Setting a Research Agenda for Music Teacher Professional Development

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Overview

- Music Education Research on Professional Development (Bauer)
- Research-Based Designs for Professional Development (Hammel)
- The Potential of National Boards Process as Professional Development (Standerfer)
- The Potential of Teacher research as Professional Development (Robbins)
- Agenda for Future Professional Research in Professional Development (Conway)
The Research Literature on Music Teacher Professional Development

- Professional development of teachers in general
- Professional development of music educators
  - Entry year teachers
  - Topics of interest
  - Approaches
  - Changing needs
The Research Literature on Professional Development in General Education

- Teacher professional development was most effective when it was subject specific and focused on:
  - Student learning
  - Instructional practices
  - Developing teachers’ understanding of disciplinary content
  - Authentic curricular materials

- Standards
  - Assessment instruments and practices

- Length of time spent in professional development is important - 30 hours

- See Resnick (2005) and Hammel (in press) for more information
Conway (2003) documents challenges faced by 1st year music educators:
- Classroom management
- Administrative issues
- Student motivation
- Providing advocacy

Mentoring appears to be a good way to provide professional development to address these and other issues.
Research: Professional Development Topics

- Appear to vary according to area of specialization - no “one size fits all”

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Note. Likert scale ranged from 1 (no interest) to 4 (very interested).
Research: Approaches & Means of Delivery

- Music teachers do not prefer non-music/music education in-services held in local schools (Bauer, Forsythe, and Kinney, 2007; Bush, 2007; Friederichs, 2001; Conway, 2006)

- Opportunities for informal interactions with colleagues are valued (Friederichs, 2001; Conway, 2006)
Research: Approaches & Means of Delivery

- Evidence that extended experiences are valuable (Junda, 1994; Dolloff, 1996; Bauer, Reese, and McAllister, 2003)
- Professional conferences (Price and Orman, 1991, 2001)
- Value of professional memberships (Killian, Baker, and Johnson, 2006)
- MENC Online Forums (Bauer and Moehle, in press)
Research: Changing Needs Throughout a Career

  - Newer teachers rated their interest in classroom management, administrative aspects of music teaching, working with special learners, career development, and the applications of research significantly higher than more experienced teachers.

- See Hookey (2002) and Bauer (in press) for more details on the music teacher professional development literature.
Communication Between Teachers and Administrators

- Teachers feel that professional development is something that is done to them rather than with and for them (McCotter, 2001).

- An NCES (2006) staffing survey found that only 12% of teachers report their principal speaks to them regularly about their teaching.
“One Size Fits All”
Professional Development

- Lack of differentiation (expertise, school and classroom needs) is a concern (Lieberman, 2000).
- The classic model of one-day or short term professional development opportunities are not very effective (Fullan, 2001; Moore & Johnson, 1990; NCES, 2006; Sarason, 1996).
Research on Professional Development Delivery Formats

- Many teachers are limited to opportunities that are less than a week long, provide less than 25 contact hours, and do not involve active, content specific strategies (NCES, 2006).

- Teachers are seeking long-term experiences that provide mentorships, work with master teachers, and the opportunity to collaborate with other educators on a regular basis (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006).
Best Practice in Professional Development

- Killion (1999) found that teachers cite the following as most effective professional development activities:
  - Mentoring
  - Collaboration
  - Portfolios
  - Active Research
  - Observing Others
  - Working with University Faculty
  - Writing Curriculum and Grants
  - Presenting Research and Sessions
Killion Imperatives for Effective Professional Development

- Diverse and extensive learning experiences.
- Educator freedom to select content and process for learning.
- Time, resources, leadership, shared governance, collaboration, focused goals, and support structures.
- A significant role played by the principal.
- Multiple evaluation points.
- All educators responsible for contributions and student achievement.
What is National Board Certification?

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is the agency that grants advanced teaching certification
- Teachers must have 3+ yrs. experience
- Requires a portfolio submission and six tests at an assessment center
- Usually takes 9-11 months to complete

For more information: www.nbpts.org
NBPTS Portfolio

- Entry One: Planning
- Entry Two: Delivering Instruction
- Entry Three: Demonstrating and Developing Musicianship
- Entry Four: Documented Accomplishments: Contributions to Student Learning.
NBPTS Assessment Center
“Exercises”

1. Diagnostic Skills
2. Historical Repertoire
3. Composition
4. Instructional Strategies
5. Music From a World Sample
6. Curricular Applications
General Research on NBPTS


- Each study compared the NBPTS process to PD models.
- All found the National Board process to be a valuable form of professional development.

Common PD Elements:

1. Teachers volunteer to participate in the certification process.
2. Teachers reflect on their teaching in the form of self-analysis of practices.
3. Teachers collaborate and/or develop relationships that support their learning.
4. The process occurs in classroom contexts.
Research on NBPTS in Music

- Standerfer (2003): Qualitative case studies of three choral music teachers
- Compared to PD model (Guskey, 2000, 2002) & adult learning theories (Knowles, 1984, 1990; Mezirow, 1991)

Findings:

- Teachers reported improvements in their knowledge, skills, and belief structures
- Unintended transformative learning occurred
- More transformative learning occurred with conceptual reflections
Future NBPTS Research

- What do music teachers learn in the process? (in relation to the NB standards)
- Do music students of NBCTs perform better than non-NBCTs?
- Does the NBPTS process for teachers increase student achievement?
Through Teachers’ Eyes

Research is nothing but a state of mind...a friendly, welcoming attitude toward change...going out to look for change instead of waiting for it to come.

Becoming a Teacher Researcher

- Every lesson should be for the teacher, an inquiry, some further discovery, a quiet form of research (Britton, 1987).

- Teacher researchers become “students of teaching” (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995).

- Teacher research involves systematic and intentional inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

- Teacher researchers embrace uncertainty and welcome change, as opposed to waiting for it to happen (Ashburn, 1995).

- Research is typically case-oriented occurring within a bound system, such as a single classroom, content area, or group of students.
Tales of Two Teacher Researchers

- Learning to Love the Questions
- Designing Projects
- Dancing with Data
- Into the Field and Back Again
- Transformative Practice
Testimonies of Transformation

- Heidi: I have become a teacher who interacts constantly with students, allowing them to have input in the learning process. Questioning them about their knowledge, ideas, and creative possibilities has become a crucial part of each lesson. They can talk about their learning intelligently and can show me through their words and their actions what it is they are learning, and this has given my students a real voice in the classroom.

- Mary Kathryn: Through this project, a door has been opened for me regarding the way I now think about selecting and teaching folksongs. I gained more confidence in teaching multicultural music, and I am more appreciative of and comfortable with students from cultures other than mine. Having Demi teach *Zhou Peng You* became a real eye-opener for me and a reminder that sometimes the best thing teachers can do is simply get out of the way. Most important, I came to know my ESL students in ways that will forever shape the way I relate to them, and, in turn, all students who I teach.
Teacher Research as Professional Development

- Teachers’ questions that grow out of their real work with students become the stimulus for inquiry and growth.

- Inquiry is sustained over an extended period of time.

- Teacher research is a catalyst for teachers to become producers of knowledge as opposed to only being consumers.

- Teacher ownership of their learning leads to a renewed sense of professionalism.

- Teacher research acknowledges teachers’ authority and knowledge and promotes the inclusion of the teacher’s voice in shaping professional development.
Professional Development and Teaching Context

- Do the professional development needs of teachers in one state or region vary from teachers in other regions of the country?
- How are professional development preferences related to the specific teaching responsibilities and the area of music in which one teaches?
- How do professional development needs and preferences change throughout the career of a music teacher?
Professional Memberships

- Do the professional development desires of teachers who do not belong to their state association differ from those who choose to be members?
- There are common professional development experiences, such as attending conferences and membership in professional associations, which the music education profession may take for granted as being worthwhile and effective. However, some studies shed doubts on these common practices.
Designs for Music Teacher Professional Development

- What is the optimal length of time for a professional development experience? While a number of studies seem to indicate that extended experiences are more beneficial than short-term in-services, further examination of this question is needed.

- How does having the opportunity to practice and apply instructional approaches being learned, and to receive feedback on these, benefit the learning of and long-term use of new teaching and learning strategies?
The utilization of technology and its effectiveness for various aspects of professional development needs further study.

What are the effects of various approaches to professional development, including (but not limited to) NBPTS, teacher-research, teacher learning communities, and mentoring on teacher professional development?
Professional Development and the Lives of Teachers

- The professional development needs of teachers at various points in their professional life cycle should continue to be examined.

- What is the role of professional development in the retention of teachers and in the quality of their professional lives?
“The most difficult, and, to many the most important question is how what teachers have learned ultimately influences what their pupils learn. Even if teacher education students are followed into their classrooms, there are many complexities in approaching this question, including the problem of linking what teachers have learned to what they later do in the classroom and then linking what they do to what their students learn, accounting for the variability in what these pupils bring with them” (pp. 131-132)