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EDITORIAL

By

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Despite the advent of social networking, mp3 players, tablet notepads, smart phones, video gaming, and teleconferencing, little has changed in the way music is presented to students in public schools throughout the United States. A struggling national economy and Federal legislation ensures that music education in schools remains fragile. MENC: The National Association for Music Education faces an identity crisis. As one response, the International Society for Music Education (ISME) is organizing a North American region to unite Canada, the United States and Mexico. The Mayday Group, founded in 1993, continues to wrestle with and to expose issues of professional activity, methodologies, philosophies and politics. New publications from experts in music methodologies are connecting to critical thinking through differentiated instruction, reciprocal teaching and other strategies borrowed from contemporary literature in language literacy.

The focus of Volume 6 is both historic and contemporary. In this volume, we revisit assessment, national standards, qualitative research methodologies, curriculum, action research, cultural identity and social psychology, and various teaching strategies within the context of music education and educational practice in 1995. One year earlier, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations published national standards to delineate what every American student was to know and be able to do. Unfortunately, despite continued interest in assessment, national standards, and the other topics of Volume 6, we may be in the same place in 2010 as we were fifteen years ago.

Issue 1 of this volume deals with research in the social psychology of music. Articles by Bergee, Grashel, Gromko, Hurley, Jorgensen and Kornicke draw from papers presented at the Indiana Symposium on Research in the Social Psychology of Music. The remaining papers were published in the winter 1994 issue (Volume 5, Number 4) of *The Quarterly*. As Charles Schmidt introduces the issue, he states, "The papers in this issue discuss the personality and psychosocial characteristics of music education majors, the dynamics of one-to-one interactions in music instruction, motivation of string students, individual differences in representation of music and relationships among sight reading achievement and learner variables." An upcoming conference later this year on many of these topics evidences that they are still relevant and a popular field of study. The recent publication of Ruth Wright called *Sociology and Music Education* and *Sociology for Music Teachers* by Hildegard Froehlich update the most recent literature on the topic.

In issue 2, Michael Mark reviews the history of the National Standards and reminds us that since the 1930s, language arts and mathematics were the major focus of policy, assessment and funding. That has not changed. Karl J. Glenn notes the importance of National Standards as a catalyst for change in school music programs, mobilizing music education and education in general for the global economy of the end of the previous century. Gary E. McPherson focuses on the standards for musical performance.

Paul R. Lehman explains that one goal of the standards was to "close the door on the era in which the music curriculum depended largely on the whims and idiosyncrasies of individual teachers." Of course, that did not happen. The standards were and are voluntary and the advent of No child Left Behind Legislation has rendered music programs fragile and on the fringe of school programs in many places. In 1995, Lehman's concerns were assessment, resources and professional development. Those concerns are still the focus today. Toward the end of his article, he acknowledges that "Virtually all teachers can teach to the standards immediately because there's nothing in them that is totally new." He was correct. In fact, despite admirable efforts on the part of MENC and the authors of the document to obtain public opinion and input from a variety of voice, the National Standards were a recasting of the 1974 document *School Music Program: Descriptions and Standards.* In his article, Samuel Hope calls for colleges and universities to consider the standards in the design of their teacher preparation programs. He cites substance, sustainability, support, sensitivity, sophistication and spirituality as the themes to frame preparation for pre-service teachers to teach the content of the national standards.

Bennett Reimer lauds the National Standards for reminding music teachers that music education extends beyond performance. He writes that we "can no longer rely entirely or dominantly on performance as the be-all and end-all of music education." He credits the National Standards for being the catalyst to move music teaching and music learning forward. Reimer's hope was that the standards would reposition music education programs to the center of school curricula. In fact, he writes, "I believe the standards…stipulate that our goal as a professional field should now be to prepare all people in our culture to take fullest possible advantage of all the musical opportunities afforded them. This would enrich both their own musical lives and the musical viability of their culture."

By fall 1995, *The Quarterly* published three Kaleidoscope issues. Volume 6 contains the fourth. Liora Bresler's article "Ethnography, Phenomenology and Action Research in Music Education" remains an excellent introduction for students exploring qualitative research paradigms. While we may have moved on to e-journaling now called blogging, Towell, Snyder and Poor explore the use of student journals in music education courses. They suggest "using student journals can provide a unique opportunity for music preservice teachers to discuss the issues they see as central to teaching with someone who has experience in the profession." That is still true. C. Victor Fung reports on music

preference as a function of musical characteristics. Veblen, McCoy and Barrett look at context in the music curriculum. This foreshadows their 1997 text, *Sound Ways of Knowing*. Jackie Wiggins explores the importance of scaffolding to facilitate structural understanding in a case study of one 5th grade student's experiences. That article is important not only for its content but also as a model for the case study research design. Judith M. Teicher reports on the children of the Thyagarja festival from the perspective of social psychology.

Assessment is the topic of issue 4. To frame the discussion, Richard Colwell writes, "We should use the present interest in assessment as an opportunity to improve music teaching and learning." We have not done that. Where have we come and where are we going are questions that remain at the forefront. We have national standards, yet as a profession, we are not at consensus as to what students should know and be able to do. While most music teachers know the nine content areas identified in the standards, a much fewer number know the benchmarks. Fewer still know that there are *Opportunity to Learn* standards, which Colwell suggests may be more significant than "the nine." Radocy provides some definitions that could frame discourse. "Assessment is a process" he says "for rating or judging a person or event in accordance with specified or implied criteria or standards. Curriculum" he tells us, "is a set of experiences that promote education." He and Colwell agree that assessment should yield data to document what students are learning and are able to do in music. Webster and Hickey discuss rating scales to assess children's music compositions and argue for test instruments that are subjective. George L. Duerkson posits assessments to measure student growth in music education and Brent Sandene approaches the topic from his position at Educational Testing Service (ETS).

While concerns for assessment were in the forefront in 1995, we do not find any of the authors discussing rubrics. In fact, the word does not appear at all in the issue. Today, we note mandating standards-based grading, with a manual of rubrics to which all teachers, including music teachers, and all students, including music students, must account. Anyone who has experienced a national accreditation review at their school, college or university knows how important those agencies believe rubrics are to assess and document student achievement and teacher dispositions. My own state of New Jersey has adopted the backward design promoted in *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe. Public school districts throughout the state are insisting that music teachers align their curricula and lesson plans to the principles and forms in that text.

As this reprint goes to press, schools in the United States are in crisis. Proposing remedies, Mark Zuckerberg, 26-year old founder of Facebook, announced a $100,000,000 gift to the public schools in Newark, New Jersey and challenged other philanthropists to do the same. In a recent interview, the Chancellor of Education in New York City suggested paying science and mathematics teachers more money than teachers of other subjects in order to attract the finest scientists and mathematicians to teaching. The mayor of New York has lobbied for the elimination of tenure for teachers. Colleges

and universities where students learn to be music teachers are exploring curricula based on critical pedagogy, composition and improvisation, integrated and connected curriculum, constructivist and connectionist teaching strategies. Others suggest differentiating instruction and reciprocal teaching. Colleagues advocate centering music instruction on creativity, social justice, diversity, multiculturalism or music methodologies and more, hoping to send teachers into the field that will make a difference and add value to the lives of the children they teach.

Dewey reminds us "arriving at one goal is the starting point to another." As we revisit the topics in Volume 6 within the context of our practice and professional health in 1995 or in 2010, one wonders whether we have yet to arrive.