
EDITORIAL

By

Adam Patrick Bell, *guest editor*
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

I liken my perspective as the writer of the editorial for this 28th volume of *Visions of Research in Music Education* to Drake sitting atop Toronto's CN Tower on the cover of his album *Views*. From high up above one gains a holistic perspective of a city. Distinctions demarcating neighborhoods like the Annex, Yorkville, Little Portugal, and Koreatown that seem blatantly obvious amidst the bustle of urban life on street level are eviscerated from an elevated point of view. Absorbed in our own worlds, it is easy to forget they we all inhabit the same planet; one can only fathom the visceral immediacy of this phenomenon an astronaut experiences orbiting the earth.

The map of inquiry in music education is continually growing. With every research question and problem statement posed, we venture into new territory, and as a result, contribute to this ever-evolving expanse that is music education. Just as those in a vast metropolis will often seek to live amongst a community of people with whom they identify or share common interests, scholars similarly tend to search out their own—however that might be defined. Special issue journals, edited topical books, themed conferences, special research interest groups, and other scholarly activities evidence a field of fields in music education. Specialization is critical; it is what we expect of experts, but it can also create disconnects within a field. Practitioners of particular research paradigms can find it difficult to relate to other approaches and interests. I have overheard remarks ranging from “I’m not a quantitative person” and “I don’t do

philosophy” to “I mostly just listen to solo trombone works.” Engaging with scholarship outside of our comfort zones can feel akin to roaming into the wrong neighborhood, but rather than staying in our silos we should scale up them to gain some perspective. Therein lies the merit of this volume of *Visions*: it gives us *views* that we would not otherwise have. It is our figurate CN Tower to ascend and assess critical issues in our field at present. From my view on this editorial perch I was particularly enthralled by the range of questions the authors sought to answer. What is music literacy and can it be measured? Does music help improve other skills taught in school? How can music education integrate more creativity? What do band directors value pedagogically? How is technology integrated into music education programs? How is peer mentoring learned and how does it influence teaching? To complement the array of questions, the authors featured in this volume utilized diverse methods, demonstrating a broad spectrum of orientations to research.

From a Hungarian perspective, Csaba Csikos and Gabriella Dohany measured the construct of music literacy (as defined by the national core curriculum) amongst high school students. The investigators developed a reliable instrument to measure the level of music literacy achieved upon the completion of compulsory music education in Hungary. Further, the researchers aimed to identify the effects of music literacy of non-cognitive components of music learning such as taste, attitude, and habits. Csikos and Dohany emphasize that “music literacy” is effected by a host of factors such as musical taste and experience, family background, the type of school a student attends, and students’ attitudes toward music education.

Authors Daniel Johnson and Virginia Davis conducted a four-year longitudinal experimental study—a rarity in arts education research—to investigate the effects of chamber music ensembles on elementary students’ auditory discrimination and spatial reasoning skills.

The ensembles utilized a co-curricular approach using aural models to present topics that included counting, adding, differentiation, phonetics, and other basic skills. Statistically significant results are reported on the constructs measured, indicating a positive impact on the learning and cognitive development of the kindergarten through fifth-grade students who participated in the study.

With the goal of encouraging a renewal of arts education in France, particularly in the primary years, Grazia Giacco and Solène Coquillon present an experiential method of artistic creation developed by Walter Thompson in the 1970s called Soundpainting. The researchers note that French school music classes tend to focus on musical interpretation as opposed to creation, and question how music education might be more like the visual arts in which creative practices are more present.

Jason Gossett's case studies of three band directors brings to light multiple perspectives on what they value pedagogically. Central themes emerged centering on content, ends, and students, but equally interesting is Gossett's investigation of how these values develop and the role of students and other influences in this process. While each of the band directors interviewed aims to help prepare their students to be lifelong musicians, Gossett's description of how these directors navigate toward this ideal reveals three distinct approaches.

In an increasingly technologized world, musical and otherwise, Jay Dorfman's contribution is timely. Surveying the music-teaching profession in the United States, Dorfman sought to examine the existing models by which music teachers receive technology experience and training. He takes into account multiple perspectives, first considering at which point during a teacher preparation program technology experiences occur, and how they are structured. Dorfman also surveys what teachers consider when they design technology experiences for

students, and considers faculty perspectives of the efficacy of these technology experiences in preparing teachers for their first forays into the field.

Building on the research literature addressing peer mentoring in music education, Andrew Goodrich provides new insights into this topic by addressing its role in jazz education. Interviewing and observing three graduate students, Goodrich examines how the participants learn how to become peer mentors, and how they engage in peer mentoring during a semester-long study. Finding that peer mentoring impacts how the participants perform and teach, Goodrich suggests that peer mentoring practices can assist music educators with both learning to teach and perform jazz.

On the ground level it may seem that this volume presents an eclectic view of music education, with each author delving into a different topic with a different approach. But collectively the authors present not just their visions, but our visions. Having gone through the peer-review and editorial processes, each author's contribution is a perspective that has been scrutinized to ensure their visions are presented clearly. The end result is a volume that surveys and celebrates a field that cannot be constrained to a single vision. Enjoy the views.