

Title: Research as a Means of Ascendancy in the Professoriate

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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.

Research as a Means of Ascendancy in the Professoriate

By William V. May

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“In a university, members of the faculty must show continuing growth and development through research, writing or other creative activities, and through participation in professional activities of their discipline. A recommendation for tenure must be based on a record of quality performance in this area and, so far as is possible, some indication of long-term motivation and interest.”

-- University of North Texas Faculty Handbook, Appendix B-1, Sec. 2.200

Statements similar to the one above are included in faculty policy documents of colleges and universities across this country. Though wordings and emphases may vary from institution to institution, the importance of research and of related activities, such as publication and presentation, seems firmly established in academe's faculty evaluation and reward systems. On most of our nation's campuses today faculty are thought to ascend through professorial ranks, achieve tenure, increase status among peers, and receive salary and other financial gains by demonstrating success in research, as well as in the other components of the tripartite evaluative system—teaching and service.

In recent years, however, questions have been raised concerning the relative priorities assigned to these three professorial responsibilities. Some have claimed that in many institutions research improperly has superseded teaching as the most valued activity. These critics have blamed many of the problems in

higher education, such as over-dependence on graduate teaching assistants or general neglect of undergraduate instruction, on the overemphasis of research. Others have rebutted, claiming that the very nature of scholarship is embodied in the act of research, and therefore scholarship must be the most important preoccupation of the university community. At the heart of this debate are two related issues: (1) the proper allocation of faculty time and energy; and (2) the faculty job-performance reward system. What, therefore, is the proper role of research as a means of ascendancy in the professoriate? Does that role differ in the music education setting as compared to the academic community at large? Is research actually overemphasized in the evaluation of music education faculty? What identifiable trends foretell the future of research as an activity of the music education professoriate? This article seeks to examine these important questions.

The Past

Ernest Boyer (1990), president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, traced the history of collegiate priorities regarding faculty activities in his book, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. He argued that the nature of scholarship in American higher education has progressed through three indistinct phases, the results of which are our current recognition of teaching, research, and service as the categories of proper faculty endeavor. The first phase, based on British models, took place early in our country's history and focused on students' moral, religious, and civic educations. The typical colonial "professor" was a young man, called a tutor, who often had just graduated from the institution and

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who was "filling time until he received his call to the ministry" (Fuhrmann & Grasha, 1983). After the colonial period, the role of the "tutor" changed and progressed as institutions' programs expanded, yet the philosophy which undergirded this phase continued well into the nineteenth century. Teaching was considered the foremost preoccupation of faculty.

Service, the practical side of education, was not a part of the colonial model. The condemnation of practical or professional studies was exemplified in the landmark 1828

Yale faculty report (reprinted in Hillesheim & Merrill, 1971, p. 322), which stated, "Our object is not to teach that which is common to any one of the professions; but to lay the foundation which is common to them all." This philosophical position was countered by public sentiment and subsequent national legislation such as the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1887, which established our "Land-Grant" colleges. These efforts, though essentially aimed at promoting the common good through technological development, indirectly established practical applications as learning goals of collegiate education and focused the attention of faculty on service to community, nation,

and mankind. The transition from phase one to phase two, ironically, can be traced through the words of a single individual, Harvard president Charles W. Eliot (1898, 1908), who at his 1869 inauguration declared that the most important role of faculty was "regular and assiduous class teaching," yet who by 1908 proclaimed that "all colleges boast of the serviceable men they have trained, and regard the serviceable patriot as their ideal product." In this spirit, public service was added to the role of the faculty.

In the 1870s, Daniel C. Gilman, following German models, created at Johns Hopkins

University in Baltimore a different type of institution based on the "law" that the work of professors must emphasize "unselfish devotion to the discovery and advancement of truth and righteousness" (Gilman, 1898). Gilman's graduate-oriented program stressed research as the means to this end. This third developmental phase grew in acceptance and in prominence to become the model for the modern university, a model in which research unashamedly overshadowed teaching. By the turn of the century, for example, professors at the University of Pennsylvania who

had gained reputations as teachers instead of researchers were advised in writing to seek other appointments (Shryock, 1959). This was not an isolated example. The research emphasis created a fundamental change in the evaluation of university faculty and induced the founding of learned societies and the establishment of scholarly journals, both of which served as environments in which research activities could thrive.

Music education, although a somewhat late entry, was part of this movement. In 1918, the Educational Council was established. This organization eventually became the Music Education

Research Council, the current research body of the Music Educators National Conference (Mark, 1986). By 1923, the Educational Council had been renamed the National Research Council and was disseminating a variety of research documents authored primarily by college professors and music supervisors. In 1953, the *Journal of Research in Music Education* was established out of a perceived need for a unified means of research dissemination in the field, as well as the desire to improve the quality of music education research and to increase scholarly prestige in the discipline (Warren, 1984). The journal's contents were

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to be of “primary interest to college teachers of music education, graduate students in music education, and scholars in closely allied fields” (Warren, 1984, p. 224). With the establishment of the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, the research mechanism in music education was in place, and music education had found its way into the research-emphasis versus teaching-emphasis controversy in higher education.

Increasingly during the following time, faculty, including music educators, who thought they were hired as teachers found that when evaluations were conducted, research was of primary significance. Boyer (1990) dramatically reported the shift toward a research emphasis by comparing two surveys conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In 1969, 21 percent of all faculty strongly agreed that publication was necessary to achieve tenure. By 1989, this percentage doubled to 42 percent. The change was even more dramatic—six percent to 43 percent—in institutions without doctoral programs and with few research resources.

Apparently, widespread acceptance had been gained for the notion that if elevated faculty status and prestige were sought, then research leading to publication was a necessary activity, regardless of the role, scope, or available resources of the institution in which the faculty taught. Evaluation and reward systems emphasizing research evolved along with this trend, but not without frequent objections regarding the efficacy of such a system.

Music education brought its unique qualities to the debate. To the casual observer, the discipline seemed singular in nature. The teaching/learning process in music seemed to be its only focus, yet in actuality it was, and is, a broad, diverse discipline. It simultaneously subsumed teaching/learning processes of all age groups, music as an art

form, music as an activity, music as a scholarly endeavor, aesthetics, and a host of other components and special interests. Such diversity inevitably prompted disagreement regarding the proper role of the professoriate. Among music education professors were those individuals from largely musical performance backgrounds, others with primarily pedagogical experience and emphases, and still others with deep curiosities regarding human musical behavior and little curiosity about the teaching and/or learning process. Some basically were elementary or secondary teachers sharing experiences at tertiary levels, while others arrived at college teaching as an “escape” from the public schools. Regardless of their backgrounds, few music education professors had experience with research paradigms, scholars’ jargon, or the scientific method; therefore, they either overestimated the power of research by expecting quick solutions to long-standing problems, or they underestimated the usefulness of research and declared the whole process irrelevant.

Philosophical battle lines drawn then still stand. Illustrative of this dispute was an unscheduled debate witnessed by this author at a Music Educators National Conference regional convention in the mid-1970s. During what was to have been a routine research dissemination session, an individual delivered an impassioned speech declaring all the research reported that day trivial to music education and largely impossible to understand. One suddenly defensive researcher countered that he did not have time to write for the untrained audiences who lacked basic understanding of research processes. A third professor, hoping to strike a compromise, suggested the need for “middle-level scholars” to translate research for the “uninitiated” educators. All parties departed more frustrated than informed; nevertheless, all participants did gain one important item, *an entry in their faculty evaluation re-*

ports. Given academe's history, with its shifts in emphasis, its confused expectations, and its diversity of opinion regarding the validity of research as a process in music education, it is not surprising that clear definition of today's standards for professional excellence are difficult to delineate.

The Present

What are the present practices and opinions regarding research as a means of ascendancy in the professoriate generally and among music education professors specifically? The preceding historical overview seems to imply that today research is the clearly established means of ascendancy among all professors, including those in music and music education. This is not so conclusively the case when one examines the small amount of extant literature in this regard.

If one asks which activities professors prefer to pursue, teaching clearly is the front runner, except perhaps among faculty in universities designated as research-oriented institutions. The Carnegie Foundation for the

Advancement of Teaching included this issue in the 1989 national survey of college and university professors.¹ Their findings, exhibited in Table 1, are quite clear. Faculty in general, as well as fine arts and education faculty² specifically, preferred teaching, rather than research. Fine arts faculty percentages in general were most closely aligned with faculty in "comprehensive institutions," that is, institutions in which more than half of the baccalaureate degrees were awarded in two or more professional disciplines and in which graduate degrees were limited to the Master's (Boyer, 1990). Education faculty were similar in their responses to those of faculty from undergraduate liberal arts colleges. Does this mean that fine arts and education faculty in research-oriented or doctorate-granting institutions might hold opinions regarding the importance of research which are in conflict with those of their colleagues from other disciplines? The existing evidence is inconclusive in this regard, yet there are hints in the literature that this may be the case.

Table 1. Do your interests lie primarily in research or in teaching?

	Research	Teaching
All Respondents	30%	70%
Fine Arts Faculty	26	74
Education	17	83
Research Institutions	66	33
Doctorate-granting	45	55
Comprehensive Institutions	23	77
Liberal Arts	17	83
Two-Year Colleges	7	93

Table 2. Teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for promotion of faculty.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
All Respondents	62%	7%	31%
Fine Arts Faculty	73	9	18
Education	70	8	22
Research Institutions	21	9	70
Doctorate-granting	41	11	48
Comprehensive Institutions	68	8	24
Liberal Arts	76	6	18
Two-Year Colleges	92	3	5

Table 3. Percentage of faculty rating the following items as "very important" for granting tenure in their department.

	Fine Arts faculty	Education	Research	Doctorate granting	Comprehen- sive	Liberal Arts	Two-Year
Number of publications	13%	34%	56%	30%	30%	8%	2%
Recommendations from outside scholars	19	17	53	29	9	16	3
Research grants received	14	21	40	30	19	9	3
Reputations of journals publishing works	13	22	40	32	18	7	2
Recommendations from faculty within my in- stitution	18	18	15	13	19	38	15
Student evaluations of teaching	29	36	10	19	37	45	29
Presentations off-campus	8	9	8	8	12	7	3
Published reviews of works	8	5	8	7	5	3	1
Service within discipline	19	16	6	8	13	11	7
Observations of teaching by colleagues	26	21	4	6	20	29	43
Service within university community	21	15	3	6	17	27	19
Recommendations of students	13	13	3	6	13	30	15
Academic advising	9	7	1	2	6	15	6
Syllabi of courses	11	12	1	2	9	14	18

Attitudes toward the role of teaching in the faculty-reward system parallel reported faculty interests. Subjects who were asked if teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for promotion of faculty agreed in large numbers, except again for those in research and doctorate-granting institutions.³ As shown in Table 2, fine arts and education faculty exhibited responses like those faculty in liberal arts colleges. The stark differences in responses by research institution faculty must be noted. Should we suspect that music education faculty teaching in research or doctorate-granting institutions share these attitudes with their colleagues? As we shall see, this may not generally be the case.

Critics have claimed that, even if faculty prefer teaching, the current faculty evaluation and reward system does not allow such a priority. The data in this regard only partially support such claims, as noted in Table 3. Fine arts and education faculty diverge

when identifying those activities "very important" to the granting of tenure in their departments. Teaching activities are important to both disciplines. Publication, presentation, reviews of works, and other research-related pursuits, however, seem more important to those in education than to those in fine arts. Service activities for fine arts faculty apparently outweigh research in the tenure review process (see Table 3). One can only suppose that music education falls somewhere among these two positions.

Another enlightening portion of the Carnegie survey (1989) were respondent's answers to the question, "Does the pressure to publish reduce the quality of teaching in your university?" Subjects were divided almost equally on the issue, with 35 percent agreeing and 46 percent disagreeing (fine arts faculty: 33 percent agree, 39 percent disagree; education faculty: 43 percent agree, 41 percent disagree).

Unfortunately there is little data specific to music education with which to compare the Carnegie Foundation survey; however, LeBlanc and McCrary (1990) offered some insights in their study of motivation and perceived rewards for research by music faculty. LeBlanc and McCrary chose to survey music faculty from a variety of specializations who had published two or more research articles in a selected group of prestigious music journals during the period 1980 through 1985. The resulting sample included mostly veteran professors, averaging ten years in their current positions and 14 years past receipt of the doctorate. Subjects typically were in the upper professorial ranks (47 percent at associate professor, 36 percent at professor) and most importantly, 71 percent taught at doctorate-granting institutions.⁴ The survey group clearly were active researchers who had successfully ascended in the profession and, therefore, were a group whose opinions were not generalizable to a larger, more diverse population of music professors. Nevertheless, their collective comments were surprising to this author, given the prevailing attitudes of professors in general at doctorate-granting institutions.

Subjects reported four main motives for conducting research. They were, in descending order of importance, (1) intellectual curiosity, (2) enjoyment, (3) self-improvement, which included notions of professional advancement, and (4) perceived duty. Even though these individuals recognized research as an ingredient in their professional ascendancy, the percentages of responses tended to suggest that research played a role of less-than-expected importance. For example, only 31 percent reported that research helped them earn promotion and tenure, only 24 percent reported that their universities required research as a means of achieving promotion and tenure, 26 percent indicated that research activities helped them get a salary increase, and only 14 percent viewed research as a professional duty. Fifty-five percent of the group did report that research activities helped them earn professional recognition, however.

The teaching-service-research proportion issue was not addressed by LeBlanc and

McCrary, but their data seemed to indicate that among music educators, music theorists, musicologists, and music therapists working in primarily doctorate-granting institutions, research was a valued, but neither an over-emphasized nor a heavily rewarded activity. This tends to corroborate the implications of the Carnegie survey and seems to support the notion that music education professors may encounter or may have created reward systems different from those suggested in the research-emphasis model. These findings further suggest that music education professors who teach in research institutions may have different views regarding appropriate emphases in professional activities than do their colleagues in other disciplines. Those other colleagues, nevertheless, often sit on evaluative panels and judge music education faculty by university-wide criteria. The degree to which this negatively affects music education faculty, however, is not clear.

The Future

What can university music education faculty expect in the future with regard to job emphases and reward systems? Boyer (1990) suggests that "the time has come to move beyond the tired old 'teaching versus research' debate and give the familiar and honorable term 'scholarship' a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work" (p. 16). He suggests four separate, yet overlapping functions of the professoriate's work: (1) the scholarship of discovery, which refers to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and the passionate creation of new understandings; (2) the scholarship of integration, which would call for a host of scholars whose task is to make connections across disciplines and to bring these new insights to bear upon new research; (3) the scholarship of application, which calls for careful study of applications of knowledge in various contexts and the study of consequential problems; and (4) the scholarship of teaching, which suggests the elevation of teaching from a routine function to a genuinely scholarly enterprise. If Boyer, indeed, foretells trends of the future, then music education, perhaps unwittingly, already finds itself in a leadership position. Recognition of

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diversity may already be in place in our discipline. For example, the following statement is now under consideration for inclusion in this author's own department's evaluation criteria:

The Division of Music Education recognizes the educational and professional integrity of a program which features a diversity of goals and strengths. Such a program requires (1) a faculty with varied abilities, interests, and areas of expertise, and (2) a faculty evaluation/reward system which recognizes high productivity and individual achievement within such diversity. Each faculty member must be allowed the freedom to choose the route to advancement which best fits individual abilities and interests, and must have the assurance that the chosen route will be acknowledged by peers.⁵

If similar philosophies were adopted by music education faculty-review bodies in a large number of institutions, then the discipline might, indeed, claim a sort of leadership in this trend.

There are dangers in this position, however. Does the de-emphasis of research in the faculty reward process in turn lessen the importance of research to our discipline? In this author's opinion, it must not. Among music faculty in general, the music education professoriate, by virtue of their academic training tend to be, with notable exceptions, the individuals most skilled in conducting and interpreting systematic research. It, therefore, must be their responsibility to create new, systematically derived knowledge for the profession. Expanding the importance of teaching or service in the evaluation of faculty must not impede the process by which current professional practice is studied and new understandings are created. The scope of the research efforts might be expanded to include a greater diversity of activities, but still those activities must go on if we are to progress.

Attention to the promotion of music education research efforts is particularly important

when one considers the relatively sparse research output from individuals in our discipline. Studies by Abeles and Carroll (1981) and Standley (1984) indicated that most music education professors have rather limited research records and that very few have ongoing, long-term research regimens. Much of our research either is done by a small group of individuals or is the product of an individual's research efforts, typically the dissertation project. Given these data, research among music educators is at best described as a part-time endeavor; therefore, when research is attempted, it must be supported and rewarded.

This might be especially important for faculty in research institutions where emphasis on research is expected by evaluators. Music educators in such settings should be recognized for their work and should be allowed to continue without the fear of being penalized for their efforts by colleagues or by members of the profession who might consider research trivial and irrelevant to music performance or to music teaching. Music education researchers often find themselves uncomfortably caught between the negative attitudes of their music-teacher colleagues toward research and the insistence on research output from their university colleagues. The danger of suffering penalties in the faculty evaluation process from both sides of this issue may be the greatest danger to the music educator in the professoriate. Solutions to this dilemma are not found in the literature and await future attention.

De-emphasis of research cannot become synonymous with a lack of productivity on the part of faculty. The perpetuation of tired practices derived from unsubstantiated intuitions was not a part of Boyer's call for “scholarship of teaching” and must not be tolerated by the faculty reward system. No amount of dedicated committee service can compensate for misinformation in the classroom. Lectures

based on out-of-date information are not examples of good teaching, no matter how compelling, enticing, and entertaining the presentation. Methodological dreams cannot be taught as practical truths no matter how logical they may seem to the conjecturer.

In summary, one might ask if research is necessary to ascend in the music education professoriate. Scholarship, in perhaps an expanded definition which extends beyond the traditional view of research, is and must continue to be a vital part of all music education faculty activity. Depending on the emphasis of the institution, however, traditional research efforts may play varying roles in faculty evaluation. It certainly is not necessary for all institutions to profess the same educational roles, to evaluate faculty in the same way, or to emphasize the same aspects of scholarship; therefore, it is unreasonable to assume that faculty across a broad discipline such as music education would be expected to participate in the same activities or be evaluated in the same manner. Is research overemphasized to the detriment of teaching or service among music educators? In general, the answer is apparently no; however, the balance of expectations in some institutions may tip toward research while others may lean toward a teaching emphasis, both of which, if conducted in a scholarly manner, could fit under Boyer's recommendations. Strangely enough, a solution to all the questions raised in this article is the creation of new information through thorough research which examines these issues. It is clear that the professoriate should conduct such inquiries. Whether faculty are to be rewarded for such efforts, however, remains an unanswered question.

Notes


1. Survey is reported in *The Condition of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends*, 1989. Lawrenceville, NJ: Princeton University Press.
2. Fine arts and education faculty results are reported herein because there was no separate designation for music educators in the survey. These results are directly applicable to music educators to the extent that the reader believes music education faculty are similar to fine arts or education faculty in general.
3. The Carnegie Foundation distinguishes between research universities and doctorate-granting universities in the following ways: Research universities give high priority to research, receive over \$12.5 million

dollars annually in federal support of research, and award at least 50 Ph.D. degrees each year. Doctorate-granting universities have a commitment to graduate education and annually award at least 20 degrees in at least one discipline and 10 or more Ph.D. degrees in three or more disciplines (Boyer, 1990, Appendix C).

4. LeBlanc and McCrory made no distinction between research-oriented and doctorate-granting institutions.

5. Taken from an internal document which proposes new criteria from faculty merit evaluation, University of North Texas Division of Music Education, Fall 1991.

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