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Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning

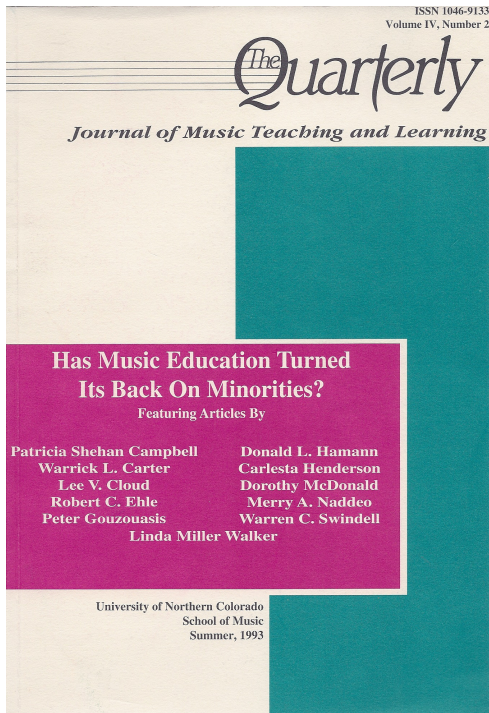
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It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of 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.

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning

Reviewed By Dorothy McDonald

University of Iowa

HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON MUSIC TEACHING AND LEARNING. RICHARD COLWELL, EDITOR. SCHIRMER BOOKS: A DIVISION OF MACMILLAN, INC. (866 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10022), 1992; 832 pp.

On the jacket for the *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, the text is described as "...the definitive guide to the sources, methodologies, issues, and controversies surrounding music education research." Richard Colwell, the editor, describes it as "...a starting point, an introduction, to every facet of music teaching and learning" (p. ix). This extensive reference book fits both descriptions. For those seeking to keep current with the issues facing music education, the *Handbook* offers thought-provoking essays by leading scholars in the field. For readers wishing an overview of the research in music teaching and learning, the book provides the most comprehensive synthesis to date.

The *Handbook* is a collaborative project of the Music Educators National Conference and Schirmer Books, a division of Macmillan Publishers. The format is similar to that of the handbooks published by Macmillan in other educational areas. The 55 chapters are arranged in associative fashion into eight sections of from 5 to 10 chapters, each chapter addressing an aspect of music education. Authors include 70 leaders in the profession, representing 27 states, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia. Topics include "...historical,

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philosophical, research techniques, evaluation, cognition, research results, discipline blocks such as early childhood, general music, teacher education and special education, and sociology and administration" (p. x).

The first five chapters, grouped in the section entitled "Conceptual Framework," give an overview of the philosophical, theoretical, and historical bases of music education practices. A recurrent theme of these essays is that, to be effective and to serve the profession well, music education must have a credible philosophical and theoretical base. Has music education grown with a less-than-stable foundation? Have music teachers (and researchers) found too many things interesting, and too few things important? Such questions cannot help but occur as one studies these chapters.

Section B, "Research Modes and Techniques" (Chapters 6-15), describes the basic types of research designs, methodologies, statistical analyses and interpretation of results. The discussions are quite technical, and readers with little background in statistics will not find the reading easy. The more accessible chapters illustrate points in the discussions with examples from specific music studies. While a background in statistics would help in understanding the material, these chapters provide important information to teachers and researchers alike about interpreting research results and evaluating them. Graduate students who are planning research studies will give these chapters careful reading.

The chapters dealing with "Evaluation" (Section C, chapters 16-20), expand most of our understandings about assessment. Not only are published tests of music aptitude,

achievement, and intelligence described and evaluated, but also methods of assessing student attributes such as creative thinking, attitudes and preferences. Assessment of teacher competencies and evaluation of music programs are given good analysis and discussion.

Music education research has been criticized by some as having little relationship to what actually goes on in the classroom. In a recent issue of *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, for instance, a more “basic” laboratory approach to research on music learning was advocated. The author stated that if such research had been competently conducted in the last 30 years, “By now there might be enough basic knowledge to sit down and sensibly design better courses of study” (Edwards, 1992, p. 8). The chapters in Section D, “Perception and Cognition” (chapters 21-28), dealing with aural and auditory-visual perception, the structural nature of cognitive skills, developmental stage theories, affective responses, motivation, and learning transfer might well represent the type of research to which Edwards referred.

“How to teach” has always been important to music educators. Britton once wrote that teachers “...are still a little more concerned with methodologies than we probably should be, but this is a common and venial sin of teachers as a class” (1982, p. 43). “How to teach” and “how they learn” are major topics in Section E, “Teaching and Learning Strategies” (Chapters 29-37) and of Section F, “The Teaching of Specific Musical Skills and Knowledge in Different Instructional Strategies” (Chapters 38-43). Studies of the development of specific skills, such as listening, singing, reading, and the mental and physiological factors that affect the processes are discussed. Other chapters review studies dealing with general and instrumental music instruction at both the elementary and secondary levels. Methodologies, technology, teaching styles, and strategies are considered. A

recurrent theme through these essays is the necessity to determine “why” before embracing any method or system.

Section G, “Schools/Curriculum” (chapters 44-49), reviews and evaluates the literature dealing with specific populations: disabled learners, young children, ensemble performers, preservice teachers, and elementary and secondary general music students. In these chapters, the reviews are couched in the philosophical context of why music is important for these students and what yet needs to be studied.

The last section, “Social and Institutional Contexts” (Chapters 50-55), deals with issues that are currently assuming greater importance to the profession, but, as yet, have not received the amount of attention from researchers or teachers that other aspects of the discipline have. For example, policy-making: Who does it, how is it done, and how does it affect music education? Another area covered is sociological issues. How is the changing social and cultural fabric of the school

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population affecting music programs? What is the role of the professional organizations in this milieu? The discussions of this section’s chapters provoke questions that the music education research community is only beginning to address in substantive fashion.

While the *Handbook* is distinguished by its comprehensive overview of the professional research, there are topics that, perhaps because of their relative recency, receive limited coverage. One is the issue of secondary school general music. If the profession is in earnest about its stated goal of a fine arts requirement for high school graduation, it will need to address the basic question, “What is the rationale for the inclusion of music in the general education of young adults?” rather quickly and establish some directions for classes for nonperformers. A research base is needed. Another somewhat related issue

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is the arts-in-education concept. What is music education's role? What is the responsibility of the research community?


There are yet other issues, societal in nature, about which, at present, there are many opinions, numerous questions, and little consensus. One is that of multicultural music in the curriculum. In one chapter, an author raises the question of "...whether cultural diversity can be celebrated without denying the existence of a common political and cultural heritage" (p. 758). Another author discusses the issue from a different perspective: "No recent studies have addressed the issues of multimusicality or capacity of young children to function within cultures other than their own" (p. 738). A third author describes a study of the effect of learning southeast Asian music in its cultural context on students' attitudes, namely ethnocentricity and prejudice. The study was cited because of its "new and timely" direction (p. 460). It appears that despite the current literature in professional journals advocating multicultural and global music in the curriculum, many questions remain unaddressed.

One could cite other examples of the mixed opinions and beliefs of the profession

about current issues. But, as the editor states, the *Handbook* is as valuable for informing readers about what is not known and what topics have not been addressed, as it is in providing information about what we have learned through research. Taken as a whole, this impressive assemblage of the collective knowledge of the scholars in the field attests to the great strides that have been made in identifying a music teaching and learning research base.

The *Handbook* provides a broad perspective of the music education profession. It is essential reading for music teachers and researchers alike. One author stated, "Music educators have a responsibility to search for and disseminate reliable knowledge based on inquiry that reflects the richness of the scholarly traditions available to us..." (p. 139). The *Handbook* reflects the seriousness of the profession in assuming this responsibility.

References

- Britton, A. P. (1982) Keokuk to San Antonio...75 years of change. *Music Educators Journal*, 68 (6), p. 44.
- Edwards, R. H. (1992) Research: Going from incredible to credible. *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning*, 3 (1), p. 8. 

Call for Manuscripts *Kaleidoscope III*

The Kaleidoscope issues published by *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* are composed of outstanding papers addressing diverse topics. Editors are now seeking to review papers for possible publication in Kaleidoscope III, to be published in 1994. Such papers may expand upon discussions initiated in previous issues of *The Quarterly* or present entirely new topics in the areas of composition, music education, musicology, ethnomusicology, music in general studies, music history, music philosophy, applied music, performance, or topics that blend these specialties. For submission criteria, see *Advice to Contributors* on page 44.