

# Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

*The refereed journal of the*



Volume 11, No. 1  
March 2012

David J. Elliott  
Editor

Carlos Xavier Rodriguez  
Guest Editor

## **Electronic Article**

### **Mentoring Doctoral Students in Music Education: Personal Reflections about Ethical Choices and Conflicts in Higher Education**

Hildegard Froehlich

© Hildegard Froehlich 2012 All rights reserved.

ISSN 1545-4517

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of the author. The ACT Journal and the Mayday Group are not liable for any legal actions that may arise involving the article's content, including, but not limited to, copyright infringement



## **Mentoring Doctoral Students in Music Education: Personal Reflections about Ethical Choices and Conflicts in Higher Education**

Hildegard Froehlich  
Professor Emeritus, University of North Texas

Mentoring is an instructional model that allows for one-on-one engagements between teacher and student. It is unarguably one of the better ways of individualizing instruction at all levels (e.g., Grasha 2002). Music educators in higher education are accustomed to this model by (1) their own professional music studies and (2) what they experienced while writing a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of an assigned or a personally selected faculty member. I certainly relied on those experiences in my role as dissertation mentor over a time span of twenty-five years, assuming, of course, that my actions as a doctoral advisor followed principles of ethical behavior as my overriding professional imperative. I had always gauged my actions by wanting to be what Charnov (1987) has termed “the academician as good citizen” (3) when successfully mentoring more than fifty doctoral students to the completion of their respective doctoral degrees.

As might be the case for many of my colleagues in higher education, I had an open-door policy and saw myself as a student-centered mentor, giving differential amounts of time to each advisee, listening to and taking into consideration personal stories and troubles, helping with writes and re-writes of chapters and paragraphs, and becoming engaged in my advisees’ research designs and bibliographic searches. Only recently, however, have I begun to examine my work as an advisor from the perspective of what scholars in higher education and organizational management have said about the challenges that arise from mentoring as a formal teaching act in the university setting. The challenges they identify not only interests me personally but also touches on broader ethical concerns within the topic of “institutional belonging and pedagogic discourse,” a topic I first examined in its application to music education at the university level in previous essays (e.g., Froehlich 2002, 2007).

Doctoral-level mentoring relies in large measure on efforts of trust-building within the confines of hierarchically structured relationships. As with nearly all formal instructional settings, actors of unequal status communicate with each other for a seemingly defined, three-

pronged purpose: learning to somewhat independently carry out a research study, writing it in the form of a dissertation, and graduating with a terminal degree.

Because of the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student, advising protocols and their results show complexities (see Baker 1996, Kramer and Cook 2004, Payne and Charnov 1987, Rocheleau and Speck 2007) that I was only intuitively aware of during my career as a faculty member and university employee. I certainly knew that professionalism, respect and friendship can easily conflict with or lose out to favoritism and controlling behavior (Rocheleau and Speck 2007), but I was quite certain that I was not guilty of such transgressions. In this article I examine the validity of that certainty by reflecting on my doctoral advising practices as I remember them in light of pertinent research literature on ethics in teaching. It is done in the hope of contributing to a discussion of doctoral mentoring in music education as an important pedagogical act. After all, the models we provide establish future practices.

### **The problem in context**

Many stories, often well-publicized accounts across the spectrum of public education, attest to experiences in which student-teacher relationships became harmful to students (e.g., Baker 1996, Braxton and Bayer 1999, Carr 2000, Keith-Spiegel et al. 2002, Johns et al. 2008, and Rocheleau and Speck 2007). But ethical behavior in teaching goes beyond extreme violations of accepted norms and expected behaviors of “rights and wrongs” (Carr 2000, Rochelau and Speck 2007) or of what Vardi and Weitz (2004) call “acts in the workplace that are done intentionally and constitute a violation of rules pertaining to such behaviors” (3). Because instructional acts can be interpreted in various ways by different individuals, whether or not our actions as mentors are harmful may depend as much on the advisee’s perceptions as on the mentor’s intentions. This fact was brought home to me vividly seven years after retirement.

*It was New Year 2009 and I attended a ball together with my partner and my sister from Germany with her partner. From the time I had come to the United States in 1973, my sister had never visited me before and I was excited about showing her my life in Texas. The New Year’s Eve Ball was one of the highlights in her visit and all four of us were in a festive mood, looking forward to an evening of swing and ballroom dancing. As the musicians gradually stepped onto the stage, tuning their instruments, I spotted among them a former student of mine who long ago had received his Ph.D. in music education from our program. Now teaching at an area university, he continues to play whenever he can. We have maintained our friendship*

*and enjoy visiting when there is a chance. As soon as I saw him I walked over to the stage and greeted him, wishing him a happy New Year. As I proudly introduced him to my sister, he referred to me as one of his favorite mentors. Obviously, his words were music to my ears: life was good! We returned to our table and he to the stage because the festivities were about to begin.*

*With dinner to be served soon, I was therefore quite surprised to see that my former student returned, this time accompanied by the bandleader, a man I did not recognize as someone I should know. That changed, though, as the bandleader introduced himself by name and said, "Remember 1979? I want you to know that you are the reason why I did not finish my doctorate in music education." Of course I remembered him now; how could I not as he told his story in front of anyone who cared to listen? As uncomfortable a situation as it was for me, it also brought back memories of me as a young, untenured assistant professor who felt she had to prove herself to her senior colleagues. And I remembered this student as a difficult advisee who did not respond well to supervision but had been assigned to me as his doctoral advisor. That, at least, was my take on the situation; his take, obviously, was different because he proceeded to describe himself as the victim of a system that, through me, had not allowed him to be himself. In his eyes, I had personified that system in 1979 and continued to do so at the end of the year of 2009. His story was full of hurt and anger many years later, as he described me as the representative of a university who in his mind had been harmful when keeping him from pursuing his career dreams.*

Numerous other reasons than those given by the second former advisee might have contributed to his reasons for leaving the degree program, but I am not examining the validity of his claims. Rather, I found that the encounter exemplified what Mills (1959) has called the intersection of our private and public lives; moments in which biography and history come together and force us to place our "own self with its orbits into the larger scheme of things" (3). When I met both former students in 2009, thinking of work or my role as mentor was furthest away from my thoughts. What struck me immediately at that moment however (and has been on my mind since) is this: The first part of the encounter affirmed my own sense of self, as I had construed it in my own mind, as a gate opener who enjoyed a once-established collegial friendship with a former advisee. Although to the best of my knowledge my advising principles had been the same for both students, the second advisee shattered that image of gate opener as quickly as the first student had built it u

Two questions have remained with me as a result of this experience:

- How might my own conduct as educator, college professor, and representative of the academic world in music have impacted my judgments and actions as a dissertation advisor? And,
- To what extent can I actually say for certain that I have always acted in such a way that no harm was done to any of my advisees?

These questions caused me to peruse a substantial amount of literature on (1) ethical teaching behavior in general; (2) expectations toward ethical teaching in higher education that take into consideration the complexities of the academic institution itself; (3) institutionally sanctioned, professional behavior apart from teaching; and (4) the self and its construction as an important connection to making ethical judgments.

As in previous publications, my theoretical perspective is that of interactionism, a framework that places the self at the center of analysis. The theory goes back to Cooley's "Looking Glass Self" and Mead's distinction between "the 'I' and the 'me' as the interacting properties of the self" (Simpson 1998, 30). The self becomes the unit of analysis (25) for all interactions because it reflects "local embeddedness" (27) in a larger societal context. The "I" as the innermost portion of the self, known only to each of us individually, interacts with the "me" of the self, that portion of the self that expresses itself in different roles when interacting with others. The two questions above, then, are raised in direct application of interactionism to my own actions as a doctoral advisor.

### **On ethical teaching behavior in general**

As can be expected, one of the most commonly cited examples of unethical behavior in teaching lies in situations in which the unequal power structure between teachers and students can lead to abuses in what began as befriendments (e.g., Baker 1996, Rochelau and Speck 2007). The cases that make it into the public limelight in that regard often represent illegal sexual relationships or, at the college level, sexual harassment accusations. The other end of the continuum of unethical student-teacher relationships is either that of outspoken favoritism toward one student or a "stand-offishness" toward another. Any teacher in a mentoring role at any level may know this: advising is easy and fun in the first case and hard work in the second; most importantly, when we perceive certain advisees as being "difficult," they sense our disposition and react in a variety of ways. I can recall instances in which my actions were met with barely hidden or even open hostility, withdrawal from asking for help, or seemingly unquestioned compliance that relegated all decision-making to me.

When I encountered such situations, more time with an advisee was needed than I normally allotted for a consultation because a candidate's background and motivations had to be examined more closely. Although adjusting my expectations in that way, I often felt a tension between pressing forward in the interest of time and expediency and the particular

and special needs of the advisee. However, not always did I resolve that tension in the interest of the student's immediate needs. Rather, I acted on behalf of what I assumed to be the candidate's long-term needs, those of completing the dissertation and getting the degree.

This tension, well remembered by me, seems to be a manifestation of what Carr (2000) has called teaching "as a normative, intentional activity to bring about learning" and education "as a profession and vocation" (23). Teaching, in his view, should mean "to train and instruct" rather than "heal and care." And, because of the complexities of teaching as a profession, student-faculty relationships, too, are more complex than "oversimplifying dichotomous categories of traditionalists-progressivists, teacher-centered vs. child-centered education" (131) might imply.

Throughout my career as a college professor, I had strived to be a student-centered instructor; a person balancing the vision of herself as a trusted and student-oriented counselor who "healed and cared" with her position as a professional in charge of promoting and rigorously upholding academic standards and principles. In doing so, however, I may have done precisely what Charnov has described for faculty in higher education in general: they are individuals "who struggle to teach competently and ethically but have relied mostly on intuitive guideposts" (Charnov 1987, 21). Although I prided myself in the possession of such intuitive guideposts then, I now see validity in what Burgan has called a professor's possible unawareness about "the impact of [her] own power as a senior professor" when "putting the young into their place" (Burgan 1996, 22). If I replace "the young" with "the advisees," Burgan also described moments in my own teaching.

Rodabaugh (1996) asserted fairness as the key (or guidepost) for ethical behavior in teaching, dividing it into three dimensions: interactional, procedural, and outcome fairness. She defined *interactional fairness* as being "...equally concerned about all students, without showing any partiality when answering their questions, when giving them assistance, and when responding through body language or otherwise" (40). *Procedural fairness* in teaching was believed by Rodabaugh to be evidenced primarily in the administration of tests, the establishment and enforcement of attendance rules as well as rules that relate to cheating and plagiarism. Finally, she suggested *outcome fairness* to be achieved "when students truly earn the grades assigned to them" (42).

As clearly as the behaviors are described in the definitions, applying them fairly and evenly to all students is more difficult. For instance, to be a fair, thus ethical, teacher, should

I have given the same amount of interactional time to all students rather than spending hours with the weaker ones when it only took five minutes to advise stronger students? Or, with individualization of learning at the center of prevailing teaching philosophies today, would outcome fairness have to be re-defined to reflect different learning goals for different students? How comparable would such goal assessments be?

### **Expectations toward ethical teaching in higher education that take into consideration the complexities of the academic institution itself**

In *Rights and wrongs in the college classroom. Ethical issues in postsecondary teaching*, Rocheleau and Speck (2007) list lack of professionalism, conflicts of interest, decision-making for students, and favoritism as some basic “wrongs” in higher education. Those can be traced, as was done by Payne and Charnov (1987), as being rooted in the complexity of the university as a multiple system of values and stakeholders (11). Existing in 1987 and perhaps still pertinent today, such complexity brings with it the dilemma of lack of agreement on universal principles of ethical conduct at the university level and differential perspectives that control many “gatekeeping” relationships in the academy.

While related, the first one speaks to the impact of academic freedom and freedom of scholarly decision making as mainstays of higher education careers (see also Carr 2000). The second dilemma, differential perspectives among university constituents, speak to the fact that, as Charnov (1987) has pointed out, college careers are shaped by adherence to rules that define very specific (and important) “gatekeeping” relationships in the academy: student and teacher, department chair and faculty member, tenured and non-tenured faculty, editor and author, review board chair and individual committee members, novice researcher in the humanities and seasoned researcher in the natural sciences. In each of these relationships, an individual needs to make choices that keep old alliances or form new ones.

Two related examples might illustrate this point. First, after many discussions with my students about methodological options, I frequently ended up suggesting the options might best work for a particular project. When making such suggestions, I found myself holding to an agenda, at times unbeknownst to my students, of taking the known preferences of certain committee members into consideration. I did so to protect the doctoral candidate because I knew who among my colleagues had the greatest veto power on a committee. Clearly, my choices on behalf of the students had a direct bearing on the student’s work.

Today and upon reflection, I wonder whether those choices weakened the students' own construction of self as researchers.

Secondly, my colleagues and I would jokingly and at times affectionately refer to a few of the completed and approved dissertations in our program as yet other examples of dissertations “we had written.” Intended as a light-hearted and private comment then, I now believe it to be an ethical issue worthy of serious consideration: Where is the line between advising what to do and showing how to do it? If imitation is a recognized instructional tool, how ethical is it to help someone in writing paragraphs, if not pages? Are we merely assisting the student or weakening the academy? What is the ethical imperative in such a situation, and whom are we harming?

Karl D. Hostetler (1997) has grouped the choices each teaching professional has to make into pairs of opposites that nonetheless complement each other. He called the groupings freedom and discipline, self and others, communities near and far, excellence and equality, unity and diversity, and faith and truth. Each of these choices suggests tensions to be negotiated in one's own self, a subject also highlighted by Edmondson (2005) and further discussed below. Here it may suffice to say that even such readily agreed-upon qualities as honesty and integrity, traits that according to Johns, McGrath, and Mathur (2008) most university faculty strive for or believe to possess, are not as easily attained as I once thought.

### **Institutionally sanctioned professional behavior outside of teaching with a bearing on professional conduct in education**

Not in academia alone are the lines blurred between advocacy and neutrality, trust and distrust, being friendly and showing favoritism. Judging from the literature reviewed, it seems that nearly all work relationships can be traced to one-on-one, supervisory relationships that may or may not be governed by clear rules. This is why there exists a considerable amount of general information concerning institutionally sanctioned professional behavior in the corporate world (e.g., Bommer et al. 1987, Bradshaw 2009, Christians and Merrill 2009, Fricke and Totterdill 2004, Kramer and Cook 2004, Vardi and Weitz 2004).

Although our “business” is not that of the corporate world, the organization “university” in which doctoral mentoring takes place exerts controlling behavior not unlike that present in the corporate world. Therefore, two issues spoken to by several researchers



attracted my attention: 1) the supervisor-advisee relationship, and 2) the intentionality of behavior in the context of institutional belonging.

### *The supervisor-advisee relationship*

Political scientist Gary Miller (2004) describes teaching, together with police and social work, as a task in which “the ability of supervisors to monitor subordinate behavior is limited and the costs of monitoring individual behavior are large” (115). Visualizing the relationship of supervisory monitoring and achieved output, Miller describes how:

...the effort-response curve may rise steeply in the vertical dimension, meaning that increased monitoring [by the mentor] has limited impact on the individual's [i.e., the student's] level of effort, which remains low. The equilibrium behavior in such situations may involve a great deal of monitoring and little subordinate effort. (115)

Miller captures well what I experienced repeatedly: the more I helped with the actual re-wording and re-writing of chapters or sections of chapters, the less effort I thought I observed in the doctoral advisees. It was an unsettling observation which, I now know, was not unique to my own advising. Miller confirmed for supervisory relationships in general what I had experienced personally.

Of particular importance in Miller's theoretical model might be the point at which the equilibrium between effort and response is out of balance. He describes that situation as one that is:

...likely to be perceived as “bureaucratic” in the fullest pejorative sense of the word: bureaucrats will be seen as rigid and inflexible, obsessed with following procedures rather than serving their public clientele, determined to use organizational rules and routines both as excuse for inaction and defense against external criticism. (115)

Did I ever perceive myself as a bureaucrat when I guided the students through the dissertation process? Certainly not. Did the students see me as the representative of an educational bureaucracy? The likely answer would have to be primarily ‘yes’ because even the most successful students probably thought of me as “rigid and inflexible” at least some of the time. How often might they have perceived me as being more concerned with procedure and organizational rules than with their desire (and need) to resume their lives? I do not know the answer to this question in my own case but believe it to be a valuable question for systematic research on doctoral mentoring in music education. Further research regarding

Miller's effort-response curve in application to doctoral advising in music education might be useful.

*My behavior in the context of institutional belonging*

A construct suggested by Vardi and Weitz (2004) with relevance for understanding my own actions as doctoral advisor may be that of 'misbehavior of organizations,' a term that can be applied to both blatant abuse of power and minor workplace incivilities. The authors suggest, however, that any such distinct misbehavior should be set apart from organizational behavior that may be perceived by one group in an organization as "misuse of power, impression management, politicking, and favoritism" (77) while other groups not only accept it as appropriate but also expect it. Citing and concurring with Drory (1993) and Vigoda's (2000) empirical work, the authors suggested that:

The negative effects of organizational politics are stronger for employees of lower status who are more vulnerable and more easily victimized by such manipulative behavior. Therefore, they exhibit more negative attitudes and behaviors toward the organization than higher status employees. (Vardi and Weitz 2004, 93)

Of course it remains to be determined whether lower-status employees of a company are comparable in behavior and expectations to doctoral students in general or, particularly, music education doctoral students; and if the relationship between student and advisor may resemble that of a low-status employee and a higher-ranking manager. If both hypotheses could be accepted, one might be able to explain why certain advisees perceive their advisors as wielding undue power and control when the advisors believe they are compliant with institutional demands. Because individual-level and situation-level variables (Trevino 1986) always interact with each other, truly ethical mentoring conditions require an effective match between individual and institutional expectations. Such a condition would have to be more than the shared goal of successfully completing the dissertation and of actually graduating; rather, all parties would have to share as equal partners in the research process itself, a topic to which I will return below.

Whether or not my actions as an advisor were ethical would have depended on the extent to which I had made my allegiances to the university and the community of scholars in music education clear and had shared them explicitly with each advisee. Although I spoke about that goal regularly in many classes, I did not make it as explicitly a point with each advisee and with the urgency that it held for me personally. We did discuss peer review and

principles of scholarship, university guidelines, and expectations by committee members, but each of these topics may have come across as symbols of bureaucratic red tape rather than as the manifestation of scholarly conduct to which any faculty member should be professionally committed. This explains, perhaps, why a good number of my advisees either tended to balk at my repeated requests for a chapter re-write or resented probing questions they interpreted as personal criticism.

### **Our sense of ‘self’ as advisors and advisees**

Mary Burgan, former professor and chair of English and associate dean of arts and sciences at Indiana University, suggests that “if students are subjects whose identities are in flux, so are their teachers” (Burgan 1996, 15). It is an observation not only central to interactionism as a theoretical model but also to mentoring as a teaching act.

Identity is a complex phenomenon that has been described and discussed by many scholars in different ways. In the context of interactionism, identity construction is the result of the self interacting with other selves by means of roles we take and/or play according to our own perception of how we think we are seen by others.

In music education, an individual’s professional sense of self (one portion of what Mead called the “me”) is a composite of his or her sense of self as musician, artist, practicing teacher, scholar, and or researcher, but not necessarily in this order of importance. Mismatches in priorities can lead to mutually questioning each other’s reasons for acting the way one does. Out of those acts of questioning can come positive or negative results, either a deeper understanding of each other or a sense of alienation.

Political scientist Morton Kaplan (1998) acknowledged this alienation in *Character and identity. The philosophical foundation of political and sociological perspectives*, but also observed that although “some degree of alienation is an inevitable consequence of life,” it is “nonetheless ... possible to deal productively with alienation in developing an identity that helps define character” (105–7). An episode in my advising history that I previously reported in Froehlich (2008), may help illustrate this point:

I always prided myself in giving my doctoral students much of my time. But it also was my habit in earlier years to mark up dissertation drafts in a way that saved me time. Thus, I wrote into the margin statements like “this is unclear,” “explain,” “no!” or simply a “?,” the latter standing for a host of issues I wanted to raise during upcoming conversations. My own teachers had done it this way to me and I saw nothing wrong with continuing that tradition. That is, until the day when my doctoral

student PS stormed into my office, waving the marked up document in his hand and said, “How dare you talk to me this way—you can’t do that to me!” Pointing to my notes in the margins of his dissertation draft, he made it clear that the notes in the margins played me out not as a person with perhaps more knowledge but as a person with more control and power—an important distinction in his mind. Instead of reading my corrections in the way I had intended them (that is, as reminders for him and myself that the text needed more work), he interpreted my scribbles in the margins as a message about the hierarchical nature of our relationship. (27–8)

Fortunately for my growth as an advisor, my student apparently was comfortable enough with the discourse we had established over several years to speak to me as his equal, a gesture that stunned and affronted me at first; after all, I was the teacher. But from that moment on I began to write lengthy notes in the margins of any written drafts I received from him or other advisees. I wrote substantive, lengthier questions into the margins of each document and took care to use a language that was non-judgmental. By doing so I found that I not only sharpened my own thinking about the subject matter at hand but also spent far more time in reading and responding to drafts than prior to the encounter. Although I am not sure that it changed the substance of my concerns significantly, it certainly changed the substance of the mentoring process away from a top-down approach to one of dialogue. Henceforth, our advisee/advisor relationship improved as well as our dialogue as researchers. Dealing with alienation in a positive way is a matter of understanding the difference between self and ego (Mann 1994), and realizing that “different views of the self inform different political positions” (Margolis 1998, 4). Once both points become internalized in the self of both advisor and advisee, it is possible to “measure up” (Miller 2003) to the task and construct new selves (Dunkel and Kerpelman 2006, Markus and Nurius 1986).

Doctoral mentoring, as probably all of teaching, constitutes a relationship in which a mentor’s own self and that of her advisees come together in ways that, in Kaplan’s words, “get tested continuously” and in which:

Morality and ethics are not disembodied, abstract subjects. Their subject matter is concrete. They apply to particular kinds of beings in particular kinds of environments and with particular historical experiences and understanding. (170)

If that is so, perhaps measuring up to each student and exploring new selves in that process should have received more time during advising than I was able or willing to give. Perhaps only then could I have brought my advisees to actually view themselves as researchers. In looking back, only a very small number of advisees may have brought this ability to the mentoring process from the beginning, but most did not. Explicitly and as described above,

only one student took direct action in that regard, causing to change, I believe, my advisor self. Whether or not my perceptions and those of my advisees align would actually depend on the advisees' responses to how they remember my advising behavior. If those responses were to show significant differences between students who graduated before and those who graduated after I changed my style of written commentary, one might conclude that my advisor "me" had changed toward a more socially just, more ethical self. This is work that lies ahead.

### **Answering my own research questions and developing new ones**

Two questions initiated this work: 1) how had my own conduct as educator, college professor, and representative of the academic world in music impacted my judgments and actions as a dissertation advisor; and, 2) to what extent can I actually say for certain that or whether I have always acted in such a way that no harm was done to any of my advisees? For reasons that might become clear later, I begin with the second question.

*Did I act in such a way that no harm was done to any of my advisees?*

Pairing memories of my advising style with the reportedly most common faculty digressions in higher education, it is likely that some harm was done to some of my advisees. As such, I must conclude that I probably did not act as ethically as I believed I had during my work as a doctoral advisor. I qualify this answer because I would need to examine more closely how former students describe in retrospect their experiences as doctoral candidates: How many of them perceived in me gestures of favoritism and controlled behavior to override the building of trust? Did I understand their selves and my own sufficiently to truly individualize instruction? Were my actions reflective of knowledge about the "historically conditioned matrix of languages, logics, and beliefs of science and the philosophy of science" on the one hand and "our notions of good things and justice" on the other (Kaplan 1998, 170)?

As stated previously, I view my role as a doctoral advisor as pivotal to my past work and pride myself in the many students who graduated and are successful music educators across the country and the world. Numbers however and anecdotal testimony alone do not reflect "what really went on." My assumption is that once data came in for any of the above questions, my now somewhat qualified response may get solidified then. At such time,

however, I might pursue further the question of exactly what kind of harm resulted from my actions, a question perhaps also applicable to other faculty in higher music education.

*The impact of my conduct as educator, college professor, and representative of the academic world on my judgments and actions as a dissertation advisor*

In reflecting on my advising practices, I believe that my role as the representative of the university as a gatekeeper was probably stronger than what I had assumed it to be during my career. As much as I believed myself to come across as a gate opener, it appears to me now that my professional self was aligned closer to the academy than to the students. My alliance to the academy was apparently quite firm.

Clearly, differences in alliances go hand in hand with the nature of what it means to get a degree in higher education. But it also seems important to distinguish more explicitly than I apparently did how I affirmed my own position as faculty member, and which of those actions actually helped the students solidify, if not strengthen, their own positions. There is a difference between holding out for a particular point of view because of egotism or because of upholding university-wide, agreed-upon standards of conduct. Thanks to one of my student's actions, I began to see the danger in such egotism and believe that I changed my behavior from then on. However, whether I succeeded in that regard can be answered only by responses from the students themselves.

### **Conclusion and recommendations for research and action**

In this article I connected my doctoral advising practices as I remembered them to pertinent research literature on ethics in teaching. I did this in the hope of contributing to a discussion of doctoral mentoring in music education as an important pedagogical and ethical act.

The result of this examination has been a humbling experience because it has challenged my basic assumptions about advising practices. I was not as student-centered in my actions as I had often seen myself, and I continue to know very little about how I came across to my advisees in terms of my roles as gate keeper and gate opener of the academy. Perhaps even describing the role of advisor in those two terms may be a oversimplification, akin to the “dichotomous categories of traditionalists-progressivists, teacher-centered vs. [learner]-centered education” Carr (2000, 131) spoke against.

As a scholar with substantial research interests in such simplifying dichotomous categorizations (Froehlich 1995, 1992, 1981, 1979, 1977; Froehlich-Rainbow 1984), my increased focus on interactionism as a perhaps more valid model (Froehlich 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2002) reinforces the view that the “webs of interaction” in which all of us are engaged are unlikely to allow dichotomous categories at all. Rather, our actions always respond to, or are a reflection of, the many interactions to which we are committed every day in our professional lives.

Secondly, I have learned first-hand that to advise in an ethical way requires more than knowingly avoiding obvious violations of “wrongs” in the postsecondary classroom (Rochelau and Speck 2007). Instead, our responsibilities as doctoral advisors lie in a delicate and often unspoken balance of providing guidance while letting the advisees find their own ways. Further queries into my advisees’ memories of their dissertation experience may bear out that making the balance clear to our advisees might be as important as are commenting on drafts and correcting obvious mistakes.

Third, several researchers addressing the subject of ethical behavior in organizations, including educational institutions, recommend the articulation of clear codes of ethics by which to improve channels of communication and conduct (e.g., Carr 2000, Charnow 1987, Vardi and Weitz 2004, Vigoda 2000). Many such codes of conduct and ethics are already in place by professions in the business world and elsewhere and examples can be easily accessed through the Internet (e.g., <http://www.ibe.org.uk/index.asp?upid=57&msid=11>, last retrieved March 15, 2012). Some of them even include writing instructions as well as examples from major corporations. Saltzmann’s (2006) twelve step instructions of how to write of a code of conduct seems especially noteworthy.

If it were the case that unambiguously worded codes of conduct would serve us well as useful tools for establishing obligations, expectations, and boundaries of authority in all matters concerning university work, perhaps the one-on-one advising process of theses and dissertations might need to be included in such efforts, bureaucratic as those efforts may seem at first glance. In higher education, we already ascribe to such codes when it comes to conducting and publishing research. If evidence beyond my own experiences and perceptions were to confirm a need for greater transparency and more socially just modes of advisement across doctoral programs in music education, a code of conduct might indeed be a necessary further step toward improving instructional practices at the doctoral level.

However, not even the best code of conduct assures voluntary ethical behavior by advisor, advisee, and the institution of which both are a part. It therefore may be advisable to look for solutions to possible problems also in a revised mode of operation within graduate and, especially, doctoral programs in music education. One perhaps should envision the possibility of a work environment in which research and scholarship are shared by faculty and students in equal and more transparent ways than my advisees and I experienced it. It is an apprenticeship model that is more common in the sciences than in the humanities; nonetheless, a number of music education programs in the United States already follow that model and might become the foundation of inquiry on the teaching of research.

We may find in such programs that students, beginning from the first day of enrollment in their course work, engage with their mentors in joint research projects on an ongoing basis. An equal interest and engagement in particular research projects throughout the doctoral work lessens the students' perception of bureaucratic pressures because the mentors have a personal stake in the projects they guide. The students learn first-hand that their mentors are held to the same principles of disciplined inquiry to which the mentors hold their students. And, along with a focused purpose, self-evaluation and self-criticism become necessary ingredients throughout the entire research process. Peer reviews become familiar to the students from early on in their doctoral work and form an important tool for scholarly communicative practices.

A model as the one hypothesized and perhaps found to exist would benefit both the students and their mentors because technical and related research skills are honed on an ongoing basis. Unexpected problems are handled in consultation with the entire committee together, with the mentor having as much at stake as the advisee. Furthermore, both parties would understand that any one project is just one step in a never-ending loop of focusing, evaluating, improving, questioning, and, again, focusing. The dissertation would simply be one such step in that ongoing journey of scholarship and inquiry, a vision that has been articulated by many scholars before me but one that might deserve repetition and further enactment.



---

## References

- Baker, Richard L., Jr. 1996. The ethics of student-faculty friendships. In *Ethical dimensions of college and university teaching: Understanding and honoring the special relationship between teachers and students*, ed. Linc Fisch, 25–32. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bommer, Michael, Clarence Gratto, Jerry Gravander, and Mark Tuttle. 1987. A behavioral model of ethical and unethical decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics* 6(4): 265–280.
- Bradshaw, John. 2009. *Reclaiming virtue. How we can develop the moral intelligence to do the right thing at the right time for the right reason*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Braxton, John M., and Allan E. Bayer. 1999. *Faculty misconduct in collegiate teaching*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Brehm, John, and Scott Gates. 2004. Supervisors as trust-brokers in social-work bureaucracies. In *Trust and distrust in organizations. Dilemmas and approaches*, ed. Roderick M. Kramer and Karen S. Cook, 41–64. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Burgan, Mary. 1996. Teaching the *subject*: Developmental identities in teaching. In *Ethical dimensions of college and university teaching: Understanding and honoring the special relationship between teachers and students*, ed. Linc Fisch, 15–23. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Carr, David. 2000. *Professionalism and ethics in teaching*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Charnov, Bruce H. 1987. The academician as good citizen. In *Ethical dilemmas for academic professionals*, ed. Stephen L. Payne and Bruce H. Charnov, 3–20. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Christians, Clifford G., and John C. Merrill. 2009. *Ethical communication: Moral stances in human dialogue*. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press.
- Drory, Amos. 1993. Perceived political climate and job attitudes. *Organizational Studies*, 14(1): 59–71.
- Dunkel, Curtis, and Jennifer Kerpelman, eds. 2006. *Possible selves. Theory, research and applications*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Edmondson, Amy C. 2005 Psychological safety, trust, and learning in organizations: A group-level lens. In *Trust and distrust in organizations. Dilemmas and approaches*, ed. Roderick M. Kramer and Karen S. Cook, 239–272. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Froehlich, Hildegard. 2012. Mentoring doctoral students in music education: Personal reflections about ethical choices and conflicts in higher education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11(1): 43–61. [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11_1.pdf)

- 
- Fricke, Werner, and Peter Totterdill, eds. 2004. *Action research in workplace innovation and regional development*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Froehlich, Hildegard. 2009. Music education and community: Reflections on ‘webs of interaction’ in school music. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 8(1): 85–107. Online: [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich8\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich8_1.pdf). January 11, 2012.
- . 2008. Toward understanding language codes as framers of hidden curriculum in music education at the collegiate level. In *Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> International RAIME Symposium, 20–31*, ed. Teresa Lesiuk (Frost School of Music, University of Miami, November 8–10, 2007). Miami, FL: Frost School of Music. ISSN 1942-9746.
- . 2007. Institutional belonging, pedagogic discourse and music teacher education: The paradox of routinization. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 6(3). Online: [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich6\\_3.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich6_3.pdf). January 11, 2012.
- . 2006. Mirror, mirror on the wall . . . Or the challenge of jumping over our own shadows. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 5(2). Online: [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich5\\_2.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich5_2.pdf). January 11, 2012.
- . 2002. Thoughts on Schools of Music and Colleges of Education as places of ‘Rites and Rituals’: Consequences for research on practicing. In *Research in and for higher music education. Festschrift for Harald Jørgensen*, eds. Ingrid M. Hanken, Siw G. Nielsen, and Monika Nerland, 149–165. Oslo, Norway: Norges musikkhøgskole.
- . 1995. Measurement dependability in the systematic observation of music instruction: A review, some questions, and possibilities for a (new?) approach. *Special Issue, Psycho-Musicology* 14(Spring–Fall): 182–196.
- . 1992. Systematische Beobachtung in musikpädagogischer Unterrichtsforschung—ein Nachtrag zur Methodologie. [Systematic observation in music education research—a postscript to its methodology]. In *Vom pädagogischen Umgang mit Musik*. [About Music and Pedagogy]. eds. Hermann J. Kaiser, Eckhard Nolte and Michael Roske, 31–38. Mainz: Schott.
- . 1981. The use of systematic classroom observation in elementary general music. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 66–67(Spring–Summer): 15–19.
- . 1979. Replication of a study on teaching singing in the elementary general music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 27(1): 35–45.
- . 1977. The investigation of the relationship of selected variables to the teaching of singing. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 25(2): 115–130.
- Froehlich, Hildegard. 2012. Mentoring doctoral students in music education: Personal reflections about ethical choices and conflicts in higher education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11(1): 43–61. [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11_1.pdf)

- Froehlich-Rainbow, Hildegard. 1984. Systematische Beobachtung als Methode musikpädagogischer Unterrichtsforschung. Eine Darstellung anhand amerikanischer Materialien. [Classroom observation as method in research on music education. Examples of American materials.] Mainz: Schott.
- Grasha, Anthony F. 2002. The dynamics of one-on-one teaching. *College Teaching* 50(4): 129–133.
- Hostetler, Karl D. 1997. *Ethical judgment in teaching*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Johns, Beverly H., Mary Z. McGrath, and Sarup R. Mathur. 2008. *Ethical dilemmas in education. Standing up for honesty and integrity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kaplan, Morton A., ed. 1998. *Character and identity. The philosophical foundation of political and sociological perspectives*. St. Paul, MN: Professors World Peace Academy.
- Keith-Spiegel, Patricia, Bernard E. Whitley, Jr., Deborah Ware Balogh, David V. Perkins, and Arno F. Wittig. 2002. *The ethics of teaching. A casebook*, 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kramer, Roderick M., and Karen Cook, eds. 2004. *Trust and distrust in organizations. Dilemmas and approaches*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Mann, David W. 1994. *A simple theory of the self*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Margolis, Diane R. 1998. *The fabric of self: A theory of ethics and emotions*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Markus, Hazel, and Paula Nurius. 1986. Possible selves. *American Psychologist* 41(9): 954–969.
- Miller, Gary J. 2004. Monitoring, rules, and the control paradox: Can the Good Soldier Švejk be trusted? In *Trust and distrust in organizations. Dilemmas and approaches*, ed. Roderick M. Kramer and Karen S. Cook, 90–126. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Miller, William I. 2003. *Faking it*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The sociological imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Froehlich, Hildegard. 2012. Mentoring doctoral students in music education: Personal reflections about ethical choices and conflicts in higher education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 11(1): 43–61. [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Froehlich11_1.pdf)

- Payne, Steven L. 1987. Concern for academic research participants. In *Ethical dilemmas for academic professionals*, eds. Steven L. Payne and Bruce H. Charnov, 47–57. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Payne, Steven L., and Bruce H. Charnov, eds. 1987. *Ethical dilemmas for academic professionals*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Rocheleau, Jordy, and Bruce W. Speck. 2007. *Rights and wrongs in the college classroom. Ethical issues in postsecondary Teaching*. Bolton, MA: Anker.
- Rodabaugh, Rita C. 1996. Institutional commitment to fairness in college teaching. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 66: 37–46.
- Saltzman, Joel. 2006. 12 top tips for writing a code of ethics for your business. Online: <http://shakethatbrain.com/stbethics.Writing%20a%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20for%20Your%20Business.html>. April 28, 2010.
- Simpson, John H. 1998. Selves and stories: From Descartes to the global self. In *Character and identity. The philosophical foundation of political and sociological perspectives*, ed. Morton Kaplan, 17–36. St. Paul, MN: Professors World Peace Academy.
- Trevino, Linda K. 1986. Ethical decision making in organizations: A person-situation interactionist model. *Academy of Management Review* 11(3): 601–617.
- Vardi, Yoav, and Ely Weitz. 2004. *Misbehavior in organizations: Theory, research and management*. Mahwah, NJ; London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Vigoda, Eran. 2000. Organizational politics, job attitudes, and work outcomes: Exploration and implications for the public sector. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 57(3), 326–347.

### About the Author

Hildegard Froehlich is Professor Emeritus of Music Education at the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas. She continues to be professionally active as a clinician, lecturer and writer in her special interest area of sociology as applied to the study of the learning and teaching of music. Her website is [www.hildegardfroehlich.com](http://www.hildegardfroehlich.com) and she can be contacted by e-mail at [hildegardfroehlich@my.unt.edu](mailto:hildegardfroehlich@my.unt.edu).