



**Title:** Toward an Enhanced Community of Scholars in Music Education

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**Source:** Jorgensen, E. R. (1990, Spring). Towards an enhanced community of scholars in music education. *The Quarterly*, 1(1-2), pp. 36-42. (Reprinted with permission in *Visions of Research in Music Education*, 16(1), Summer, 2010). Retrieved from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/>

*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning and continued until 1997. The journal contained articles on issues that were timely when they appeared and are now important for their historical relevance. For many authors, it was their first major publication. Visions of Research in Music Education will publish facsimiles of each issue as it originally appeared. Each article will be a separate pdf file. Jason D. Vodicka has accepted my invitation to serve as guest editor for the reprint project and will compose a new editorial to introduce each volume. Chad Keilman is the production manager. I express deepest thanks to Richard Colwell for granting VRME permission to re-publish The Quarterly in online format. He has graciously prepared an introduction to the reprint series.*

# Towards an Enhanced Community of Scholars in Music Education

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Our English word “community” has its roots in the old French word *comuner*, meaning “to share”. It refers to a group of people who are organized and unified according to a common and shared purpose, who have ongoing dialogue with one another, or as *The Oxford Dictionary* suggests, have “life in association with others”. There is a sense in which the concept of community is both inclusive and exclusive: inclusive in that it recognizes all the people within the community; exclusive in that it distinguishes its members from non-members. The metaphor of community as a descriptor of scholars who are working in the field of music education holds promise. Indeed, I suggest that music education researchers both here and abroad would greatly benefit personally and professionally from a greater sense of community. A particular case in point is that of philosophy of music education where the need for community has been expressed.

At Music Educators National Conference (MENC) meetings, I notice that college and university music educators are either to be found busily conducting workshops

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and presenting clinics and the like, or wandering about looking for sessions that are sufficiently academically challenging to stimulate them. Special Research Interest Groups (SRIGs) have been of some help but have permitted insufficient dialogue because of time constraints at

MENC meetings. I am not suggesting that we should drive a wedge between college-level and elementary and secondary school music educators or that, as college music educators, we have nothing to learn from our elementary and secondary school colleagues. But we must recognize that all levels of music education should be served by professional development opportunities, and to this point, college and university music educators have largely been the providers for, rather than recipients of, educational benefits from the MENC. As scholars, we need more opportunities to meet regularly to discuss our research without having to concomitantly keep in mind the immediate practical interests of music teachers who are working at secondary and elementary school levels.

Unfortunately, the field of music education research in the United States seems somewhat fragmented. It is represented by various groups within the MENC—the Music Education Research Council (MERC), the Society for Research in Music Education (SRME), and various SRIGs—whose efforts to develop research are, in measure, politically influenced by the MENC. This is evidenced, for example, by the comparatively limited time devoted to research at MENC meetings, the expectation of SRIGs to justify their place in MENC meetings by communicating research findings to teachers rather than engaging in discussions of the research itself, and the various pressures (both political and financial) on the *JRME* editorial board.

Naturally, the MENC is vitally concerned with the professional development of the wider body of elementary and secondary school teachers who comprise the greater part of its membership, and its contribution in this respect has been significant. But can we expect it to do equal

justice to the fostering of research in music education? Aside from questions of political influence, the objectives of scholarship on the one hand and professional practice on the other are not always easily reconcilable or even compatible. It is in the great tradition of academic inquiry that university scholars have had control of their own destiny, that they pursued those subjects they saw as inherently important and relevant to the societies in which they found themselves, and that they were responsive to, but not dictated to, by the world around them. Yet, as researchers in music education, we seem to lack this corporate independence, and our research, I believe, suffers as a result. At MENC meetings, the interests of scholarship and research take second place to those of the professional development of elementary and secondary school music teachers. Based on the experience of the last national MENC meeting in Indianapolis, an observer from outside the field of music education might be forgiven for concluding that aside from poster sessions, or research bazaars that allow only superficial discussion, our time together as a community of scholars in music education consists mainly of short business meetings of the SRME (including speeches by senior researchers and presentations to them) appended to MENC meetings almost as an afterthought. But this is not enough. Over the past few decades, research in music education has come of age. Having been nurtured by its parent the MENC, music education research has developed to the point that scholars should now forge their own fully independent corporate organization, within which they can foster a deeper sense of community.

Moreover, a regrettable perception has arisen on the part of some researchers, of exclusive clubs of scholars within music education who consider their work superior to that of others. This perception may well have contributed to the fragmentation of research efforts in the field and discouraged the participation in reporting and publication of their research by others who have considered themselves "outsiders" to these clubs. Further, this sense of exclusiveness and

"cliquishness" may be traced to an overuse (albeit well-meaning) of small research seminars without a corresponding emphasis on research meetings that are open to the entire music education research community. In our effort to improve the quality of music education research, our reliance on seminars that brought together in dialog a few scholars who reflected our particular perspectives and interests, has been counterproductive: It suggested to those whose papers were not accepted that their work was not sufficiently meritorious or valued; it excluded those who might have benefited by observing firsthand how they could improve their research; and it discouraged the kinds of cross-fertilization of ideas between scholars pursuing different forms of research that might have eventuated from complementary meetings of the entire music education research community.

Research in music education is a tender plant that needs to be nourished and fostered. Indeed, the function of community is to provide mutual support. It is doubtless our desire to ensure that all the members of our research community feel that they have a place, that their efforts to improve their work are valued, and that their disparate points of view are not only tolerated but encouraged. In our community, the natural tendencies toward segmentation or fragmentation which arise out of our varying particular interests and perspectives need to be complemented by efforts to ensure unity and cohesiveness amongst us. Smaller exclusive seminars should be balanced by more inclusive research meetings which the entire research community is invited to attend.

In view of the importance of philosophical work in the earlier part of this century, it is especially regrettable that some philosophers now feel marginalized in the music education research community and believe that philosophical content and method are not well understood by many of their empirically trained colleagues. It is self-evident to the regular readers of the *JRME*, confirmed by Yarbrough's (1984) content analysis over the period 1953-1983 and Radocy's (1988) recent Forum statement, that philosophical

articles have not been well represented. This might suggest that philosophers have avoided submitting articles to the *JRME*, preferring rather to place them in other journals, or that their pieces have not been accepted for publication in the *JRME*. Radocy states that the *JRME* is not systematically biased "against any type of research," implying that philosophical pieces have not been published because they have not been submitted. Whatever the reasons for the hiatus of philosophy of music education research, those who regard the *JRME* as the centerpiece of music education scholarship (in the United States, at least) may be left with the impression that little philosophical research is going on. As a scholarly community, our concern is to encourage greater understanding about, and include all forms of, research in our publications. Radocy's editorial statement of openness to all forms of inquiry is therefore a welcome step in fostering greater inclusiveness in music education research, and it should be widely welcomed.

How shall we improve our community of music education scholars? I suggest four propositions: first, we would benefit from a fully autonomous and independent Society for Research in Music Education (SRME) that constitutes the national scholarly society in our field, meets regularly to hear research reports, discusses important issues, and publishes a journal under its own auspices and for which it raises its own subscriptions; second, greater attention to philosophical research in music education would enhance our research endeavor and promote greater inclusiveness in our community; third, an emphasis on scholarly issues rather than the interests of political organization would enable us to make significant progress in music education inquiry; fourth, the fostering of community at a variety of levels (e.g., local, regional, national, and international), would ensure the inclusion of scholars from a variety of places and bring a broader perspective to bear on music education research. My specific suggestions in each case are envisaged as exemplary of a variety of approaches that might be taken to satisfy these propositions, rather than as prescriptive of the

only, or necessarily best ways, to realize them.

We would greatly benefit from more extended and regular interchanges with each other in the context of a scholarly society that might hold annual meetings each lasting several days, in which both general sessions combine with SRIG meetings, including paper presentations and round-table discussions, that enable us to hold dialogues. For some of us whose time is wholly occupied in university teaching and research, such a learned society in music education would be like a breath of fresh air. Importantly, it would engender a stronger sense of community among music education researchers, improve communication among philosophers, historians, and those engaged in various types of qualitative and quantitative empirical research, and thereby have a significant and beneficial impact on inquiry in music education.

Moreover, the society could publish its own journal, each issue of which might be larger than a current *JRME* issue, including all forms of research, with an editor assisted by a review board appointed by the society. For example, the constraints of preferred manuscript length and style have, I believe, deterred some scholars from submitting their best pieces to *JRME*. A typical article in the *JRME* is rather short when compared to significant philosophical, historical, qualitative and quantitative empirical studies published in some prestigious scholarly journals. Also, although *JRME* editorial policy is now more open, the historical preference for the American Psychological Association (APA) style, characterized by a minimum of footnotes or endnotes, author-date documentation within the text, typical article format, and distinctive clinical use of language, has been unattractive for philosophical and historical discourse. If one examines distinguished journals in the fields of philosophy and history, one often finds the use of styles in which footnotes or endnotes are used extensively by way of separating ideas that are central to the argument from those that are peripheral to it, and documentation along with commentary on it is appended as notes on the text. The development

and discussion of ideas in philosophical research and the description and commentary on historical people and events are very different undertakings from the reporting of qualitative and quantitative empirical research. One thus expects to find a variety of writing styles corresponding to these various forms of research.

The larger journal I envision, relieved from the financial and spatial constraints presently imposed on the *JRME*, might be a more attractive forum for more significant and longer articles than is now the case, and would include pieces that respect the conventions of written expression in each form of scholarly inquiry. Further specific matters of article length, written expression and style, could be resolved by an editorial board that reflected all forms of music education research.

An increased emphasis on research in philosophy of music education would benefit all forms of research in our field and enhance our scholarly community. In order to accomplish this, I suggest three strategies. First, philosophers should be appointed to the editorial board of our research journal in sufficient numbers to ensure that philosophical pieces are reviewed by philosophers. It is not enough to expect philosophers to teach empiricists how to do philosophy, although we will do this. Rather, every philosophical piece merits an informed, albeit subjective, review. A better approach, and one that seems self-evident, would be to have philosophical essays reviewed by experienced philosophers (and for that matter, historical pieces reviewed by historians, and descriptive and experimental research articles reviewed by people who have expertise in these types of research).

Philosophy is importantly a body of content, not only a matter of method. Indeed, philosophical research (or any other form of research) should not be judged in terms of method alone. Reviewers need to have a grasp not only of important methodological principles but of the content as well. For example, a philosopher reviewing a philosophical piece would be cognizant not only of more recent American and European currents in

philosophical research, but of the significance of ideas being grappled with in the article and their philosophical ramifications within the broader literatures of philosophies of education and the arts. Such a reviewer, for example, would understand phenomenology to be a valid form of research—one that Husserl ([1931] 1962) developed as a description of philosophical method (and some social scientists [e.g., see Luckmann, 1978] adopted as a basis of their theoretical and empirical work)—that should be included among the various forms of scientific and nonscientific inquiry in music education.

Ensuring that philosophical pieces were reviewed by philosophers would prevent the kinds of problems that have arisen in the past, when reviewers whose expertise lay elsewhere were assigned to review philosophical pieces. Moreover, empowering the editor to adjudicate in the case of mixed reviews would overcome past situations, where one negative adjudication out of three reviews might prevent (or significantly delay) the publication of a piece, no matter how excellent. This is not to suggest that there has been a conscious effort to exclude philosophical pieces from the *JRME*, but to note that the impact of the reviewing process thus far has been to dissuade some philosophers from submitting their articles. The perception of a more equitable reviewing process, however, would promote greater inclusiveness, and in all likelihood encourage philosophers to submit articles in greater numbers. The same principle applies to, and would benefit, all of the forms of music education research.

Secondly, we would continue to develop the Philosophy of Music SRIG, now under consideration for official approval of MERC. Such a SRIG can encourage a greater sense of community among philosophers, promote increased dialogue not only among philosophers themselves but with those engaged in other types of research, and stimulate the publication of philosophical research in music education. In the *Philosophy of Music Education Newsletter*, which goes to an international readership, I have encouraged my colleagues to submit pieces to the *JRME*, among other music education and related



journals whose editors or editorial policies have welcomed philosophical contributions. I also appreciate the support of those in the MERC, SRME, the Research Commission of the International Society for Music Education (ISME), and the various journal editors who are concerned to see an improvement in the quality and quantity of published philosophical research in music education and have encouraged the establishment of a SRIG in the philosophy of music education.

Third, undergraduate and graduate foundations of music education courses, particularly their philosophical elements, should be strengthened. Strong courses beget scholars with a broad and deep knowledge of the foundations of music education, and these people in turn produce good courses and solid research. An appropriate place to begin to improve the teaching of foundations courses, especially philosophy of music education, is to assist those who are currently teaching these courses. For example, we might organize institutes or seminars that would provide teachers with opportunities to enrich their understandings of philosophy by studying with prominent philosophers both within and without music education. One reason for the qualitative improvement in experimental research in music education over the past decades has been in the transfer of models from such fields as psychology and cognitive science. An improvement in philosophy of music education would similarly follow the study of models from philosophy, particularly in the areas of aesthetics and the philosophy of education.

We should not expect that an increased emphasis on undergraduate and graduate foundations of music education courses will immediately and necessarily result in significantly more people taking up philosophical research. Philosophical studies sometimes take longer to develop, require larger blocks of time for intensive study, and may be somewhat more unwieldy than their empirical cousins which, once the parameters are clearly defined, are less likely to encounter the kinds of pitfalls along the way that philosophical research implies. Thus, an empirical study may be a somewhat safer and even

shorter route to the completion of a dissertation, especially if the researcher is completing it part-time while teaching full-time at a school or college. As Yarbrough (1984: 216) notes, about 42 percent of the articles published in the *JRME*, 1953-1983, were based on dissertations and of these (although this percentage has been declining), the greater part are empirical studies. One would expect that scholars trained as empiricists are likely to pursue empirical research throughout their careers. But even if a majority of graduate students continued to elect to train as qualitative and quantitative empirical researchers, their greater philosophical understanding would better prepare them to develop excellent conceptual frameworks for their empirical studies.

Ultimately, we would all benefit from an increased focus on philosophical issues. This is not to say that empirical research is unimportant, or even less important than philosophical research, but only to posit that both philosophical and empirical research are necessary for the development of our profession. One without the other leaves us limping on one leg.

To propose changes of the magnitude I envisage is to conceive of a new political reality in music education research. Change always brings with it the necessity of realigning power, and this can be both a challenging and sometimes difficult experience. Nevertheless, my study of the birth of new organizations (especially when spawned from existing organizations) convinces me that while this may be a problem for some, with the determination and goodwill of us all, the newborn organization (SRME) can go on to develop an independent life of its own and coexist amicably with its parent (MENC). If we place the interests of research in music education ahead of personal and political considerations, and if significant attempts are made to ensure continuing cooperation with the MENC, the realignment of organizations that serve music education outlined above can be successfully accomplished.

In the event of such a change, some form of institutionalized coordination between the SRME and the MENC would

benefit both research and practice in music education. For example, it might be in the interests of both organizations to ensure the continuation of the MERC as a means of communication between the SRME and the MENC. Alternatively, the MERC might remain in place as an MENC commission to foster research projects on behalf of MENC and to communicate research findings to music teachers (in similar manner to the Research Commission of ISME), and a new jointly run committee might be struck to represent the interests of the SRME and MENC as equal partners. The separation of the MENC and SRME would allow both organizations to develop—the MENC to continue to serve the professional interests of music teachers, and the SRME to serve the research interests of scholars, and a communication vehicle between the two organizations would facilitate collaboration on those projects of mutual interest.

I have stated recently (Jorgensen, 1989) that anti-intellectualism in music education is something we should shun. Rather, as a profession, we should be distinguished by our efforts to seek increased understanding, to value learning and inquiry, and to foster a better interface between theory and practice. But to ensure the interface of theory and practice does not presuppose that both research and professional development must necessarily be fostered by the same organization. To so insist is to value unity over diversity. Rather, both unity and diversity can better be realized through two distinct organizations, each working toward its own ends, and collaborating with the other in meaningful ways.

The music education research community should be conceived in terms of a global view of music education and organized on several levels—local, regional, national, and international. Historically, our strongest links have been forged at the local, regional, and national levels. We now need a stronger sense of international community in music education research.

The research commission of ISME has sponsored small, exclusive research seminars and more inclusive research reporting sessions at ISME meetings. While

these efforts have been helpful in fostering international contacts among some music education researchers, as with the MENC, only a part of the time during ISME meetings has been devoted to research reporting, and the major focus has been upon wider professional issues. For reasons similar to those cited above, an International Society for Research in Music Education (ISRME) would enhance the international community of researchers in music education and complement the professional emphasis in ISME. Likewise, we might expect that ISME would maintain a Research Commission to support specific research projects and disseminate research findings among music teachers internationally, and that some sort of institutionalized cooperation between ISME and ISRME would be established. The ISRME, like its American counterpart, would call its own meetings and publish its own journal, for which it would raise its own subscriptions. Importantly, it would promote the study of music education literature in other languages, and contribute to a wider view of music education and a greater international inclusiveness than is presently evident in world music education research.

Given that there is a well-established tradition of music education research in the United States, we are in a position to reach out to the international community of scholars in our field, and lead the way toward the eventual formation of an international research society in music education. In the meantime, we can actively participate in, and support, ISME Research Commission meetings and research seminars.

The development of an independent scholarly community in music education does not mean that we should cease our efforts to communicate the results of our research to teachers in elementary and secondary schools, or become disinterested in the practice of music education. There is a continuing need for the presence of scholars at MENC and ISME meetings, for sessions devoted to reporting research with a view to showing its applications in the classroom, and for ongoing dialogue between teachers and researchers. Indeed, we need to increase our efforts

in this regard to ensure that important results from our research can benefit teaching practice and that practice likewise informs our research. As we continue to enhance our research community, though, we may not only improve the quality and quantity of our research, but be in a better position to contribute to music education practice. □

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