12

Developing a Philosophy of Music Education

First-year teacher Ms. Haskins has just taken a job as string specialist in a large school district in an urban community. The parents of students in the school district met last winter and spring with the school district's administrative team, and together they decided that there was enough interest in string music education to start a program in the school district in the fall.

Knowing that the task of starting a string program from the "ground up" would be an overwhelming, yet not impossible, task, Ms. Haskins began to think about what she wanted the ultimate string program to resemble. She realized that in the initial stages of building the program, the "ultimate" would not occur immediately, but she thought it productive to have program goals in mind for the future. Ms. Haskins dreamt about wonderful solo and orchestral performances, students playing in tune, musically satisfied students, parents, and administrators. She would begin with the youngest students and build the program through the high school level.

Then, it occurred to her! She had been imagining only one of the "end products" of string music education—staging quality performances. But how was she going to achieve her end results? Wanting her program to be a viable music program, she began to design a curriculum. She was confronted with having to determine what was musically appropriate for her students to learn. When were they to learn the various skills and musical knowledge necessary to become an independent musician? Why did the school district and the community want a string program? What were their goals and motives? Did they coincide with hers? Why did she value string music education?

Ms. Haskins's simple dream unleashed a host of provocative questions, the answers to which would determine what was taught, when it was taught, why it was taught, and how it was taught. Her head began to spin when she realized that she had to take a personal look inward; she needed to reflect on and sort through these vital issues that would drive her curriculum and ultimately would determine the success of her string program.

Where would she begin? She felt quite confident in the amount of knowledge and performance experience she had acquired throughout her years of formal string training. Inwardly, she knew why string music education was important, but she was unable to articulate her thoughts and feelings. She read articles and

portions of books that discussed curricular ideas, some with which she agreed and others that did not seem natural to her. She consulted other music educators for ideas. One older band director who had taught for many years finally said to her, "Look, in the end it comes down to what you believe is important. What do you value—not only about a school having a string program—but why are you convinced that music education is a valuable part of every student's basic education? What is your philosophy, your rationale? You need a foundation on which to build your program. You will make your decision, parts of which may or may not coincide with what some other music education professionals deem important." Ms. Haskins had a lot of thinking and soul-searching to do over the remaining portion of the summer, before her first string students eagerly arrived during the first week of school in September.

INTRODUCTION

Some music educators would contend that a chapter on developing a philosophy of music education should be the initial chapter in a book that introduces undergraduates to the music education profession. The authors of this book, however, believe that one's personal philosophy of music education is a continuously evolving journey taken during one's professional life. Through this journey, a philosophy motivates a teacher's instructional style and course content and is redesigned or confirmed by practical teaching experience. A reciprocal process, developing a philosophy of teaching is a continuous challenge, something that should not be allowed to become dormant or stagnant. Therefore, we are relying on the probability that your teaching observations, teaching episodes, and class readings and discussions during this semester have informed and expanded the conception of the music education profession that you first brought to this class.

There is no single, widely accepted philosophy of music education—a problem and a plus for our music education profession. First, having no uniform philosophy of teaching is a problem; the music teaching profession might be strengthened if its teachers could agree on what should be taught to students and why music education should exist for all students. The creation of the *National Standards for Arts Education* (MENC, 1994) was an attempt to unify individuals' concepts of curricular content across age levels. The lack of a standardized philosophy is a plus, however, because each teacher is empowered to make personal decisions based on personal values. Every time a music educator makes a decision that affects who, what, why, when, or how she/he teaches, values are exhibited and set into motion. The authors of this text made conscious decisions of why, when, and for whom we were writing this book, as well as what content we would present and how we would present it. Each chapter reflects values of individual authors

and the writing team as a unified entity. We chose to include and present the content in a certain fashion according to our teaching experience in the public schools and according to our personal philosophies of music education.

This chapter will include bits of historical perspective including some of the social, political, and cultural events that influenced the existence of formalized music education in American society. In your advanced music education courses, you will acquire additional depth and breadth of historical and philosophical perspective as it relates to music education. Therefore, the authors will present only some of the significant historical events, prominent thinkers, and general philosophical ideas from which many music educators draw their passions about teaching.

Many questions will be posed in this chapter. Few, if any, definitive answers will be provided. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to stimulate your thinking about why you are considering music education as a profession, why you deeply believe that music is important to humans, and why children of all ages should experience music education. If you were asked to articulate why you value music as an art or why you are committed to the music education profession, could you state your views and values? Could you justify your opinions? Read and consider the following ideas presented in this chapter with an open mind. It is the authors' intent that the structure of this chapter will facilitate the development of a brief philosophy statement of music education, one that you might choose to rework, reword, redefine, and redo throughout your music education journey in college and in the profession.

EXAMINING VALUES

Fundamental in formulating a philosophical statement that, with preservice and professional teaching experience and learned information, will blossom into a personal philosophy of music education is the identification of your personal values and passions regarding music and music education. In order to begin the process of writing a brief philosophical statement about music education, ask yourself, "What do I value about music?" and "What do I value about music education?" Jot down your ideas, save them, and build on them as you consider the ideas presented in this chapter. The chart that follows might assist you in organizing your thoughts. In each box, place a word or phrase that indicates how music education plays a uniquely important role in developing that feature of human beings. The chart already has an entry in each category in order to provide an example of the many extant possibilities.

"Why do I value music and/or music education?"

Intellectual	*Emotional*	*Physical and/ or Behavioral*	*Personality*	*Social*	*Other*
Learn to read a different symbol system	Means of expression	Muscle coordination in singing and playing instruments	Builds self-confidence	Learn to work within a group	Exercises the "ears" (sensory stimulation)

You probably have automatic responses to the "why" questions, for you have been drawn into exploring the music education profession because you love music. You understand at the deepest human level what it is like to experience music and the joys that performing, listening, composing, and improvising music have brought to your life over the past years. You probably want to share your passion for music with your future music students. But, this passion is not the only justification for creating and maintaining quality music education programs.

Before you set aside your list, review the values and passions contained in each column of your list. Most, if not all, values tend to fall into two broad categories—musical reasons for valuing music education and extramusical reasons for valuing music education. Musical reasons for having music education programs focus on music as a unique art form and learning about the various components making a complete piece of music. Extramusical reasons, while important, are reasons not having to do with the music itself, but are ancillary benefits that students receive from participating in a school's music program. Extramusical reasons, sometimes referred to as "nonmusical" reasons for valuing music education, include the development of personal, social, humanistic traits that are often a result of participating in musical experiences.

You have just considered some of the "why" questions about music and music education. Try taking your ideas from the previous chart and transferring them to the following chart that indicates musical and extra-

musical values of music and/or music education. You might find it [illegible] complete this chart than the previous one, because the categories are broader and less confining. Feel free to continue brainstorming about your values, experiences, and passions, while adding your ideas to this chart.

Musical Reasons	*Extramusical Reasons*
Understand the creation process of a musical art form	Bolster students' self-esteem
Discriminating quality in performance with regard to expressive line	Students learn to work as a group
Participating in composition by small groups	Enjoyment

As you continue your path in music education, observe music classes, and begin practice teaching, you will gain ideas and information to add to your list of values and experiences. As you explore the music education profession, you will also want to consider pertinent "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how" questions. This list includes only a few of the most important questions to consider.

WHO?

- Who should receive music education?
- Should all students, regardless of musical ability, experience music education?
- Who should teach music education?

WHAT?

- What specific music experiences should students encounter?
- What should students learn about music?
- What musical behaviors should students exhibit during and after instruction?
- What musics should students encounter?

WHERE?

- Where should music education occur?
- In what educational setting should music education occur?
- Where, outside of schools, might music education occur?

WHEN?

- When should students learn specific music information?
- When should students have specific musical experiences?
- When should music education begin?

HOW?

- How should music education be taught?
- How might the music content standards inform teachers' decisions for curricular content?

Asking the questions, "who," "what," "where," "when," "how," and "why" in regards to education, in the broadest sense, and music education, more specifically, is not a recent phenomenon. Writings about educational policy and procedure date back to the times of great thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Erasmus. They, too, grappled with the notion of how education could best meet the functional and moral needs of a democratic society. Although times and people have changed through the millennia, some of the same basic philosophical questions that the great thinkers asked are still being posed and debated by contemporary scholars. A list of questions considered by ancient and twentieth-/twenty-first-century scholars (John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Paulo Freire, Cornel West, and Matthew Lipman, among others) includes:

- What is the role of education in a free and just society?
- What is the relationship between school and other sources of learning?
- What is the relationship between knowing and doing?
- What determines "ability"—nature or nurture?
- How does education affect people's abilities to rise above oppression?
- How does one build a learning partnership between student and teacher?
- How is a child-centered learning environment created?

Although these questions relate to complex issues surrounding education in the broadest sense, they also directly relate to music education. Substitute "music education" whenever the questions refer to "education."

How does this change the meaning of the question? Think of how your past general education and music education experiences shape your responses to those questions. Perhaps you have not had experiences that contribute to formulating a response or an opinion for a particular question. Challenge yourself to imagine placing yourself in a situation different from the one you experienced during your school years. Once again, you will have experiences in your future music education and general education courses that will help you open your mind to these questions and diverse music learning situations.

CONSIDERING THE "MOVERS AND SHAKERS"

There are select people and historical events that have shaped American music education as it exists today. Why might it be important to consider these events and various thinkers' perspectives as one attempts to formulate a statement of music education philosophy? A valuable exercise might be to try to detect hints of your own music education perspective in those people who have traveled before you in their music education journey. How did a particular individual display her/his values? How did a belief system shape the means by which music education was conducted, the people who received music education, or the musical content that was conveyed to students? Values are the foundation for action taken.

Music for Religious Purpose

In Chapter 8, you read about the European settlers who came to the North American continent in order to acquire religious and financial freedom. On their arrival, the settlers encountered indigenous American people, whose musics and societal traditions were different from the European traditions. Instead of integrating the cultural heritages, the European settlers attempted to enculturate the North American natives across the vast continent.

Music was seen as having utilitarian purposes. That is, music served the settlers in teaching their kin and the native peoples about Christian religious tradition. Bringing the Ainsworth version of psalmody from England, the Puritans published *The Bay Psalm Book* (Day, 1640). There remained limited congregational singing, however, for most common people had no training in reading musical notation or in producing quality vocal sound. Church schools were the site not only for religious education but also for teaching students hymns and psalms that would serve as core leadership within Sunday worship services.

Music in the Community

Eventually, community members, outside of the church school auspices, assumed responsibility for musically educating people. The first singing school opened in Boston (1717) with the intent of teaching music reading and cultivating singing that was more pleasing to the ear than typical congregational singing. In addition to the singing schools, Samuel Holyoke (1806) opened a school for teaching instrumental music.

The primary purpose of singing schools was to develop citizens' music notation-reading skills and to prepare those people with exceptional musical talent to sing with singing societies. New England was the host for the first singing societies, which focused on the community performance aspect of music. Their performances were not limited to performance in church worship services, but they were always inclusive of literature, which modern-day musicians might term as "the great choral masterworks."

Music for Every Child

Lowell Mason might be considered the father of modern music education. He claimed that every child deserved to learn music as a part of her/his daily school curriculum. In 1838, he became the first supervisor of elementary school vocal music, as well as the first music teacher in the Boston public schools. Mason's idea was reiterated in 1919 by Osbourne McConathy, who stated that "every child should be educated in music education according to his natural capacities" and by Karl Gehrkens who, in 1923, claimed his goal of having "music for every child, every child for music" (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman, 1994, p. 35).

The post–Civil War and World War I eras left music education in demand throughout the United States, particularly with a renewed interest in instrumental music. Therefore, more music educators were trained and supervised in public and private school settings. In 1907, music supervisors who were also members of the National Education Association (NEA) met for their first meeting in Keokuk, Iowa. The group assumed the name "Music Supervisors National Conference," then "Music Educators Exhibitors Association," "Music Supervisors National Conference," and, finally, "Music Educators National Conference" (Abeles, Hoffer, and Klotman, 1994, p. 36). MENC, the name it presently touts, is the music education profession's largest and most politically active group of music educators. MENC recognizes basic professional values of and standards for music education and is a strong advocate of "music for every child."

Back to Basics

During the 1950s, the United States government was prompted to invest monies into the educational system, because its chief competitor—the former Soviet Union—had just launched Sputnik. From the government's perspective, Americans would not fall behind the Soviets in the technological space race. Therefore, school reform was necessary; the "basics"—reading, math, and science—received much financial and educational attention. Many music educators would claim that the "back to basics" movement took away from music programs within the public schools.

As a reactionary attempt to regain the stature of music education among other core curricular domains, music experts met at the Yale Seminar in 1963 and at the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967. During the Yale Seminar, music experts explored means for focusing on the arts in public schools. They also examined why K–12 public school music students were not becoming musically literate. The Yale Seminar delegates concluded that music students should be exposed to a variety of musical exemplars, rather than the limited "school music" that often decontextualized the musical experience from "real life." Included in their suggestions for music education was for students to experience musics from outside of the Western musical tradition. This suggestion came as the United States was awakening to the notion of civil rights and multiculturalism.

The music historian Michael Mark (2000) stated that yet another professional gathering comprised of the music education profession's own professional and scholarly personnel was needed. The Tanglewood Symposium occurred at the summer residence of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1967. During the Tanglewood Symposium, music education professionals considered the effects on music education of school reform, civil rights, multicultural music issues, and the emerging role of technology. Both the Yale Seminar and the Tanglewood Symposium held as its primary objective not only to evaluate music methods and materials but also to move the profession toward creating a unified philosophy of music education.

Music for Music's Sake

Unlike the early North American settlers who considered music as a tool to promote religious doctrine, some arts education scholars of the twentieth century contemplated the value of experiencing music for music's sake. That is, music as an art form needs no utilitarian reason for being experienced by all people.

A branch of philosophy that deals with the intrinsic value of art—in this case, music as a unique art form—is called aesthetics. Experts in the field of aesthetics ponder questions such as, "What is art?," "What is the value of art in society?," and "To what aspects of art do people relate that might evoke an emotional response?" Music education as aesthetic education calls for students to learn to perceive and respond to the value of music that they listen to and perform. Three basic schools of thought represent what is important to learn and experience in an artwork.

Formalists would posit that musical elements—rhythm, form, melody, duration, dynamics, timbre, harmony—and how they interact within a musical work are of primary importance in valuing a piece of music. References and associations to the outside world (including mentally created pictures and images) are not of primary importance to one who embraces the formalist view.

Referentialists, by contrast, find meaning and value of a piece of music in its outside context, culture, and association with the real world. The referentialist point of view purports that a piece of music refers to something separate from the musical elements. A musical work and its interacting sounds function to remind the listener of something from their own life experience, from the composer's life experience, from a cultural event, or from a story.

Finally, absolute expressionists would contend that music's worth is found in the inner workings of the musical elements and that cultural experiences and context are also important in giving personal cognitive—perceptual and emotional (affective)—meaning to those inner elemental interactions. Absolute expressionism considers multiple facets of the music experience and combines them to make meaning a holistic experience of the complete piece of music.

In his landmark publication, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Bennett Reimer (1970, 1989) provided the music education profession with a model music education philosophy. Reimer embraces the absolute expressionist philosophy, providing teachers with a rationale for creating comprehensive music curricula in performance and general music classes. His philosophy (music education as aesthetic education) remained the accepted music education philosophy, virtually unchallenged by other documented philosophies until the 1990s. Reimer suggested that aesthetic music experience involves the mind (cognition, perception) and the emotions (affective response) and that aesthetic experience can occur in a variety of musical experiences provided to students in music instruction.

Estelle Jorgensen, at Indiana University, in 1990 organized a symposium of international music educators who were interested in philosophy. Ideas that challenged Reimer's philosophical stance—music education as aesthetic education—were debated and brought to the attention of the music education profession.

David Elliott (1995) presented his philosophical ideas for music education in the monograph *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. Elliott espouses the praxial philosophical stance. Praxialists contend that there are no artistic universals for meaning in music, that music has a variety of meanings per culture, and that music is an "action (overt *and* covert) that is purposeful, contextual, and critically reflective . . . " (Elliott, 1996–7, p. 22). Music performance is the primary tool for learning music, and it is through performance that musical intelligence is developed.

Music as a Core Subject

During the 1980s, there was a renewed interest in giving attention to the "basic" subjects in public school curricula. In addition, teachers were being held "accountable" for meeting basic schoolwide, state, and national curricula criteria in core subject areas. During his term as president of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush proposed legislation that focused on the rejuvenation of education in "core" academic domains. The arts, however, were not included in this proposal. Therefore, representatives from dance, theater, visual arts, and music lobbied for the inclusion of the arts as a core subject. The creation of voluntary national music standards came, in part, as a response to President Bill Clinton's approval of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, in which arts as an integral part of the school music experience were placed into federal law.

In 1994, MENC, as a partner of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, published the *National Standards for Arts Education* (dance, music, theater, and visual arts). The document examines philosophical questions such as, "What is art?," "Who are the artists?," "Who benefits from arts education?," and "Are arts important to life and learning?" Other considerations are multiculturalism, diversity, technology, assessment, meaningful artistic experience, curricular integration, and competencies in each artistic domain for students in each grade level.

Music Makes Students Smarter

Learning music and participating in musical experiences is typically accompanied by some degree of personal enjoyment and self-fulfillment. In recent years, however, the media, *basing their messages on loose research findings*, have spread the news that music makes children smarter. The question of how music is processed in the brains of young children has intrigued researchers, especially because of the latest technological tools that assist the researchers in their investigations (Flohr, Miller, and Persellin, 1996; Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky, 1993).

Frances Rauscher said that she and her colleagues "have found short-term improvement of college students' performance of spatial-temporal tasks after the students listened to a Mozart sonata" (Costa-Giomi et al., 1999, p. 31). This phenomenon became known as the "Mozart Effect." In addition, Rauscher's research of preschool children's brain activity during music listening suggested that "children who had received music instruction scored higher in spatial task ability than those who had not" (Flohr, Miller, and Persellin, 1999). Immediately the media, and many public school music educators, jumped on the Mozart bandwagon as a means of justifying music education in the schools. If students could score better on standardized tests as a result of receiving music education, then all students would benefit from music education—an extramusical reason for valuing music education in the schools.

Results of the "brain and music" research, however, have caused much debate (Demorest and Morrison, 2000; Flohr, Miller, and Persellin, 1996; Reimer, 1999). Though their reports have caused quite an enthusiastic stir in the music education community, some of the findings were based on research that tested the short-term effects of musical exposure. Consequent studies attempting to replicate the Rauscher and Shaw studies seem not to indicate similar findings.

While music educators have long believed that music experiences at an early age influence children's brain development, there are many other variables that contribute to the developmental process that may or may not have to do with early musical experiences. With additional technological advances, researchers might provide concrete evidence of the specific effects musical experience has on brain activity and development.

Music Education for the Future

As the new millennium approached, MENC President June Hinckley led the effort to reassess and redefine music education as a profession, along with the values and expectations that are held at the core of the profession's existence. This effort resulted in *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the Future of Music Education,* held in 1999, at Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida. The Housewright Symposium included music educators from all areas within the music education profession. Questions considered at the symposium (Madsen, 2000) are shaping the current music education profession.

- Why do humans value music?
- Why study music?
- How can skills and current knowledge be taught through the music content standards?

- How can all people continue to be involved in meaningful musical participation?
- How will societal and technological changes affect the teaching of music?
- What should be the relationship between schools and other sources of learning?

Notice that while the times have changed, the questions have not. The Housewright Declaration, the result of the symposium, holds the following principles (Madsen, 2000, p. 219). Teaching, learning, and assessment strategies affected by these principles also were presented in the complete document, *Vision 2020* (Madsen, 2000).

> "Music clearly must have important value for people."
> "Music makes a difference in people's lives."
> "Music is a basic way of knowing and doing because of its own nature and because of the relationship of that nature to the human condition . . ."
> "Societal and technological changes will have an enormous impact for the future of music education."
> "Music educators must . . . ensure that the best of the Western art tradition and other musical traditions are transmitted to future generations."

MENC's latest statement of music education philosophy is the result of years of discussion and debate over the questions that you, as a pre-service music educator, are also considering. The statement is a part of the MENC *Membership Handbook* (2000).

> Through its many programs, activities, publications, and conferences, MENC addresses all aspects of music education and works to ensure that every student shall have access and exposure to a balanced, comprehensive and high quality program of music instruction.
>
> Toward the end of promoting the best possible music education for all children and advancing music education as a profession, MENC's objectives are to:

- Provide information, resources, and services for music education professionals
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas through publications and meetings
- Promote music as an essential area of study
- Foster the utilization of the most effective techniques and resources in music education
- Investigate curriculum needs and develop resources for effective music education
- Develop criteria, guidelines, and evaluation procedures for music education

- Encourage excellence in music education by recognizing individual achievements and contributions to the profession
- Maintain an effective liaison with national organizations that have allied interests in arts and music education."

Your Philosophy Statement

Pondering the myriad questions and the insurmountable information in this chapter and from your own educational experiences can be quite overwhelming, a bit confusing at the very least. Did your perception of music education change as a result of reading the ideas of prominent thinkers? Were you able to make the connection between the evolution of music education in the schools and world events? Did you resonate with any of the philosophical perspectives presented in this chapter? Were you skeptical of any of the philosophical ideas?

While you might not (and probably will not!) have a solid philosophy of music education, you are most likely at the point of being able to take inventory of some of your values at this point of your music education journey. Return to the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions from the beginning of the chapter. Think about which of your values are musical or extramusical. Use the chart on the following page to organize your thoughts and then attempt to write a brief statement of your music education values and passions. Good luck!

At the end of four or five years, many of you will graduate with a degree in music education. You will begin the process of looking for a job. One of the questions that most school administrators ask of an interviewee is, "What is your personal philosophy of music education?"—what do you value and why. You, too, might raise the same issues with the interviewers: What is the school district's perspective of music education? What are its expectations for a music education program within the school district? A good match between prospective employee and school district is partially dependent on philosophical stances that are basically in agreement.

Final (Beginning?) Thoughts

The authors' intent in writing this text has been to provide the reader with an introduction to the music education profession: tools, methodologies, students, historical accounts, challenges, and philosophies. But as the text's title, *Prelude to Music Education*, suggests, the curtain has been raised, but the main theatrical drama—teaching, learning, reflecting—has just begun to unfold. Your initial exploration marks the beginning of your professional

Values Inventory

	Musical	*Extramusical*
Who?		
What?		
Where?		
When?		
Why?		
How?		

journey. As a result of reading this text, completing the assignments, and discussing questions pertinent to the music education profession, has your interest in the music education profession changed? If so, how? Has reading about a specific area of music education sparked an interest that you will choose to pursue? How might you pursue your interests in music education? What role do you want to play in providing students with music instruction? What are your professional dreams for the future of music education?

Remember . . . YOU are the future of music education. YOU can make a substantial difference in the lives of children that you teach. YOU are on an important journey. May your professional journey be as rewarding, satisfying, surprising, and joyful as the journeys that the authors have taken individually and together as colleagues.

> As good teachers weave the fabric that joins them with students and subjects, the heart is the loom on which the threads are tied, the tension held, the shuttle flies,

> and the fabric is stretched tight. Small wonder, then, that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart. . . . The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that the teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning and living require. (Palmer, 1998, p. 11)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

(You might choose to use the questions posed in this section and throughout this chapter as means for organizing and formulating your own philosophy of music education statement.)

- What do you consider the current public perception of music education to be? Why?
- What reforms in music education would you like to implement? Provide a rationale for each reform that you suggest.
- How might the *National Standards for Arts Education* influence music education reform? Cite specific examples.
- What does a music teacher do to establish an image within a school or community setting?
- What image do you want to project as a music educator?
- What image do you want your music program to project to others (i.e., what is most important to you in your music program)?
- How do the following aspects of music education interact: Image, values, philosophy, curriculum?