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Communicating with the Student Teacher
Whose Job is it to Listen?

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For the past ten years we have been called upon to embed the National Music Standards into our practice. It may not be stated outright, yet criticisms of the National Standards have been discouraged. Two examples highlight this point. The first is taken from an address by the president of New York State School Music Association. "As issues of standards . . . are addressed on the state and national level, it is imperative that NYSSMA members work together in harmony to maintain a unity of purpose" (Groner, 2000, p. 4). The second example appeared in a 1999 address by the president of MENC warning and admonishing music educators who take the "short view." The president stated, "When we break into factions, we diminish our impact on decision makers and on our students" (MEJ, Jan. 1999, p.7).

If the intent of the standards document was to level the playing field and put music education on the "basic" map, as it were, then curriculum legitimacy may have been attained. But the impact and importance of the national standards may have been inadvertently undermined by an inability to see that conflict is imperative for the ongoing growth of our discipline. As, Apple pointed out, "The fact that conflict and disorder are extraordinarily important to prevent the reification of institutional patterns of interactions [was], thus, once again ignored" (1990, p. 115).

While there is internal conflict within the field of music education, very little can be attributed to disagreements over the National Standards. Throughout the literature and conferences of the music education community, the music standards document remains sacrosanct. But again, as Apple warns, " . . . to call for consensus is to call for a lack of commitment and is to ignore the crucial value of the uncertain and of conceptual conflict in a fields progress" (p. 119).

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The possibility that the Music Standards document attempts to guarantee and maintain an agreement and a single focus among music educators helps to create a false consensus among us. Such a consensus is an aspect of hegemony and ensures the "ongoing maintenance of society." And in a society "Internal dissension and conflict in a society are viewed as inherently antithetical to the smooth function of the social order" (Apple, 1990, p. 93). Interpreted through this lens, the Music Standards could be viewed as a trade off: abdicating conflict in favor of obtaining a perceived place at the table of high status knowledge.

So what does this have to do with the teacher/student relationship?

The music standards comprise a document that tells us what students should know and be able to do. It does not, theoretically, tell us how music should be taught. The purpose of this paper is to address the ways in which the interactions between supervising teachers and student teachers, and consequently future teacher/student relationships, can be affected by the constraints of the music standards document. The method used will be to compare and contrast the national music standards to the national standards in mathematics, language arts, science, and history. In addition I will lay out an ideological framework for examining the standards.

While this dictate of the music standards to, "know and be able to do," reflects the wording in *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), it also serves to function as a way for the authors of the document to remain neutral. In doing so the authors hoped to stay way from endorsing certain teaching methodologies and philosophies by simply focusing on student outcomes. I would like to suggest, however, that the document does not remain neutral on the processes of teaching, because the parameters of the document are bound and dictated by a positivistic model. Such a model does not reflect the current educational climate—a climate that has moved away from more traditional visions of subject matter and the teaching/learning process.

The teacher/student relationship has traditionally been defined as one in which the teacher imparts, teaches, or transmits skills, knowledge, and information. However, a reliance on this traditional and outdated model prevents music education from sharing pedagogical similarities that bind the National Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and History Standards.

The Other Standards

A quick look at the other standards will not only help frame the way in which those disciplines have defined and conceived subject matter, but looking at these standards also helps us to frame the ways in which the teaching/learning process has metamorphosed.

While the other disciplines claim they do not prescribe specific methods of teaching, they still address educational objectives in open and helpful ways. The other standards provide for problem solving strategies, new conceptions of literacy, and stress the importance of communicating ideas. These disciplines justify thinking and pedagogy, rather than methodology, and in fact, they even imply a newly defined teacher/student relationship.

A comparison of the music standards to the other discipline standards indicates that, while all five sets of documents address the Goals 2000 mandate of delineating what students must "know and be able to do," the other standards also address assumptions and philosophies underlying the process of teaching and learning. For science, this means that the science standards "…emphasize a new way of teaching and learning about science that reflects how science itself is done, emphasizing inquiry as a way of achieving knowledge and understanding about the world" (National Science Education Standards, p. ix). For history, "more and better history" should be propelled by historical thinking and historical understanding (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996, introduction). Language Arts grew out of "current research and theory about how students learn" (NCTE, 1996, p. vii). What is important for Mathematics is the

"recognition of mathematics as more than a collection of concepts and skills to be mastered…" (Standards for School Mathematics, 1989, p. 5). Clearly embedded within these four sets of standards is the recognition that acquisition of content through rote and memorization can no longer be the sole driving force. It is also clear that the standards need to address how content should be delivered, including the "why" and "how" and "how not" to teach.

The Music Standards also make a clear stance for not prescribing any specific methodology. In contrast to the other standards, however,

> These Standards . . . present areas of content, expectations for student experience, and levels of student achievement, but without endorsing any particular philosophy of education, specific teaching methods, or aesthetic points of view. (MENC, 1994, p. 12)

The nine music standards are presented as behavioral objectives. A quick review of the Music Standards illustrates this point:

> Students (will) sing; perform on instruments; improvise melodies; compose and arrange music; read and notate music; listen to, analyze and describe music; evaluate music and music performances; understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; and understand music in relation to history and culture. (MENC, 1994)

Elliot Eisner points out that, "When objectives are stated behaviorally, it is possible to have specific empirical referents to observe; thus, one is in a position to know without ambiguity whether the behavior objective has been reached" (1985, p. 110). When viewed through this behaviorist lens, the Music Standards appear to provide precise steps, teacher accountability, and evidence to the fact that learning music is measurable and, as a result, a necessary basic. In so doing, they also do a very un-neutral job of dictating how the content standards should be achieved. In light of the ways in which pedagogy is framed in the other standards, the music document also succeeds in vitiating the status of "basic."

The Constraints

Because the content standards were written in such a way that they would be measurable, measurability needs to be made problematic. On the surface it makes sense that the standards needed to be measurable; the teaching/learning process is empty without assessment. Assessment allows teachers to structure learning experiences; it also allows teachers to know if what has been "taught" has been learned and when to reward or punish. When assessment is linked only to student behavior, teachers are better able to control the learning environment simply by teaching to the desired endpoint. However, when this behavior is the goal—intended, or not—the consequences are powerful. Alfie Kohn speaks persuasively about the punishment and rewards system.

> To control students is to force them to accommodate to a preestablished curriculum. It is to tell them not only what they have to learn but how they have to learn it and what will happen to them if they don't—or what they will get if they do (Kohn, 1993, p. 149)

When the endpoint is teaching to and fulfilling the standards in order to present a united front and secure public school funding and jobs for music education, there is a definite reward structure embedded in the process. Examined in this light, a teacher who chooses not to teach to the standards seems almost deviant. However, as Popham (2001) suggests, such behavior—as teaching to the standards—is not abnormal.

> Let's not sneer too quickly at teachers who fail to teach what isn't tested. This is an altogether human response to a reward structure that focuses exclusively on a single criterion (whether that criterion is well founded or not). If people find themselves in a context where the rewards come from X, and there are no rewards, for Y, which do you think will typically be promoted? Teachers are no more or less susceptible to such reward/punishment structures than anyone else. (p. 19)

So in the case of teaching to the standards, not only are student behaviors controlled by the content standards, but the behaviors of music educators are controlled as well. Because the standards were worded in such a way to show that the outcomes in

music education could be measurable, and therefore worthy of study, it becomes necessary for the teacher to teach lessons and activities to fulfill the content standards. In so doing, the process becomes controlled by the end point. A natural result of this approach easily creates situations in which little effort can be expended to reach the goal. In other words, one can incorporate the least amount of effort, the least amount of thought, and the least amount of creativity to reach this measurable goal. So begins a non-educative circle of process/product that denies reflective, or transformative curriculum. Consequently, we teachers maintain a self-perpetuating cycle of non-growth, non-transformative behavior by teacher and student. Elliott addresses this process.

> Requiring teachers to compose ultra-specific objectives and implement step-by-step lesson plans is an effective way to "manage" teaching toward a simplistic end point: a change in a learner's behavior. The goal is not knowledge, nor growth, nor enjoyment, but the achievement of reductionistic objectives" (Elliott, 1995, p. 245)

Freire addresses this process from a different perspective in what he refers to as the "banking" concept of education–a concept in which students are treated as empty receptacles into which teachers deposit information, devoid of critical interaction. "In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (1983, p. 53). The content standards, as behavioral objectives, set up an environment in which teachers bestow upon their students activities and lessons that lead to fulfilling the content standards.

Is this our intended goal? Unfortunately, this goal of music education can be inferred from the national standards and fulfilled by the content standards, performance assessments, and the accompanying strategies for teaching series that were published along with the music standards. It appears that this goal separates teaching from the process of learning. In the following quote, Elliott is not speaking directly of the standards but a parallel can be made.

> The underlying assumption is that educational ends and means are separate and that knowing is different from doing. In this view, teaching is a matter of "interpreting" a prepackaged script and then delivering the product [the standards] to consumers (students) as efficiently as possible. (Elliott, 1995, p. 245)

The underlying assumptions in the wording of the other discipline content standards suggest a teaching/learning process that is not separated from addressing " the how and now not to teach." The first content standard in the language arts standards addresses reading, but embeds reading in a broader context.

> Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works. (NCTE, 1996, p. 3)

While this standard could be distilled down to a paper and pencil test, the wording suggests a broader definition of what it means to "know and be able to do" within the teaching of language arts. It is true that traditionally, assessment has been linked only to testable behavioral outcomes, yet research suggests that assessment must also "involve the examination of the processes as well as the products of learning" (Herman, Aschbacher, Winters, 1992, p. 4).

Unfortunately, it seems as if the bottom line was that if the outcomes were not observable, and testable, then the content standards would not count as knowledge, or knowing and being able to do. This view, that observable behaviors are the only evidence of proof, is derived from the positivistic paradigm. Research in this paradigm is focused on reducing things to basics, studying issues separately rather than holistically. It involves searching for truths and coming up with objective observations of teaching that are neutral, free of values, and subjective judgments.

This consistent flow between the ends/means aim of music education, and the unintended curriculum embedded in the national standards, does not reflect a neutral or method-free environment. Bowman, a Canadian educator/philosopher writes eloquently of the endeavor of music education and how this shapes not only curriculum development but also relationships with the teaching/learning process.

> What kind of endeavor we understand music education to be—and more specifically, of what kind of interactions it should consist—has profound importance for the way music educators teach. It is also crucial to how we structure curriculum, to the kinds of experiences in which we expect students to engage, to the ways we evaluate student progress, and to how we orient and conduct our professional research. (2002, p. 63)

What kinds of interactions, then, should we have with our students? What would these interactions look like and how can they be modeled? More importantly, how can our pedagogy off set the stultifying effects of the national standards and ensure growth for our students, our field, and ourselves?

First, it may be helpful to examine the differences between pedagogy and methodology. Definitions of method include words such as systematic procedures, plans, and orderly definitions. Methods, as Regelski has pointed out, can also "become taken-for-granted recipes and prescriptions used without regard for results" (1998, p. 2). Most often, in music education, methods refer to Orff or Kodály. Unfortunately, Orff and Kodály have both become—in many cases—strict methods of teaching music. Regelski refers to this strict adherence to methods as "'methodolatry,' –an almost religious or cult-like attachment to particular 'techniques,' 'methods' or 'materials' of teaching" (1998, p. 2).

It has been repeatedly stated that the standards were not intended as curriculum. Yet the argument has been made in this paper that, as we have been called upon to "t*each to the standards*," these standards do act as a guide to curriculum in that the attending lessons or activities provided by MENC serve to fulfill an end. Consequently, even

though one may not actually be teaching a specific method, when teachers are asked to teach to the standards, teaching to the standards becomes the method, and in essence, the curriculum.

> The simple use of the method and its associated materials is equated with curriculum. Simply using or "teaching the method" (e.g., "I teach the _____method") becomes "teaching the curriculum." Thus the process is automatically assumed to be the product and the medium becomes the message. In other words, "teaching" this or that "activity" may produce a certain degree of collective musical "activity" on the part of students during class, but little or no degree of personal musical agency results for individual students outside of or after graduation from school. (Regelski, 1998, p. 6)

When strict adherence to any method takes the place of an educative experience based on listening and reciprocity, as it does in the above situation, there are no transformative experiences or personal musical agency. In this case, method becomes objectified, something that happens separate of pedagogy, effectively removing the teacher from the responsibility in the educative process.

Pedagogy is more elusive in its definition. Lather, in *Getting Smart: Feminist Research And Pedagogy With/In The Postmodern*, describes why she chose the word pedagogy instead of teaching for her book title. She cites Lusted's definition of the word *pedagogy* as "…the transformation of consciousness that takes place in the intersection of three agencies—the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they together produce" (1991, p. 15). Lather refers to this kind of pedagogy as *emancipatory*.

Freire, suggesting ways other than seeing teaching as narration, in which the teacher as narrator "leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content" (1993, p. 53). He speaks of transformation pedagogy and refers to the relationships between teachers and students as teacher-student and students-teachers. He believes this relationship can only exist when teachers dialogue with students, where each in turn, learns from the other.

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students, and the students-of-the-teachers cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teaches. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (p. 61)

What the descriptions of Freire and Lather have in common is that they address a relationship with the student. They see pedagogy based on the notion that transmission of knowledge, rather than knowledge that is produced together, is not only impossible, but also conscripting and even unethical.

Ostensibly, the teaching-learning environment upon which this paper is focused is the observing teacher/student teacher dyad. This is a relationship in most circumstances that affords very little time for facilitating any kind of constructive or transformative growth. While it may seem that I have spent an inordinate amount of time focusing on the structure of the standards and the parameters they place on music educators' pedagogy, the overriding question here is, How do our efforts to liberate our students and music education perpetuate relations of dominance? (Lather, 1991)

How does "*teaching to*" the standards serve to perpetuate the low status of our field? How do the ways in which we interact, or narrate to our students, serve to perpetuate the notion of teacher as holder and transmitter of all knowledge? More immediately, how do the ways in which I structure the pre-and-post observation interviews with my student teachers help to facilitate or effectively end transformation, growth, and finally empowerment?

Froehlich writes that in order to " strengthen the professional training of music education students, [she] believe(s) it is essential that curricular reformers find ways by which to create a unified instructional reality for the students during their time of training" (2002, p. 3). I would like to extend Froehlich's point and suggest that a "unified instructional reality" might also constitute a shared pedagogical language that

doesn't just "train" music educators but facilitates an environment in which teachers and students learn. In other words, I would like us to help teachers and students negotiate ways in which to effect not just musical transformation but personal transformation as well.

So then how does this shared language of transformation sound? Before I meet with my students it is very easy for me to envision what these transformative moments should be like. It is an entirely different (and difficult) task to try and model ways that will help my students model the same kinds of thinking they want for their students. Given the timeframe of this session, let me give you a couple of examples. Almost without fail, in every pre-observation interview I have with my students, they express a desire to create an environment in which there are no right or wrong answers; an environment in which their students know they are being listened to and validated. Many of my student teachers even go so far in class as to say to their students, "There is no right or wrong answer."

Without fail, during the class every student teacher uses empty phrases such as "good boy," "good girl," "good answer," "excellent." I have even heard, "Well, that's not the answer I was really looking for. Does anybody else have something different?" And without fail their students understand that the power relationship is exactly as it always is and realize, as they always do, that there is in fact a very right or wrong answer.

It is also the same in a rehearsal situation. I actually find rehearsal situations much more immediate for inciting students to confront assumptions they have about what it means to listen to their students and "teach" music. I will ask my students what they hope to accomplish in a rehearsal and they respond with any number of things—phrasing, entrances, intonation—all of which usually fall under the heading of listening skills.

Then, of course, they proceed to run a rehearsal exactly the way in which all rehearsals are run. You run through the piece, the conductor automatically says, "good job," and then you play it again, most often without knowing why. You are told over and

over to listen, but you never really know what you are supposed to be listening for. It is never modeled, and you're never really held accountable for listening—unless you count playing in tune, with the correct intonation, as the be-all end-all goal of listening.

Froehlich writes of these exact same situations and speaks to the need for students to learn to make inferences on their own. She points out that when teachers simply tell a student "'to go and practice' or tell an ensemble 'to play it again,' both statements are void of any inference because the instructor either did not make a diagnosis or chose not to share it with the pupils" (2002, p. 7). These are also instances where teachers are simply narrating, rather than dialoguing with their students.

Again, I would like to extend Froehlich's remarks and suggest that conductors and teachers need to model for their students ways in which to go about learning to make inferences. In order for students to take on the habits of mind that attend to diagnosing whatever issue may be at hand, teachers need to incorporate what are referred to as "think-a-loud" protocols. In doing so, they can also include the student-as-teacher in the diagnosis process in order that students become, as Freire suggests, jointly responsible for the growth process.

For instance, after observing my student teacher's classes, I watch their faces crumble as they examine the phrases they have used and the ways in which their pedagogy is undermining their stated educational aims. We talk about what it would mean to problem solve out loud. I wonder out loud to the students how one would go about addressing something that has come up. In this way, students see me the teacher as a co-problem solver and problem poser rather than as one with all of the knowledge. It is also a very purposeful and human way to model fallibility.

Sometimes, with my student teachers, it is as simple as wondering out loud why they think they are using the phrase "good," or "excellent." When we talk about the difference between rewarding effort versus validating what has actually taken place, and they begin to realize the non-neutrality of the words they have been using, they begin to

squirm and eventually say things like, "I never thought of it that way," or "that's the way my teachers did it," or my personal favorite, "that's what I was told to do in my methods class."

I meet with these students three times over the course of a semester. It would be much easier to simply comment on the appropriateness of what they're wearing, or even lecture to them and tell them what they are doing wrong. But I can't. The language I use with them brokers and validates the ways in which they will communicate with their own students. Bowers writes that we cannot be excused from realizing the power language has in setting up parameters and boundaries in the educative process.

> The connection between language and thought, which has near universal recognition in most academic circles, means that educational theorists and classroom teachers cannot be excused from understanding the role that language plays in transmitting the conceptual maps that enable students to participate in a shared social world. Even though nineteenth century positivism still dominates the thinking in most teacher-training institutions, as well as in governmental efforts to change education, the fact remains that the basic reality of the classroom is the language environment that both establishes the boundaries within which thought occurs while providing the linguistic foundations that makes thought and communication possible. (Bowers, 1987, p. 73)

Believe me, my students are overwhelmed as our discussions unfold, but each of them eventually says, "But then I will never work it out. It won't ever be easy." And when I hear those words I think, perfect, this is the beginning of the very worrisome path of communication, transformation, and empowerment.

The point here, and there are probably several points here, is about facilitating ethical learning environments. In such environments there are transformative experiences that empower and lead toward, for instance, better listening skills. Yet to establish these environments we have to question certain given and immutable truths. One of which is teaching to the National Standards.

Doll suggests that if transformation is the goal, then a closer investigation of one's assumptions are imperative. He writes, "To create transformative transactions—where we change as do the transactions—it is imperative we question the assumptions and prejudgements we hold so dear, particularly those supporting or own historical situations. (Doll, 1992, p. 136). It is difficult to question such givens, which is exactly why they need to be confronted. And our standards, which we are called upon to hold so dear and situate us historically, are exactly one of those assumptions that need questioning.

Freire has written that "Propaganda, management, manipulation—all arms of domination—cannot be the instruments of . . . rehumanization" (Freire, 1993, p. 50). What do we want as human beings? Isn't rehumanization one of those desires? What kinds of thinking can we hope to facilitate if we are unable to begin our own transformation by examining a document that has in some circumstances served as propaganda? Lather writes of a false consciousness or "the denial of how our commonsense ways of looking at the world are permeated with meanings that sustain our disempowerment" (Lather, 1991, p. 59)

Teaching just cannot be transmission of knowledge, nor can it just be the commons sense belief of teaching music alone. There has to be more to our relationships with our students. Bowman says it this way:

> Once we grant that the idea of "music alone" represents a kind of false consciousness, it becomes imperative to ask whether what is being ritually enacted in musical settings is ethically, morally, or educationally desirable. (Bowman, 2002, p. 76)

The standards are with us. They cannot be treated as propaganda. How each of us decides the ways in which they influence or dictate our practice must be each person's informed decision. However, to not understand or to deny that each choice or even non-choice affects our relationships with our students, and their eventual relationships with their students is to not see the moral and ethical realm of what we do and to sustain our disempowerment.

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