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### Toward Increased Teacher-Researcher Communication in Music Education Research

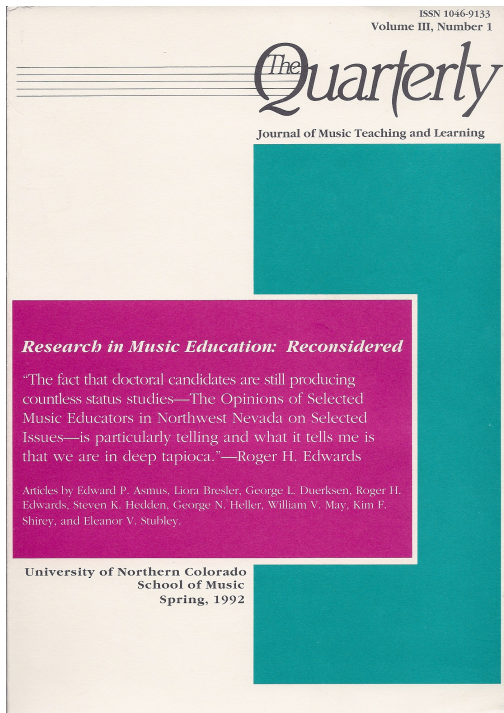
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*It is with pleasure that we inaugurate the reprint of the entire seven volumes of The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning. The journal began in 1990 as The Quarterly. In 1992, with volume 3, the name changed to The Quarterly Journal of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

## **Backtalk**

# **Toward Increased Teacher-Researcher Communication in Music Education Research**

**By Kim F. Shirey**  
*University of South Dakota*

**T**he most productive step toward improving the dissemination and practicality of research in the music education profession would be to provide the opportunity for teachers to be more involved in the research *process*.

Consider the status of research as it exists today. Reimer (1985) describes the state of research in music education as fragmented, in which "isolated studies are carried out in isolation" (p. 17). The majority of research in the field is produced by college professors and doctoral students who generally choose research topics that are of personal interest to them. These studies are then carried out with little communication with the rest of the research community, much less with those who could benefit most from the results of research—the practitioners. Would it not be more productive if practitioners had a voice in determining the topics that are to be researched? Would they not be more inclined to keep up with the findings of studies if they worked cooperatively with researchers and had more of a sense of ownership—that the products of research were more "for them?"

There is no question that researchers need an increased sense of community as well as

more frequent opportunities for intellectual exchange with other researchers; however, taking steps to improve the community of researchers without a concurrent endeavor to involve teachers in the research process would perpetuate the notion that research is "for the researchers." Music education's more immediate need is for researchers to break new ground in their effort to be "for the profession." Simply being attentive to the concerns of teachers would be a critical step in this new effort.

If teachers are to be more involved in the research process, communication *from* the teachers *to* the researchers must improve. Continued two-way communication in the profession is needed as a step toward breaking the existing fragmented pattern.

### **The Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research**

To facilitate communication between practitioners and researchers on a national level and on a consistent basis, The Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research at the University of South Dakota, beginning in the Spring of 1992, will serve as a liaison between these two areas of the music education profession. Teachers are invited to send questions or problems they feel could benefit from research; researchers are encouraged to write and express their willingness to consider the concerns of teachers as future re-

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search projects. Ideally, teacher-researcher partnerships or groups will result through which topics will be evaluated and refined, ultimately to be investigated by the researchers with or without the assistance of the teachers. Partnerships may be formed for a single study or may develop into long-term professional relationships. Initial communication between teachers and researchers will be facilitated through the Center; subsequent communication may take place directly between the parties involved.

The Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research offers an opportunity for teachers to make their concerns known and perhaps investigated through the research process, to communicate with researchers, to consult the findings of research, and to make transfers to their specific teaching situations.


For researchers, the Center provides opportunities to become aware of and to address the concerns of teachers, to communicate with teachers whose professional concerns are related to their general area of research interest, to conduct investigations on topics indicated by this ongoing communication, and to continue to share results with the profession.

Participation in the Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research has potential benefits for teachers, researchers, and the profession as a whole. It may provide for teachers a sense of ownership of research; participation in the process of research may

increase their willingness to consult the findings of studies whether or not they had a voice in their inception. Researchers may gain professional satisfaction in the knowledge that their research effort will be a step toward filling a need expressed by those in the "trenches." Also, communication with teachers may aid the researcher who has occasional difficulty finding direction for his or her research endeavor. The potential benefit for the profession as a whole is an enhanced community of music educators striving toward a common goal: to acquire and share knowledge of the teaching and learning of music and to apply that knowledge to the educational setting.

In conclusion, the Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research will attempt, through improved communication between teachers and researchers, to increase the dissemination of practical and important information to membership of the conference, and to make research a more integral part of the profession. It will attempt to make research what it can and should be: "an intensely humane, cooperative endeavor, in which individuals, while doing their own work, are attached conceptually to a larger issue than their own . . . (Reimer, 1985, p. 18).

## Reference

- Reimer, B. (1985). Toward a more scientific approach to music education research. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 83, 1-22. 

The Center for Cooperation in Music Education Research welcomes participation by teachers and researchers. Please send the following information to the address below:

### Teachers

Name  
School name and address  
Teaching area and level  
Questions or areas of concern you feel would benefit from the research process

### Researchers

Name  
School name and address  
Teaching area and level  
General areas of research interest

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