher evaluation seems to be a better predictor of success than the pooled Self-Concept test scores, in most cases.

CHART C

Instrument	Number of Students	Correlation Between Achievement And:	
		Teacher Evaluation	Pooled Self- Concept Score
Flute	25	0.129	0.248
Clarinet	48	0.383	0.078
Saxophone	9	0.073	0.140
Cornet-Trumpet	37	0.229	0.068
French Horn	13	0.586	0.387
Trombone	15	0.582	0.027
Baritone	9	0.584	0.375
Oboe	4	0.000	0.235
Bassoon	4	0.577	0.024
Percussion	18	0.036	0.287
Violin	42	0.192	0.090
Viola	4	0.246	0.346
Cello	4	0.656	0.613

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the belief of the author of this paper that a refinement of the Self-Concept Test could be developed that would be a reliable predictor of success in instrumental music. A possibility is the formulation of subscores of the Self-Concept Test based on those items having high loadings on the first two or three clusters of a factor analysis. The instrument developed by the author is already a more reliable device than the Selmer Music Guidance Survey in East Grand Rapids, even though the time required to administer them is approximately equal.

It is the intention of the author of this paper to include the Self-Concept score to help determine what goes into the report to parents that is given at the end of the fourth grade recorder program.

If this research is to be useful to music educators it is necessary that the research be repeated many times. The author offers his help to anyone who is interested in duplicating this research.

APPENDIX A

A TEST OF SELF-CONCEPT IN MUSIC

1. If you learn to play an instrument next year, how do you think you will rate compared to the other students who will be in your class?
 - A. Among the best
 - B. Better than average
 - C. Average
 - D. Below average
 - E. Very low
2. Do your friends think you will play an instrument well?
 - A. Definitely not
 - B. No
 - C. They think I may be able to play
 - D. Yes
 - E. Yes - very well
3. How hard do your friends think you try in recorder class? They think:
 - A. I try very hard
 - B. I try quite hard
 - C. I try sometimes
 - D. I don't try very much
 - E. I don't try at all
4. How would your regular teacher rate you in recorder class?
 - A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
5. How hard does Mr. Baughman think you try in recorder class? He thinks:
 - A. I try very hard
 - B. I try quite hard
 - C. I try sometimes
 - D. I don't try very much
 - E. I don't try at all

6. Some instruments are very difficult to play. Do your parents think you have the ability to play a difficult instrument?
 - A. They know I don't
 - B. They don't think so
 - C. They think I may
 - D. Yes, probably
 - E. Yes, definitely
7. How would you rate yourself in recorder class compared with those in your class?
 - A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
8. Does your regular teacher think you have the ability to play a musical instrument?
 - A. Yes, definitely
 - B. Yes, probably
 - C. I may have
 - D. Probably not
 - E. No
9. How do you think your friends would rate you in recorder class compared with themselves?
 - A. I am the best
 - B. I am above average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am below average
 - E. I am the poorest
10. Do you have the ability to play a musical instrument?
 - A. Yes, definitely
 - B. Yes, probably
 - C. I may have
 - D. Probably not
 - E. No

11. Some instruments are very difficult to play. Do your friends think you have the ability to play a very difficult instrument?
- A. Yes, I definitely could
 - B. Yes, I probably could
 - C. I may be able to
 - D. They don't think I could
 - E. They know I couldn't
12. In the sixth grade we have an all-star band made up of the best musicians from all of East Grand Rapids. Do your parents think you will be picked to play in this group?
- A. I will not
 - B. I probably will not
 - C. I may be a member
 - D. Yes, probably
 - E. Yes, definitely
13. Some instruments are very difficult to play. Do you think you could play a difficult instrument?
- A. Yes, I definitely could
 - B. Yes, I probably could
 - C. I may be able to
 - D. I don't think I could
 - E. I know I couldn't
14. How would your regular teacher rate you in recorder class compared with your best friends?
- A. I am the best
 - B. I am above average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am below average
 - E. I am the poorest
15. If you are a very good musician, you may be picked to play a solo. Do your parents think you will be picked to play a solo? They think:
- A. I would not
 - B. I probably would not
 - C. The chances of my being picked are small
 - D. They think I may
 - E. Yes, I probably would

16. Does your regular teacher think you will play an instrument next year?
- A. Definitely not
 - B. No
 - C. She thinks I could play
 - D. Yes
 - E. Yes, very well
17. How would you rate yourself in recorder class compared with your close friends?
- A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
18. If someone at home played an instrument, would you play:
- A. Better than they
 - B. Much better than they
 - C. As good as they
 - D. Almost as well as they do
 - E. Somewhere else when they play
19. Do your parents want you to play an instrument in the band or orchestra next year?
- A. Yes, definitely
 - B. I think they do
 - C. They don't care
 - D. I don't think they do
 - E. No
20. Do your parents think you have the ability to play an instrument? They think:
- A. Yes, definitely
 - B. Yes, probably
 - C. They think I have a small amount of ability
 - D. They don't think so
 - E. They don't think I have any ability

21. How do your classmates rate you in recorder class compared with themselves? They think:
- A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
22. If you are a very good musician, you may be selected to play a solo. Does Mr. Baughman think you will be selected to play a solo?
- A. I would not
 - B. I probably would not
 - C. The chances of my being picked are small
 - D. I think I may
 - E. Yes, I probably would
23. Do your parents think you will be a member of the Junior High band or orchestra?
- A. I will not
 - B. I probably will not
 - C. I may be a member
 - D. Yes, probably
 - E. Yes, definitely
24. Do your friends think you have the ability to play a musical instrument?
- A. No
 - B. Probably not
 - C. I may have
 - D. Yes, probably
 - E. Yes, definitely
25. How do you think Mr. Baughman rates you in recorder class compared with those in your class?
- A. I am the best
 - B. I am above average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am below average
 - E. I am the poorest

26. Do your parents think you will be a member of the high school band or orchestra?
- A. Yes, definitely
 - B. Yes, probably
 - C. I may be a member
 - D. I probably will not
 - E. I will not
27. How do you think your friends would rate you in recorder class compared with those in your class?
- A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
28. If you are a very poor musician you might not be allowed to be a member of the High School band. Do you think you might be allowed to be a member?
- A. Yes, I probably would
 - B. I think I may be
 - C. There is a small chance that I would
 - D. I probably would not
 - E. I would not
29. How do you think Mr. Baughman would rate you in recorder class compared with your close friends?
- A. I am the best
 - B. I am above average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am below average
 - E. I am the poorest
30. If you are a very good musician you may be selected to play a solo. Do your friends think you will be selected to play a solo?
- A. Yes, I probably would
 - B. I think I may
 - C. The chances of my being picked are small
 - D. I probably would not
 - E. I would not

31. Some instruments are very expensive to buy. Do your parents think you have enough musical ability so that they would spend a large amount of money for an instrument so that you could learn to play it?
- A. No
 - B. They probably would not
 - C. The chances of this happening are very small
 - D. I think they might
 - E. Yes, they probably would
32. How do you think Mr. Baughman would rate you in recorder class?
- A. I am the poorest
 - B. I am below average
 - C. I am average
 - D. I am above average
 - E. I am the best
33. If you are a very good musician you may be picked to play a solo. Do you think you will be picked to play a solo?
- A. Yes, I probably would
 - B. I think I may be
 - C. The chances of my being picked are small
 - D. I probably would not
 - E. I would not

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