

## EDITORIAL

By

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The three articles in this volume address issues of personal identity and agency. First, Ryan John reports on research exploring how students' participation in high school musical theater productions contributes to students finding their own identity. John applies a case study design to his experience working with adolescents in an American high school as they prepare to present their annual spring production of a Broadway musical. Watching and interviewing students as they practiced together, John was able to investigate how students' collective experiences made meaning and how that meaning contributed to the formation of a community of practice. Students shared their personal histories within the context of the production, their school, and their community. Consistent with the literature, John's data indicated that participation in high school musical theater productions fostered positive social and personal development and that the community of practice that emerged included themes of family and work.

In contrast to John's study, Janet Cape's research explored how fourth- and fifth-grade students used GarageBand to arrange, record, and compose music in an after-school composition group. She found that in the process of creating their own music, the students acquired agency and found their "musician voice." Cape concluded that when students are afforded freedom and flexibility, they produce a musical product rich with personal meaning.

Shelley Griffin described a process whereby the teacher education candidates in her music methods course, who were not musicians or music majors, overcame anxiety about teaching music in elementary general education classrooms by drawing self-portraits she calls *visual body maps*. Her research, grounded in literature on patients with HIV who used body maps to overcome fear, showed that when students made a visual representation of who they are, they were able to confront their fears in formal ways and reduce or eliminate their anxieties.

Patrick Freer, academic editor of *Music Educators Journal* (MEJ), a publication of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in the United States, contributes an essay that discusses the critique process of music education journals. Freer contends that American music education journals have long served as primary communication vehicles within the profession and considers the culture, values, and traditions of music education scholarship with views toward the larger venture of academic publishing. Thus, in this essay, he considers those who oversee, those who contribute to, and those who form the target audiences for these journals. His analysis questions quality (excellence), accountability (obedience to rules), and relevance (the achievement of goods). As the academic editor of MEJ and a college administrator who mentors younger faculty members as they move through the process of tenure, Freer is well-qualified to contribute this essay. The issues he confronts are issues we face with each issue of this journal, particularly those of quality and audience.

Our historical reprint comes from Janet Barrett and describes a socioconstructivist view of music teacher education curricula. In this chapter from *Dimensions of Musical Learning and Teaching: A Different Kind of Classroom*” edited by Eunice Boardman, Barrett proposes principles that cause preservice music teachers to question, challenge, and ultimately make meaning of the musical experiences in which they and their students engage. Written in 2002, Barrett’s ideas are still fresh and worth serious consideration. The heart of the chapter posits five ways “preservice and practicing teachers develop ongoing models of musical development, lead students toward musical independence, develop insightful perception of student responses, model reflective thinking, and design educational experiences that stretch students’ understanding” (p. 218). Taking examples from her own experiences preparing college students to be music teachers, she shows how a socioconstructivist view confronts the meaning of meaning; an attention to context; the nature of change; the intersection of cognition and emotion; and the interplay of intentions, actions, and reflections.

I am pleased to announce some changes in our staff and editorial board beginning with this issue. On behalf of the entire editorial board, I thank Carlos Abril, Alison Reynolds, Lee Higgins, and Joelle Lien for their service to *Visions of Research in Music Education*. I also thank Ryan John who leaves the staff after several years of service as copy editor and production manager and welcome him to the editorial board. Ryan brings the perspective of the K–12 practitioner to the group of editors. Sarah Michal will be assisting with the copyediting and Janet

Cape begins her tenure as production manager and member of the editorial board.