

2012

A Qualitative Exploration of Selected Writings by James Mursell

Elizabeth Cassidy Parker
Schwob School of Music Columbus State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme>

Recommended Citation

Parker, Elizabeth Cassidy (2012) "A Qualitative Exploration of Selected Writings by James Mursell," *Visions of Research in Music Education: Vol. 21* , Article 4.
Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol21/iss1/4>

A Qualitative Exploration of Selected Writings by James Mursell

By

Elizabeth Cassidy Parker
Schwob School of Music
Columbus State University, Georgia

This qualitative exploration sought to understand how James Mursell (1893-1963) articulated the aims of music education, the role of the school music program, and the role of the music teacher throughout 25 years of published writings. Using a hermeneutical lens, this study viewed language as living, and human understanding as language-bound. The author analyzed selected chapters from five books including 370 pages of text. Twenty-four codes emerged, which were gathered into three themes, including (a) music-making as a vehicle for individual growth, (b) music teaching as influence, and (c) music-making fulfilling a community need. The discussion considers Mursell's words within the dialogue of 21st century music education.

Keywords: qualitative research, James Mursell, hermeneutics, music education philosophy

Musicality is not a lonely thing in mental life. It is closely associated with a whole range of excellences. Thus music education must recognize always a reciprocal relationship between music and the whole body of culture, the one vitalizing and enriching the other. (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 36)

When I reflect on Mursell and Glenn's words, I am able to activate the vitality of two recent performances by one of Columbus State University's large ensembles. In the first concert, I observed students engaged in a performance of Western Classical music in a small hall with special and noteworthy guests of a significant orchestra. In the second, this time in a much larger space, I observed students engaged in a performance with a popular music band from the late 1970s and early 1980s. In both concerts, I observed audience members reciprocating the players' actions by moving their bodies and heads to the pulse, jumping to their feet with applause, and verbally engaging with the performers in between sets. I, too, experienced a connection to both performers and audience members. During these brief, perhaps 90-minute events, I was a part of a music-making community. I witnessed participants' joy, and their apparent pride in music-making together. I communicated my own delight and gratitude with applause and engagement. There was a shared experience radiating to and around the individuals present.

Considering thinkers such as James Mursell (1893-1963) within the context of one's personal experiences can be a valuable method for reflection. Examining Mursell's writing keeps his words alive by viewing them through a contemporary lens. However, this is not the only way to analyze an individual's work. If we are to consider the use of language, specifically one's written words, as living, then words have much to offer all who come in contact. My purpose in analyzing selected writings of James Mursell

qualitatively is to keep the vitality of his ideas while viewing them through my own experiences. I seek to answer four questions: How does Mursell articulate the overall aims of music education? How does he describe the role of the school music program? How does he specifically address the role of the teacher? Finally, how does Mursell communicate the role of the music teacher in relationship to student musical development?

Theoretical Lens

Hermeneutics, according to Gadamer (1975), views language as a living process, one that “acquires reality only in the process of communicating” (p. 405). Through language, human beings are able to reach one another, and hence, understanding can be language-bound. In this paper, Mursell’s writings are used as a way to understand: (a) an individual, James Mursell; (b) a specific time, the second third of the 20th century; as well as (c) a place and space, music education in the United States through Mursell’s own words. As the interpreter, my role is not to find an absolute “technical virtuosity of understanding” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 445), but rather a desire to enter the author’s world with my own eyes. As a reader, the benefit of using written text is I am able to function as an uninterrupted listener.

Through spending time and space with Mursell’s writings hermeneutically, I am able to build a relationship between my own experiences and his. Gadamer (1976) also assists in this regard: “Precisely through our finitude, the particularity of our being, which is evident even in the variety of languages, the infinite dialogue is opened in the direction of truth that we are” (p. 15). My finitude encompasses teaching vocal music in small and large cities in the United States. I am also bounded by time, specifically the last third of

the 20th century and beginning of the 21st. Mursell's finitude is his presence in the early and mid-20th century within England, Australia, and the United States, his many educative experiences in the seminary, and his vast study of psychology. Finally, Mursell's boundedness encompasses his tireless and prolific work on the behalf of art, education, psychology, and music through writing, which serves as the basis of this exploration.

While it is possible I may claim several congruities, and perhaps infinitudes for Mursell and myself, our experiences still risk the potential of remaining alien to one another. I retain, however, that "the support of familiar and common understanding makes possible the venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus the broadening and enrichment of our own experience in the world" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 15). Through actively immersing oneself in the written words of another, with the goal of understanding and enrichment, I hope to clarify and build a bridge between our experiences. I wish to lift Mursell's words to find meaningful and connective communication that may relevantly speak now in the 21st century.

Related Literature

To understand Mursell's words in place and space, I begin by considering how his words were viewed in his own time. The most complete and holistic accounts of Mursell's world are in the form of dissertations, including Metz (1968), O'Keeffe (1970), Simutis (1961), and most recently Kopkas (2011). Rather than focusing on James Mursell as main subject, Kopkas (2011) argues that thinkers, such as Mursell, were strong advocates of the intrinsic value of music prior to the release of "landmark" aesthetic texts, such as *Basic Concepts in Music Education* (Henry, 1958). This sentiment was also

proposed by Gonzo (1971), who articulates Mursell was one of the first individuals to state that music education should be focused on the emotional significance of music and its intrinsic qualities.

Metz (1968) critically addresses the evolution of Mursell's ideas over time, discussing his inconsistent justifications for music education. Mursell was plagued with ambiguity between the intra- and extra-musical, "from book to book and sometimes even from page to page" (Metz, 1968, p. 50). Later, Metz acknowledges that Mursell's writings demonstrate a progression of thought evolving from intramusical justifications to more socially oriented, and eventually, extra-musical rationale for music education.

Similar to Simutis (1961), O'Keeffe (1970) takes a holistic and chronological approach to the work of Mursell, including both publications as well as university appointments. He traces the challenges in Mursell's first books and lack of support he initially received from colleagues, admitting that his ideas, and early work were revolutionary. O'Keeffe also includes the professional disagreements Mursell engaged in with others over the Seashore Test of Musical Ability and the public dialogue that ensued (e.g., Kwalwasser, 1938).

O'Keeffe (1970) persuasively argues that Mursell, as a man of many ideas, but perhaps not a practical bend, went somewhat misunderstood by his colleagues early in his career of higher education. He based his ideas regarding music education on his considerable work in the field of psychology, which in the early 20th century regarded development as a continuous process of the entire human being (O'Keeffe, 1970). Once Mursell published *Principles of Music Education* in 1927, and then gave the national address for the Music Teachers National Association in 1929, the music education

community quickly embraced him with enthusiasm because they “were in great need of both a philosophy and a spokesman” (O’Keeffe, 1970, p. 192). Mursell’s groundbreaking address, entitled “The Ideal Music Lesson,” proposed that music learning occurs best when the pupil is actively involved in music-making tasks. His address was the beginning of many connective points between psychology and music education that Mursell would ultimately contribute to the field.

Over the second half of the 20th century, many have credited Mursell for his impact upon the field of music education. Similar to O’Keeffe (1970), Prince (1974) applauds Mursell for focusing on music instruction as a process with growth as the goal, particularly in general and middle school music programs. Groff (1950) argues that social implications of learning popular music are “Mursellian,” stating “things are learned best and fastest when they are related to the learner’s experience, learned in a social situation, and grasped by one who has the eagerness or motivation to learn” (p. 31). Finally, Jorgensen (1995) examines Mursell’s influence in broadening the humanistic foundation that William Channing Woodbridge began, moving beyond religion into the realm of spirituality.

In addition to tributes upon Mursell’s death (e.g, Gehrkins, 1963), as well as mentions of James Mursell in professional publications (e.g., Campbell, 1987; DeNicola, 1992), through his considerable writings, it appears Mursell gave the field of music education much to consider as it developed in the middle-third of the 20th century. Now that we have been able to briefly connect with Mursell’s contribution in his years, it is important to revisit the main purpose of this exploration: to keep Mursell’s ideas alive

while examining them within the contemporary music education dialogue of the 21st century.

Method, Collection, and Analysis

Like a camera with many lenses, first you view a broad sweep of the landscape.

Subsequently, you change your lens several times to bring scenes closer and closer to view. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 14)

I chose qualitative methods to more thoroughly “understand the world from the perspectives of those living within it” (Hatch, 2002, p. 7). I wanted to retain closeness to the data while acknowledging my subjectivity as inextricably linked to the research process (Charmaz, 2006; Hatch, 2002). I also chose qualitative methods because they align well with hermeneutics, as in this paper, understanding is language-bound. I am able to analyze Mursell’s words and look for points of intersection between our experiences, linking codes to codes and finally gathering themes.

While James Mursell was a very prolific writer over four decades (Simutis, 1968), I chose to limit my collection of writings to five books he authored spanning 25 years: *The psychology of school music teaching* (Mursell & Glenn, 1931), *Human values in music education* (Mursell, 1934), *Music in American schools* (Mursell, 1943), *Music and the classroom teacher* (Mursell, 1951), and *Music education principles and programs* (Mursell, 1956). I chose these five books because they specifically addressed music teaching and learning contexts. As Charmaz’s (2006) words indicate above, I read each book completely, taking in a broader overview of Mursell’s work. I then chose 12 chapters to analyze qualitatively, including approximately 370 pages of text. I began by using open coding to analyze each chapter. I then went back, and conducted focused coding through subsequent readings. My final step was to re-read the texts and gather the

focused codes into themes (Hatch, 2002). I wanted to enter James Mursell’s “articulation of the world,” and rather than to “know” him in a complete sense (Gadamer, 1976, p. 14), I wanted to recognize and retain what he had to say through qualitative analysis.

Findings

The analysis revealed 24 codes, which are grouped into three themes: (a) music-making as a vehicle for individual growth, (b) music teaching as influence, and (c) music-making fulfilling a community need. The findings will be shared separately, including code lists, as well as supportive quotations from Mursell’s writings.

Music-making as a vehicle for individual growth. Throughout his writings, Mursell focuses on what students experience and ultimately gain from musical instruction. At the very core, musical experiences are filled with enjoyment (see Table 1). Learners encounter joy through their contact with music as listeners, as instrumentalists, and as singers. Music can be simply enjoyable, but it is not merely enjoyable. Enjoyment is an enriching experience, which gives individuals pleasure. The pleasure that one experiences through music-making is a result of his/her engagement in musical challenges.

Table 1

Individual Growth Through Music-Making

<p>Creates value through enjoyment Fosters deeper and lasting value, fulfillment Experiences beauty Broadens cultural contexts Assists better personal adjustment Reveals the self</p>

Teachers approach their students with appealing, yet challenging tasks, which they are willing to engage in to further their musical learning. Learners will take up tasks because they view them as worthy of their attention, hence are motivated to work through their difficulties. A musical challenge may evoke enthusiasm and enjoyment of music, which may allow the subject to live on in the learner's life. When music lives on and is sustained over a number of years, the learner can find personal happiness and perhaps build a better life overall, hence creating a lifelong positive attitude through music. Mursell assumes that learners are not the masters of the subject when they begin study. However, through the learners' success with tasks, they then master materials, which helps further the process of growth.

Music offers a vehicle of self-expression within a social context; hence musical experiences are to be organized with both creativity and community in the forefront. Music is a source of agency for growth not only for the individual, but also for the entire community. When individuals use music as agency, they are able to mediate culture as an interpretation of human expression, which allows them to broaden and grow even further.

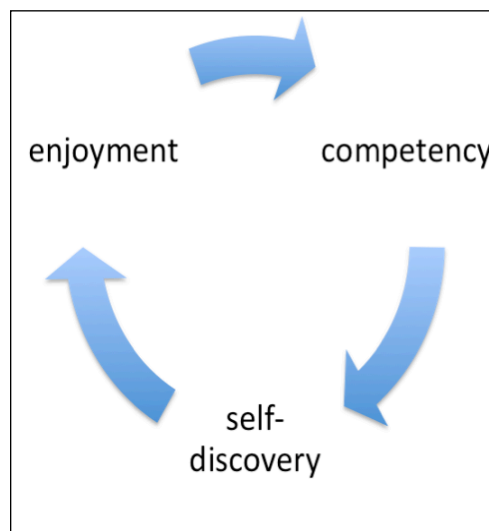


Figure 1. Growth Cycle

At an important point in the growth cycle (see Figure 1), learners begin to take responsibility for their own progress and self-initiate their own mastery. Mursell calls this a movement from preliminary to final synthesis of learning. In final synthesis, learners draw larger connections between music and life. They receive lifelong benefit, satisfaction, and an avenue for self-expression. They learn how to transfer their understanding of music into life lessons regarding the flexibility and complex nature of the world. Mursell also articulates that music lives on in the learner's life, whether they take away lessons from previous musical experiences, and/or continue making music for themselves as adults (see Table 2).

Table 2

Selected Quotations for Music-Making as a Vehicle for Individual Growth

If we can evoke in a child a keen enthusiasm for music over a period of years...he will have found himself and his personal happiness, and built for himself a better life and a wider personality through music (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 35).

...learning is a process of growth, through which a living, flexible pattern of response is created (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 80).

All valid educational values are human values (Mursell, 1934, p. 4).

All in all, the program of instruction in music should culminate in a will to be musical (Mursell, 1934, p. 97).

Music offers an avenue for self-expression in a social situation (Mursell, 1934, pp. 129-130).

The human value of music does not lie in the music itself, but in our response to it and in what we do with it (Mursell, 1934, p. 142).

Another great value of music...is that it can help children to attain better adjustments in general and that it can lead them to reveal themselves in new ways...(Mursell, 1951, p. 17).

[Growth] is a continuous movement of the mind in the direction of independent mastery and self-initiated work (Mursell, 1943, p. 18).

So the worker in the field of music education should have no qualms at all about saying that one of his chief aims is to arouse a living and continuing interest in the art of music, and in setting out to do so in the most realistic possible way (Mursell, 1943, p. 19).

If we make music what it ought to be for children—a many-sided experience of beauty—then these personal values can be achieved, along with all the rest (Mursell, 1951, p. 20).

All significant music flows from human experience, and expresses the values of human living (Mursell, 1956, p. 65).

Music teaching as influence. In the first theme, Mursell focuses on the importance of students' experiences in music. However, he also discusses the role of educators as crucial musical influences in children's lives. Theme two includes the many ways that music educators influence their students as role models, as learners, as community members, and individual musicians. Individual codes that support this theme are included in Table 3.

Teachers have a profound impact on their local school community, as well as the members within that community. To Mursell, teachers must view themselves as role models, not within the classroom alone, but rather as leaders within the school and beyond. To become leaders, teachers must engage in (a) allowing the “why” of teaching to be answered first before the “how,” (b) approaching every student as a multi-dimensional learner, and (c) “giv[ing] a honored place to create music” (Mursell, 1934, p. 50).

Table 3

Influential Music Teaching

Creates a vital spark Instills conviction of values Centers on the why leading to the how Engages child-centered and active learning Gives to the greater good Fosters hope in the world Embraces a public role Builds relationships

To exercise leadership and become a representative of hope, educators must first discover within themselves why they want to teach music. Because teaching influences feelings, actions, and choices of human beings, educators who are able to answer the question of “Why teach music?” are able to discover the potential for human values in education. Asking and answering essential questions allows one to create impactful experiences that will benefit his/her students. By answering the “why,” teachers also become discerning consumers of musical materials, only introducing those that promote their values of music-making within the classroom. Finally, when educators are able to

answer the question of “why” teach music, they are able to bring a vital spark into their classrooms, and further inspire their students. They function as representatives of hope.

To Mursell, the most important piece of “Why teach music?” includes the students within the educator’s care. While educators should create process-based activities, they should be organized with experiences in mind to benefit the children’s needs, and allow for free response from the children. The educator is a leader-by-example, remaining musically sensitive to the individual’s needs in the class. S/he is to work cooperatively, and encourage students to not only support the entire group, but to grow independently as musicians. Through the students’ independence, the classroom becomes a many-sided cultural experience. In addition, educators have the responsibility to seek out experiences with the highest educative value. Students meet appropriate challenges actively, helping them set musical goals for themselves. The students’ active engagement also helps them create new learning structures, which encourage further transformation in music. When students are able to succeed within the music classroom, the educator then challenges them to think outside of their immediate context, to make larger connections between music and life. This allows the educator to help create an honored place for music in the school.

Educators work at the nexus of the personal and the social. Hence, when they answer the question of “why” moving to the “how,” then develop relationships with students, they are able to offer a classroom filled with considerable learning opportunities (see Table 4). Educators create space for incidental learning, allow the students to learn as children, and awaken the children’s possibilities to see themselves within the musical experience. As a result, in the interactive classroom, learners do what they do well, are

engaged with purpose, and are motivated to continue furthering their education. When learners are fully engaged, they are able to further their own social world, to engage in more effective interpersonal relationships.

Table 4

Selected Quotations for Music Teaching as Influence

To sum up, we regard learning as the active creation of a living structure, a process of transformation and discovery (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 48).

What the learner does, he should do well (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 65).

...when the teacher of music grasps and expresses the human values of his work, that work becomes transformed and enriched (Mursell, 1934, pp. 15-16).

We cannot tell the teacher just how to do it. He must find for himself the source of inspiration from the very stuff of the art medium in which he works (Mursell, 1934, p. 98).

Our ideal must be...a dynamic experience, which will make the child wish for more of the same sort (Mursell, 1934, p. 93).

In the course of meeting challenges, precise insights and exact techniques can be acquired (Mursell, 1934, p. 115).

If we bring it [music] into vital relationships with other spheres of culture, we greatly increase the significance of all musical projects (Mursell, 1934, p. 124).

We should teach musical action through free integrated response (Mursell, 1934, p. 127).

Each and every worker in the field of music education is the representative of hope (Mursell, 1943, p. 2).

[Teaching] is an affair of influencing the lives — the thoughts, the interests, the feelings, the actions, the choices — of human beings (Mursell, 1943, p. 10).

...my sincere conviction that the moment you see clearly *why* it is worth while to bring music to your children you will also see clearly see *how* you ought to do so (Mursell, 1951, p. 4).

[These experiences] tended to be organized experience-wise rather than lesson-wise. They were organized...to bring to the children a fruitful and repaying musical experience (Mursell, 1951, p. 59).

Music fulfilling a community need. Mursell continually articulates the importance of music as a personally expressive social medium. While noting the importance of the teacher and personal growth of each student, he inlays the significance of community. The theme “music fulfilling a community need” seeks to address the social importance of music-making. The theme comprises nine codes addressing music for everyone, music in the life of the school, and music in the larger community (see Table 5).

Table 5

Music Fulfilling a Community Need

<p>Everyone can make music Music includes all Music as cohesive and connective Contagious to a school Expansive to further music-making Connective to outside of school Simultaneously universal and local Part of everyday life Encouraging social development</p>

Music is a social endeavor. Human beings make music alone, and with others in schools, in homes, in churches, and community settings. Because everyone makes music, educators must seek to include every student in their program. Every child can happily and successfully participate in music. There is always something children can do musically.

Educators must not only find a place for everyone in the school, but because music-making is a social activity, music programs are to promote the musical side of a school’s social life. To Mursell, examples of meaningful musical-social involvement

include playing at important events, such as athletic games, school dances, and ceremonies. Social events are more enjoyable with music. Furthermore, greater attention needs to be paid to activities that help to cut across social strata to find what is common to all.

Public opinion is the largest and strongest influence on what should be taught. Rather than perceiving public input as controlling or unwanted, Mursell encourages educators to be grateful and to further dialogue with the public regarding what they want and hope for within their communities. Music-making should be vital to the life of the larger community and reflect what is needed. It can act as a glue to pull people together, developing camaraderie and class spirit. Music can act as a specific locator of time and space, but is simultaneously universal through sharing the same music from very far away. Educators must allow their work to cross over to outside of the classroom, helping music to live within the school, and throughout the community (see Table 6). When music is integrated into the school and the community, everyone is able to feel ownership and support music-making as a democratic ideal.

Table 6

Selected Quotations for Music Fulfilling a Community Need

The pupil builds up mastery not by directly learning it, but by using it in actual musical situations (Mursell & Glenn, 1931, p. 74).

The performance of music is normally a social act (Mursell, 1934, p. 64).

We need social patterns which cut across the stratified social classes and in which everyone... may have an effective part (Mursell, 1934, p. 77).

No music program can be considered complete unless it seeks to develop and promote the musical side of the existing social life of the school (Mursell, 1934, p. 87).

...the school should institute definite, organized relationships with the life of the community (Mursell, 1934, p. 88).

...the music teacher should thank heaven for so much public interest (Mursell, 1943, p. 9).

The aim of a good music program should be, first and foremost inclusive (Mursell, 1943, p. 25).

...music may be an agency for democratic living by providing rich and significant experiences and activities in which all may share (Mursell, 1943, p. 25).

...music is something in which every child can happily and successfully participate (Mursell, 1951, p. 15).

...music acts 'like magic' in pulling the group together and in making them [the students] at home with one another" (Mursell, 1951, p. 20).

[Teachers should] encourage free and confident participation, the sharing of initiative, group cooperation and planning, in all musical activities and learnings (Mursell, 1956, p. 64).

Discussion

Genuine speaking, which has something to say and hence does not give prearranged signals, but rather seeks words through which one reaches the other person, is the universal human task. (Gadamer, 1976, p. 17)

Mursell's words were compelling to many during his own time, serving as a source of education and inspiration for teachers within many fields, perhaps most especially within music education (O'Keeffe, 1970). Because of Mursell's diversity of

interests and great volume of writing, he is most credited for his work in learning theory and curriculum, rather than his philosophy of music (Metz, 1968; see also Leonard & House, 1959). Yet, as the qualitative analysis reveals, Mursell's ideas are not focused on learning and curriculum alone. Theme one, "music-making as a vehicle for individual growth," is reflective of individuals' self-discovery from music-making experiences. Mursell articulates that after the growth cycle, individuals may hold onto music experiences with intrinsic value. Perhaps what differentiates Mursell from others is his focus on the development of intrinsic value through continuous and consistent community music-making. Some may view this as a limited aesthetic view, or as Metz (1968) articulates, a dualistic view of music-making, both extra- and intra-musical. I would argue, rather, that Mursell might be offering an additional dimension not yet fully considered within his work.

Mursell encourages teachers to foster relevance for music programs by creating meaningful relationships with the larger school community and the public-at-large. Most recent 21st century dialogue for relevance appears to focus on connecting the music program to aspects of contemporary culture, such as popular music pedagogies (Green, 2001, 2006; Kratus, 2007; Woody, 2007). Relevance is also being addressed in psychological literature regarding why students become involved in music and what motivates them to stay (Austin & Vispoel, 1998; Freer, 2009). Finally, others in the field are considering the social impact of participation as a point of relevance in lifetime music-making (e.g., Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Arasi, 2008; Parker, 2010). Educators have responded to this and other research by introducing aspects of aural imitation, improvisation, and experimentation into collegiate methods coursework, and

K-12 music classes to remain current (Davis & Blair, 2011; McGillen & McMillan, 2005). Yet, just as Mursell forewarns in 1943, the scales of music within the schools seem to be tipping away from strong public support (Kratz, 2007). Statistics of high school students' involvement in music programs within the United States hovers at 21% (Elpus & Abril, 2011), and the popular media has appeared to disregard music education as a compelling topic of conversation (Richerme, 2011).

Mursell states music educators must purposefully connect school and community as one way to overcome the perceived distance. He views the music educator as guide, role model, musical artist, and as community leader. He embraces a holistic view of an educator, one that balanced music in the lives of people as well as music education's responsibility to teach musicianship. hooks (1998) also encourages teachers to consider their audiences in order "to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged" (p. 11). For hooks (1998) as well as Noddings (2003), educators are multi-dimensional figures that are known in the community and seek to know others as part of their role. They are stakeholders who dole out "tough" love, and are committed to their students' success, their students' families, their own families, and larger community. Through the process of empowering their students in the classroom and beyond, they too grow. Caring educators, just as Mursell vocally articulates, foster beliefs such as everyone can learn and everyone is musical. They implement diverse and alternative methods to reach all students.

In considering Mursell's work within the context of 21st century music education, it appears that while some embrace and solicit meaningful connections with the larger school community, many have treated larger society as a legitimate peripheral participant

(Lave & Wenger, 1991). We have legitimized society's wants and desires through practices, research, and practitioner writings, yet have not positioned larger society in the center of music education. I would also argue that when we have connected to the community of our schools, we have done so peripherally with activities that do not address Mursell's main thesis. We have committed to performances as community outreach, or service, and withdrawn ourselves from the center of music education and society. Peripheral participation, however, is not wholly negative, because it is permeable, and able to change as needed. Individuals who are peripheral are never truly on the inside, just as they are never truly on the outside.

I propose, then, keeping with Wenger (1998), that educators work toward becoming brokers to "transfer some element of one practice into another" (p. 109). Brokering is complex and takes considerable coordination and alignment. It is fraught with ambivalence, of disruption, and potential reification. Educators already do a fair amount of brokering within the school environment. Mursell challenges us to broker more widely into the community-at-large.

Conclusion

We are on the grip of a mighty tide, sweeping us onward towards unknown destinies.

(Mursell, 1943, p. 91)

Is it possible that when teachers connect meaningfully with individual students, the seeds of advocacy are then planted to grow throughout those students' lives? As Mursell argues, educators' goals for their students should, and often do, include lifetime music-making. While this is an esteemed goal to strive for, it may be beyond reach for most. Perhaps, we should start by actively connecting our students to music programs once they graduate high school. There are many such examples, such as community

choruses dedicated to 18-27 year olds, community and university bands, orchestras, and choirs open to singers of all ages. Universities and community music schools also offer song-writing classes, freshman seminars in music that include performance-based projects, and popular music ensembles. How can we meaningfully involve the larger public in these undertakings?

Mursell's words above remind us that we are in a constant state of motion, and will continue to ride more considerable waves of change. Still, the dialogue of change is an opportunity to continue to ask questions, to seek out individual contexts and dialogue, as well as disagree with others. In these discussions, we may find ourselves coming back again to Mursell's main ideas articulated over 60 years ago: music-making as a vehicle toward individual growth, music teaching as influence, and music fulfilling a community need.

References

- Adderley, C., Kennedy, M., & Berz, W. (2003). "A home away from home": The world of the high school music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51, 190-205.
- Arasi, M. (2008). The lifelong impact of the choral experience: Philosophy and teaching styles. In M. Holt & J. Jordan (Eds.), *The school choral program: Philosophy, planning, organizing, and teaching* (pp. 1-42). Chicago, IL: GIA.
- Austin, J. R., & Vispoel, W. P. (1998). How American adolescents interpret success and failure in classroom music: Relationships among attributional beliefs, self-concept and achievement. *Psychology of Music*, 26, 26-45.
- Campbell, P. S. (1987). Movement: The heart of music. *Music Educators Journal*, 74, 24-30.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Davis, S. G., & Blair, D. V. (2011). Popular music in American teacher education: A glimpse into a secondary methods course. *International Journal of Music Education*, 29, 124-40.
- DeNicola, D. N. (1992). Dear frustrated and frightened. *Music Educators Journal*, 78, 50-51.
- Elpus, K., & Abril, C. R. (2011). High school music ensemble students in the United States: A demographic profile. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59, 128-145.
- Freer, P. K. (2009). Boys' descriptions of their experiences in choral music. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 31, 142-160.
- Gadamer, H. (1975). *Truth and method*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.
- Gadamer, H. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gehrkins, K. (1963). Tribute to James Mursell. *Music Educators Journal*, 50, 16-18.
- Gonzo, C. (1971). Aesthetic experience: A coming of age in music education. *Music Educators Journal*, 58, 34-37.
- Green, L. (2001). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

- Green L. (2006). Popular music education in and for itself, and for 'other' music: Current research in the classroom. *International Journal of Music Education*, 24, 101-118.
- Groff, F. H. (1950). Popular music in high school. *Music Educators Journal*, 36, 31-33, 44-45.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Henry, N. B. (Ed.). (1958). *Basic concepts in music education*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- hooks, b. (1998). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jorgensen, E. R. (1995). Justifying music instruction in American public schools: A historical perspective. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 96, 31-39.
- Kopkas, J. M. (2011). *Soundings: Musical aesthetics in music education discourse from 1970 to 1958* (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University). Retrieved from <http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/cgi/>
- Kratus, J. (2007). Music education at the tipping point. *Music Educators Journal*, 94, 42-48.
- Kwalwasser, J. (1938). From the realm of guess into the realm of reasonable certainty. *Music Educators Journal*, 24, 16-17.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Leonard, C., & House, R. W. (1959). *Foundations and principles of music education*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- McGillen, C., & McMillan, R. (2005). Engaging with adolescent musicians: Lessons in song writing, cooperation and the power of original music. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 25, 36-54.
- Metz, D. E. (1968). *A critical analysis of selected aspects of the thought of James L. Mursell in music education* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Case Western Reserve University, OH.
- Mursell, J. L. (1934). *Human values in music education*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.

- Mursell, J. L. (1943). *Music in American schools*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.
- Mursell, J. L. (1951). *Music and the classroom teacher*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.
- Mursell, J. L. (1956). *Music education principles and programs*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.
- Mursell, J. L., & Glenn, M. (1931). *The psychology of school music teaching*. New York, NY: Silver Burdett Company.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- O'Keefe, V. C. (1970). *James Lockhart Mursell: His life and contribution to music education* (Doctoral Dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 7120022)
- Parker, E. C. (2010). Exploring student experiences of belonging within an urban high school choral ensemble: An action research study. *Music Education Research, 12*, 339-352.
- Prince, W. F. (1974). Music education's split personality. *Music Educators Journal, 61*, 28-33.
- Richerme, L. K. (2011). Apparently we disappeared. *Music Educators Journal, 98*, 35-40.
- Simutis, L. J. (1961). *James Lockhart Mursell as a music educator* (Doctoral Dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (DC 53924).
- Simutis, L. J. (1968). James L. Mursell: An annotated bibliography. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 16*, 254-266.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Woody, R. H. (2007). Popular music in school: Remixing the issues. *Music Educators Journal, 93*, 32-37.

Elizabeth Cassidy Parker (elizabethcassidy@gmail.com) is the Assistant Professor of Vocal Music Education at the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University as well as the Artistic Director of the Voices of the Valley Youth Choir, both in Columbus, GA. She holds the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as bachelors and masters degrees from Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Elizabeth has presented her research at the American Educational Research Association, NAfME's National Society for Research in Music Education, the American Choral Directors Association, the Mayday Colloquium XXII, the Society for Music Teacher Education, Desert Skies Research Symposium, and the International Society for Music Education. She is published in *Action, Criticism and Theory in Music Education*, *The Choral Journal*, *Music Education Research*, *The Journal of Music Teacher Education* and *The International Journal of Music Education*.