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Collective Musical Cognition: Relevance, Dialogue, and Reflection in Group Learning

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to introduce collective musical cognition as a mode for developing diagnostic critical thinking in music at all levels of the educational continuum—kindergarten through graduate school. It defines and illustrates how collective musical cognition is influenced by relevance, dialogue, and reflection as social and educational practices in the classroom.

Relevance, dialogue, and reflection - the three components of collective musical cognition—are critical social practices that transform music education pedagogy, whether practiced in the orchestral rehearsal room, the general music classroom, or the choral and band rehearsal rooms. The prevailing idea is student engagement: student engagement with the teacher; student engagement with fellow students; student engagement with and about music; and student engagement with pedagogical procedures that produce successful outcomes for students and teachers. Collective musical cognition yields an array of learning outcomes that are lasting because the pedagogy mirrors what musicians do.

Collective musical cognition is a form of community learning because musical thinking and verbal thinking about music are publicly shared in class. Musical and verbal

dialogues that result in collective musical cognition are democratic in nature, as we view dialogue as a catalyst to develop an atmosphere of social equality within the classroom.

Keywords

Collective Musical Cognition, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Problem Solving

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to define and illustrate how *collective musical cognition* is influenced by relevance, dialogue, and reflection as social and educational practices in the classroom that transform music education pedagogy. Collective musical cognition is a mode for developing diagnostic critical thinking in music at all levels of the educational continuum, kindergarten through graduate school.

We describe how relevance of personal and meaningful experiences influences collective musical cognition. With specific examples from music history and classes we have taught, we illustrate how dialogue and reflection can stimulate collective musical cognition in group learning. Let us consider, then, the roles of relevance, dialogue and reflection as social and educational classroom practices that contribute to teaching for musical creativity and musical problem solving.

RELEVANCE

We are attracted to that which is relevant to our lives. Consider the following scenario: We may observe in homes where there are school-aged children that the use of technology differs among generations. Adults may watch television, play games on a mobile device, or surf the Internet on a computer or smartphone to relax. Some of these activities may even be used to help them fall asleep at night. The children, however, may use these devices in more active ways, such as, for talking to friends (making and strengthening social connections), playing socially oriented games (problem solving and developing skills), commenting on YouTube videos, and doing research on the Internet for school projects. Even a casual observer in this scenario can detect that when it's a choice between passivity and activity the latter takes precedence with young people. How stimulating can it get? There are music streaming apps to use and art projects to explore and create. There are opportunities to compose music, make beats, and listen to and share these creations.

Thinking, feeling, and acting upon one's thoughts and emotions facilitates the development of competence through playful engagement. These cognitive activities are in keeping with natural dispositions of fully functioning human beings, especially children. Relevance then, in this sense, refers to the significance that our personal interaction with external factors plays in determining the way we develop and order our preferences and make choices. These choices, and the importance we attach, becomes what is personally meaningful to us because of the way it impacts on those issues we deem central to our lives. As in life, so too in music. Whether it be a general music

classroom, or vocal/instrumental performance setting, providing people with opportunities to develop personal preferences and make choices allows for the development of diagnostic critical thinking in music.

RELEVANCE IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Artistic, personal, and social relevance are inherent criteria embedded in authentic musical educational experiences that provide students with opportunities to explore and develop their critical and creative musical thinking skills. These criteria prompt questions such as: How do students perceive their own abilities to express their thoughts and feelings through sound? What are students' needs, and how must the learning program be designed to help them satisfy these needs and support their identities? What are the learning characteristics of students, and what pedagogical processes for learning best complement these characteristics? Does the student find intrinsic meaning in his musical involvement? Does her satisfaction stem from her evaluation of the worth of her personal musical experiences? What is the relationship between his music education experience and the social environment, the total milieu in which the student lives?

Relevance, with its myriad implications for teaching and learning music, is as important today as it was in the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program (MMCP) of the late sixties and early seventies. As stated in the "MMCP Synthesis" (1971), the need for:

...relevance requires that learning be in focus with the times; and all factors, whether historical or contemporary, be considered in phase with the realities of contemporary life. The curriculum must deal with music as it relates to the student's culture, his environment, and the exigencies of life that influence his frame of reference. (p. xi)

The demand for relevance in the curriculum has forced an awareness of the nature of musical change, and the unpredictability of the directions or uses of music in the years ahead. No one can say what values will be preserved or what the future manifestations of the art will be. Music pedagogy must reflect the concern that the learner remains sensitive to the viability and variability of music in an ever-changing society.

When critics of education clamor for relevance, they are generally requesting that teachers tailor and interpret ideas to reach most students. This is a daunting challenge with the diversity of populations of students in classrooms throughout the country. Langer (1997), as an alternative approach, suggests changing students' attitudes toward the material, that is, "to teach students to make the material meaningful to themselves" (p.75). Teachers can provide a venue for relevance to evolve when they engage students in creating, performing, listening and analyzing music.

It is important to focus on pedagogical issues that are elusive in teaching for musical creativity and musical problem solving. We say "elusive" because they are issues of relevance that are not as clear in the instructional process as some others. We cannot inflict creativity with a command. We can, however, help students to access different ways of thinking about musical materials by the way we present them. If you believe

that certain social classroom processes impact the quality of learning that occurs in small groups, when students create, perform, analyze, and listen with critical awareness, much as in the “real world” of musicians, then you may also believe there are social processes that cannot be taught as directly as the “B” on the recorder. Let us consider the roles of dialogue and collective musical cognition, (a phrase which will be defined more fully), as social classroom practices that contribute to the issues of relevance and facilitate teaching for musical creativity and musical problem solving.

DIALOGUE

Dialogue—the give and take of ideas—is the exchange that takes place between two people or among several. It occurs in numerous contexts: telephone conversations, texting, email, video conferences, correspondence, and classrooms pre-K through graduate school. Humans dialogue quite naturally because of the basic need to communicate with others. Depending on the circumstances, dialogue can be casual, as having a spontaneous conversation with someone you meet in a public place, or it can have a stringent format, as in a United States Senate hearing, where comments regarding the issue on the table are timed to the second. Many levels of dialogue exist and co-exist between the casual and more stringent extremes. Dialogue in the classroom among peers and teachers is a venue for understanding and clarifying what we know or could know about music.

Dialogue about musical possibilities stimulates the imagination. It helps students focus via questions, such as, “How might music for a US national holiday, such as the Fourth of July, sound different from a lullaby?” “What musical attributes, (rhythm, timbre, tempo, dynamics) would suggest the Fourth of July?” “How would these attributes differ for music composed for Memorial Day?” “What sound sources/instruments would you find appropriate for the selected option?” “How will volume affect the feeling you want to convey?” “Will each note have equal weight, or will they vary for certain musical effects?” Any one of these questions can generate musical thinking. Even though the teacher is eliciting responses, there are no single answers to these questions. They are intended to stimulate the imagination toward musical possibilities.

Dialogue helps clarify thinking and is a serious process of listening and responding appropriately. It serves us in our plan to create music together, in our response to a performance, or our engagement in a discussion regarding a particular stylistic characteristic. Compare the following two approaches to teaching a lesson on J. S. Bach in terms of dialogue:

Teacher A prepares a unit of study on J. S. Bach for high school students. Her objective is for students to learn facts about his musical output, e.g., inventions, preludes, cantatas, oratorios, organ passacaglia, fugues, etc. Teacher A plans a series of lectures that include specific listening examples. If Teacher A is fortunate, the students sit and politely listen. If the lecture drones on too long, even the politest students mentally “check out.” At the conclusion of this unit of study, students will be required to take

a multiple-choice exam reviewing the previously lectured material. There is little room for dialogue in this scenario.

Teacher B has different objectives for his unit on J. S. Bach. Teacher B selects two contrasting pieces by Bach, such as the second movement of the “E Major Violin Concerto” and the opening movement of the “Brandenburg Concerto No. 2” for listening and commentary regarding the emotional import of each piece. Then he poses questions about the differences between the two pieces. “What emotions are communicated by the music?” “For what types of occasions do you think the musical pieces are intended?” He asks students to describe a portion of the music. “What do the pieces convey about the composer and the subject he is depicting?” “What is it about the music that communicates the musical messages it sends?” These questions stimulate dialogue in the classroom. Dialogue will assist students in remembering what they hear by Bach because they engage in a discussion where they volunteer their personal perceptions about the music. Repeated listenings become a mode of research to validate or verify initial reactions to the selected piece of music.

The ability to ask thought provoking questions to stimulate classroom dialogue is the key to effective teaching. Questions may be posed in two ways. Lower-order questions require students to replicate information. For example, Teacher A might ask her students to list the musical output of J.S. Bach on an exam. Higher-order questions, on the other hand, ask students to utilize their knowledge in new situations—to think for themselves. Higher order questions invite students to develop new ideas not found in classroom lectures and texts. For example, Teacher B asked, “What is it about the music that communicates the musical messages it sends”? This question requires students to do more than simply repeat information—they must use their knowledge, think things through, and develop their own answers and opinions. A review of Bloom’s Taxonomy helps to illustrate the importance of developing lessons that encourage higher-order thinking through the process of dialoguing in our classrooms.

BLOOM’S TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES REVISITED

Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist who developed “Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives” in the 1950’s, created a six-level pyramid model to assist educators in developing and classifying learning outcomes into levels of complexity and specificity (Bloom 1956). These levels of engagement were intended to move students from lower to higher order thinking, by providing them opportunities to learn information more thoroughly and in depth. The first three levels of the taxonomy begin with lower-order thinking: *Knowledge* (being able to repeat something, e.g., listing the musical output of J. S. Bach), *Comprehension* (demonstrating an understanding of the material or being able to describe a term, e.g., fugue), and *Application* (applying one’s knowledge and comprehension to solve problems, e.g., asking the students “What emotions are communicated by the music? For what types of occasions do you think the musical pieces are intended?). Bloom’s taxonomy then progresses to three levels of higher-order thinking: *Analysis* (requires students be asked to listen, examine, and describe what they are hearing, e.g., students might be asked to describe and compare the

second movement of the E Major Violin Concerto and the opening movement of the Second Brandenburg Concerto in terms of musical content, (e.g., repeated rhythmic patterns, use of sequences, circle of 5ths, etc.), *Synthesis* (entails planning, creating, constructing, or rearranging music, e.g., students are asked to take the opening motive of the second Brandenburg as a starting point to create a solo for their primary instrument, and *Evaluation* (the process of assessing and reflecting upon what one has accomplished, e.g., the solos created at the synthesis level could be recorded and analyzed by the students when asked to describe the similarities and differences among the performances).

When students are asked to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate music they are functioning as active learners, and active learning allows for the development of higher order thinking. Basic knowledge certainly commands an important place in the education of students. However, beginning and ending at this stage in the educational process gives students the wrong impression regarding the purpose of music education. The purpose of music education is to use musical intuitions based on the musical knowledge and skills we are acquiring, at any stage of musical development, for communicating musical thoughts.

DIALOGUE: A KEY TO DEVELOPING COMMUNITY

To pose musical questions and engage in dialogue is to make musical experience in creating, performing, and listening more reflective, more critical, and more personal. Music education is deepened and expanded by answering such questions both verbally, and especially, in the process of making music. As Greene (1995) observes, “When such dialogue is activated in classrooms, even the young are stirred to reach out on their own initiatives” (p. 5). Right and wrong emerge, as a sense of community emerges, out of the sharing of ideas, the exchanging of perceptions, the deliberation of one’s musical ideas, an investigation of one’s imagination. Especially, when a goal is coupled with a sense of community—a group motivated by common goals.

There is a certain synergy that develops among students when a feeling of community emerges. For Dewey, “community involves collaborative activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by the individuals who participate. The good is realized in such a way and shared by so many that people desire to maintain it. When this happens, there is community. And the clear consciousness of a communal life constitutes the idea of democracy” (Greene, 1995, p. 66). We think of social equality when we speak of democracy. If we think of dialogue as a form of social equality, as a reflection of an ideal of a democratic society, making sure all voices are heard, then as a microcosm of a democratic society, the classroom mirrors its nature. Dialogue is the common medium of real communication. Along with music, it is a common medium for learning.

DIALOGUE: A CATALYST FOR GENERATING COLLECTIVE MUSICAL COGNITION

One of the outcomes of authentic class dialogue is collective musical cognition. It is a form of community learning by the very fact that musical thinking and verbal thinking about music are publicly shared in class. Collective musical cognition is different in process from traditional education where teachers ask all the questions and students respond with prepared answers. One or two open-ended question(s) by the teacher initiates the dialogue. Questions and responses on the same topic are followed by students in the class until the final cadence or class time ends. Something relevant is happening when enthused students vie to participate and the teacher can maintain equanimity in the process.

Collective musical cognition dissolves students' intimidations in classrooms by placing the onus to respond musically and verbally on the class, rather than on the individual. Collective musical cognition includes dialogue about any of the following: Music students hear, music they create, music they analyze, and other related thoughts that emerge from the dialogue. For example, the power of dialogue to generate musical cognition is apparent by revisiting a creative strategy developed for a graduate music education course in 2004.

At one point during the Middle East conflict there appeared on the front page of many newspapers a variety of lead articles that read "New Round of Fighting Erupts in Falluja Despite Cease-Fire." Here are two of the more colorful paragraphs from New York Times reporters John F. Burns and Kirk Semple (2004):

The American troops met heavy resistance and called in attack helicopters, which pounded the station and surrounding buildings with machine-guns and rockets, the reporter said. Live television pictures on CNN showed thick clouds of black smoke billowing from the area, and tanks being mobilized.

Live television images on Al Jazeera satellite network last night showed the night sky aglow with smoke and flame, silhouetting a flickering backdrop of palm fronds and low-lying, sand-colored buildings. The fighting continued past midnight, punctuated by muzzle flashes, streaks of tracer fire and intermittent explosions, and a voice in a mosque somewhere in the darkness proclaiming the Muslim cry, "Allahu Akbar," or "God is Great."

The aim for the class (graduate music students) was to provide a context - a current event - which would serve as the impetus for musical improvisation. Two deliberately chosen tetrachords (c, d-flat, e, f) and (g, a-flat, b, c) have more in common with Middle Eastern scales than the diatonic scales of the common practice period. The purpose for the chosen tetrachords was three-fold: (1) to protect the graduate students from falling into traditional harmonic cadential traps in the process of improvising; (2) to musically intrigue students with the augmented second between the second and third degrees of the tetrachords; and (3) to assure their musical compositions would inevitably resemble the melodic/harmonic palette of the Middle East because of the augmented second within each tetrachord.

The class discussed the article from the New York Times. The two tetrachords were in view when students arrived for class. We took a few minutes to put instruments together and warm up using the tetrachords. The room became saturated with the sound of the intervals. Volunteers shared melodic gestures and we compared them for their similarities and differences in terms of melodic shape, rhythmic structure, and dynamics. To guide another level of exploration, it was suggested they think of how they could modify their musical gestures to depict the following phrases from the New York Times article: “sky aglow with smoke and flame,” “muzzle flashes,” “streaks of tracer fire and intermittent explosions,” “a voice in a mosque somewhere proclaiming the Muslim cry, ‘Allahu Akbar.’” We then shared our musical ideas with the class.

Dialogue concerning each individual’s musical performance began with the question, “What did the musical gesture convey?” As this dialogue continued, we experimented with the class’s suggestions for combining musical gestures to determine the viability of their potential communication. These musical experiments are a precursor for what followed—a group composition based on the individual gestures and their possible extensions as determined by the group involved in the composing. The class divided into groups of five to complete the assignment. Small group work tends to mirror what worked in the whole class but in greater depth. Each group began with dialogue, listened again to their gestures, and experimented with combinations of gestures until a short composition took shape.

The entire class reunited after twenty minutes of work in small groups. As each group performed (and the performances were recorded), it was obvious that they captured some aspect of the phrases from the New York Times article. The similarity among the musical pieces was the two tetrachords. The differences occurred in the expressive devices employed to capture emotional content with timbre, dynamics, rhythm, texture, and melodic range.

This class exercised their imaginations to create, perform, listen, analyze and discuss their work. Most of the dialogue was about music and how to use it to communicate; however, they were also dealing with a current event that was both emotionally charged and relevant to their lives. During our dialogue, they told personal stories that related to the current event, which made the lesson more relevant to them and, therefore, more powerful.

In this spirit of community-information-gathering, collective musical cognition occurred. After listening to one of the small group pieces based on the tetrachords, collective musical cognition began with open-ended questions such as, “What do you notice about the music?” “What do you hear?” and similar questions that drew intuitive responses from the students. Asking these open-ended questions required the students to respond to the composition on many different levels. Some responded to the emotional content of the music, others discussed extra-musical ideas. Some students focused on theoretical issues and others commented on timbre. This approach left room for all voices, as necessary in a democratic classroom, where anyone’s comment may trigger more acute listening in another. This lesson example shows that to engage in

collective musical cognition is to establish from the outset a mode of developing critical thinking as a class. Multiple hearings of a piece of music allows for evolving layers of understanding. Dialogue enhances the clarity of thinking. Collective musical cognition gives the dialogue a focus and removes sole responsibility from the individual to the class. Through sharing experience and observation, the class sensibility rises to a point greater than the sum of its parts, greater than each individual's personal musical awareness.

REFLECTION

Creating and performing music alone and with others is a meaning-making process. It is meaning making in different and multiple ways, involving learning new tools for musical thinking and doing; learning new musical skills; learning musical knowledge; and developing attitudes about oneself in relationship to music and others involved in music. Reflection is a part of this meaning making process.

In "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," when the wicked queen, Snow White's stepmother, asks, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" she knows from experience that the reflecting glass will answer, "You are." But one day, as the fairy tale continues, the magic mirror has something new to say: "Snow White has grown into the most beautiful woman in the land." The wicked queen, enraged by this news, plans an evil plot and the story proceeds to uncover the plot.

Mirrors convey truths, or what we desire to believe as truths, by the image reflected in them. We have all indulged in reflection, with and without a mirror, for one reason or another, in our attempts to make sense out of what and how we are thinking, or how to make meaning out of our experiences. We look inward to understand the logic and rationale of our thoughts and events that trigger them. Without reflection we probably couldn't learn from our mistakes and, for that matter, from our successes.

Reflection, according to John Dewey, "is a meaning making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society" (cited in Rodgers, 2002, p. 844).

bell hooks (1994) describes this meaning-making process as "linking the personal to the academic...the more students recognize their own uniqueness and particularity, the more they listen" (p. 151). First, we recognize the primacy of personal contact. Students need to have dyadic and small group opportunities to receive and share ideas about musical issues. In these intimate settings, students gain strength and confidence in realizing the impact of their own ideas, the influence others' ideas can have on one's own, and how different perceptions of music can open doors of understanding.

In response to the two-tetrachord group assignment, Adam, a graduate student, wrote about the experience this way:

Our group spent a considerable amount of time talking through ideas, planning outcomes that would reflect those ideas, and then piecing the thoughts together with the goal of a coherent musical statement. We found ourselves wondering and wandering at times. I have thought through the week that kids might not have the difficulty “getting started” that we experienced. I think there’s something about being a student that makes us think we have to find the right answer and play the correct notes. Perhaps it’s easier to come up with a musical expression when the “rules” are either totally clear or completely undefined. I think we managed to get ourselves caught between those two poles.

However, the actual performance was extraordinary. It totally reflected our patient, collaborative planning process. We listened to each other with complete focus, waiting to sense an appropriate moment for our musical contributions. What had seemed unclear and muddled in the practice room suddenly took on a shape and musicality that had only been hinted at during the planning process.

There is a strong link between one’s attitude, class relevance, and the level of community that has developed in the class. Attitudes include the student’s feelings toward music. It is essential that the student becomes fully conscious of music as a personal medium, that she understands music as being in tune with reality and the essence of life as she knows it, and that she regards music as a way of gaining more insight into life. Attitudes are molded by the individual from her personal assessment of the worth and quality of her own experience. The process of learning hinges on the learner’s belief in herself as a creative and productive musician.

The process also relies on advocates and mentors in the classroom that can encourage and be present for skills and talents to develop. It is vitally important that the teacher knows that attitudes about personal worth and the relevance of school music education are being developed. In this sense, level of community means the degree of music-making, dialogue, collective musical cognition, and reflection that occurs, especially reflection on positive outcomes.

Reflection occurs when our cognitive and affective domains are concurrently stimulated. With reflection we grow, learn, and retain. Without reflection we become static, inert, and dull. This, alone, is reason to consider how we plan our teaching to include what students care about and is relevant to them. As Duckworth (1996) states,

Meaning is not given to us in our encounters, but is given by us - constructed by us, each in our own way, according to how our understanding is currently organized. As teachers, we need to respect the meaning our students are giving to the events that we share. In the interest of making connections between their understanding and ours, we must adopt an insider’s view: seek to understand their sense as well as help them understand ours. (p. 112)

ACHIEVING AN AESTHETIC MUSICAL SENSE

The ultimate achievement in musicality includes the awakening of an aesthetic musical sense, the ability to comprehend beauty and to find meaning on a plane beyond analysis of techniques or concepts. The capacity for such feeling involves more than

the intellect and the senses. It involves the emotions and the spirit of the individual. Aesthetic musical insight is a condition that can only exist from one's personal affinity to the nature of the art. While an educational program can apologetically deal directly with basic information and the development of skills, aesthetic musical sensitivity cannot be taught. It is, rather, an intimate response that grows from the nature of personal and social musical experience. Many of the conditions of this experience can be basic to the educational program. Aesthetic musical sensitivity can be fostered by musical strategies, which require analytical, judicial, and creative thinking. The search for meaning through exploratory composition, the use of available music to gain insight into one's own musical problems, the freedom to react, to accept, to reject, to personally evaluate and interpret are also learning conditions which will influence aesthetic musical sensitivity.

In rationalizing the need for reflection as it relates to aesthetic experience, Greene (1995) writes,

Without spending reflective time, without tutoring in or exposure to or dialogue about the arts, people merely seek the right label, seek out the works by the artists they have heard they should see. There are some who watch a ballet only for the story, not for the movement or the music; some who fall into a reverie at concerts or focus only on appending pictorial illustrations to what they hear. The point is that simply being in the presence of art forms is not sufficient to occasion an aesthetic experience or to change a life... (p.125)

By aesthetic experience Green (1995) refers to “. . . the deliberate efforts to foster increasingly informed and involved encounters with art” (p.138). The exploratory musical improvisations that take place in small groups as students test the viability of their musical ideas, are hastened by reflection. Reflective dialogues transform into musical ideas. Musical ideas become refined as the musical “dry runs” inform the musicians' assessments about next musical steps. Reflection is a process that at first reveals an emotional quality; then it gravitates to deliberate, critical/diagnostic musical judgments about the nascent piece of music. Students experience meaning making through music that begins with dialogue about different points of view regarding what the piece may be; and graduates to collective musical cognition with the question “what do we already know and can do to achieve the goal of the musical piece?” The musical process moves to the reflective stage when revisions are undertaken. Musical questions, musical problems, and musical ideas weave themselves through all phases of the process described above, evolving, and refining themselves as they become increasingly more established in the minds of the students. The importance of asking appropriate questions to stimulate the imagination and encourage critical thinking cannot be overstated.

Relevance, dialogue, and reflection—as components of collective musical cognition—are critical social practices that transform music education pedagogy, whether it is practiced in the orchestral rehearsal room, the general music classroom, or the choral and band rehearsal rooms. The prevailing idea is student engagement: student engagement with the teacher; student engagement with fellow students; student engagement

with and about music; and student engagement with pedagogical procedures that produce successful outcomes for students and teachers. Collective musical cognition yields an array of learning outcomes that are lasting because the pedagogy mirrors what musicians do.

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Lenore Pogonowski, Professor Emerita of Music and Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Beginning with her work on the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project (MMCP) and teaming up with Ronald Thomas and Americole Bisini, Lee was responsible for developing and implementing a groundbreaking music education curriculum that placed students in the center of their learning, viewing children as musicians, capable of composing, performing, and verbalizing their own musical thinking. Her research and philosophy on critical thinking skills, problem solving, and reflection in the music classroom was the centerpiece of every class she taught.

While at Teachers College, Lee founded her signature project—the Creative Arts Laboratory (CAL). This arts-based professional development program was grounded in the premise that children learn best from multiple perspectives and was awarded a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fund for Innovative Education.

Cindy L. Bell Professor of Music Education, Hofstra University. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in music education, general music, and choral music methods. As a specialist in choral music education, teacher training and community choirs, Dr. Bell presents professional workshops for Long Island and New York City schools, as well as for NYSSMA; MENC Eastern Division 2003, 2005 and 2009 Conferences; MENC 2004 National Conference; ACDA 2004 and 2006 Eastern Division Conventions; ACDA 2007 National Convention; and ISME 2002 Rotterdam and 2008 Rome Community Music Seminars.

Recent published articles by Dr. Bell appear in the *International Journal of Community Music*, *Choral Journal*, *Music Educators Journal*, *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, *Bulletin for the Council of Research in Music Education*, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, and conference proceedings for *ISME Community Music Seminars*.

Nathalie Robinson who received her Doctor of Education degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, is a retired Professor and Chair of the Department of Music at Hofstra University. In addition, she co-directed the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in Music Education. Under her leadership these programs were recognized as premiere music teacher training programs in the greater New York area. With nearly two decades of public school teaching experience at the elementary and middle school levels, Dr. Robinson specialized in the development of general music curricula that focused on improvisation, composition, and children's musical thinking. Professional presentations included sessions for NMEA, CMEA, NYSSMA, AERA National Conference, MENC Eastern Division, and MENC National Conferences. Dr. Robinson has also authored several articles for *MEJ*, *CMEA*, *The School Music News*, and is co-author of a chapter in the 2006 MENC publication *Teaching Music in the Urban Classroom*.