

# Research Presented at the 2010 PMEAs Conference

The 2010 PMEAs conference in Pittsburgh was the site of a research poster session reporting on research conducted in a variety of settings. Six of the posters were chosen for presentation at one of two Research Forums. Below are descriptions of these six; the remaining abstracts are available on the PMEAs website, on the Research page by scrolling over the **PMEAs Specialty Areas Link**. Please feel free to contact the authors for more information about their studies.

Look for even more research at the 2011 Conference in Hershey.

## ***Junior high instrumental music students' audiation-based improvisation***

Alden Snell, Eastman School of Music

In this descriptive study, seventh and eighth grade students were given the *Musical Aptitude Profile* (Gordon, 1995), followed by instruction in improvisation. The researcher was looking to describe student achievement, the relationship between achievement and MAP scores and student perceptions of audiation-based improvisation. Following instruction, students were asked to play two tunes by ear and to improvise on each tune. The conclusions of the study were that students showed higher achievement on playing tunes by ear than they did on improvisation, that MAP scores did predict student achievement and that students enjoyed learning to play tunes and how to improvise.

## ***Collaborative reflection: A deeper understanding of the reflective practices of middle school teachers***

Nancy Beitler, Penn State University

Using an embedded case study approach, this study investigated the collaborative reflection practices of middle school teachers. Examining both the collaborating group as well as the individuals that made up the group, the researcher sought to understand 1) how the teachers collaboratively reflected on their teacher, 2) how the collaborative reflection influenced their individual teaching, and 3) how the collaborative reflection led to deeper understanding. Preliminary analysis suggested that the group encouraged and affirmed each other, as well as shared their experiences together. The group reflection provided an awareness of and interest in

new teaching strategies, as well as helped teachers to refine their teaching skills. The collaboration process enabled teachers to consider their classroom practices with deeper understanding.

## ***Teachers' self-reported experiences with online learning: Preliminary findings regarding professional growth***

Ronald P. Kos, Jr. & Andrew Goodrich, Boston University

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 36 participants upon their recent graduation from an on-line masters of music education degree program. Interviews were analyzed with priori codes, seeking instances of 1) changed teaching practice, 2) revised teaching philosophy, 3) satisfaction with the program, and 4) significance of the on-line community. Preliminary analysis suggested that the on-line program had a positive influence on professional growth, and that interactions with the on-line community were beneficial. The authors suggested that there may be value and benefit in on-line degree programs for music education.

## ***A case study: Middle school boys' perceptions of singing and participation in chorus***

Bridget Sweet, Bucknell University

As participant observer, the researcher sought to understand the perceptions of five boys regarding their participation in her choir as well as their perceptions regarding singing. Analysis of data—including a group interview with the participants and informal field notes—revealed four themes: *Singing*, *Other People*, *Choralier Men*, and *Silliness*. Due to this study, the researcher developed an awareness of the boy's behaviors and interactions during choir, as well as their need for peer interactions regarding singing. She was also able to use her observations to reflect on and develop her choral program, in order to deepen her student's choral experience.

## ***Self-reported medical problems of college band and orchestra members***

Allison Andrews, Elizabethtown College

In this quantitative study, college band and orchestra members were surveyed regarding the prevalence of instrument related musculoskeletal and non-musculoskeletal medical problems. Instruments were limited to woodwinds, brass, percussion and strings. Using descriptive statistics, the researcher found neck, left and right fingers,

lower back and right wrist to be the most prevalent areas of musculoskeletal problems. Non-musculoskeletal problems included headache, stage fright, fatigue and eyestrain. Further, the results indicated that students end their practice time due to physical fatigue 45.5% (SD=28.3) of the time, and due to mental fatigue 44.4% (SD=26.3) of the time. Highest frequencies of instrument specific reported pain were neck and right wrist for woodwind players; neck and lower back for brass players; and left fingers, left wrist and left hand for percussionists. String players reported higher pain levels than the other players, reporting highest frequencies of neck and upper back pain.



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***The first five years of the “real world”: An in-progress longitudinal investigation of music teachers educated in Pennsylvania music education programs during their first five years after college (Years 3 & 4)***

Kimberly H. Councill, Susquehanna University

Years three and four of this project focused on a selected group of four participants out of the original nine. Specific attention was given to the participant’s sense of preparation by their undergraduate program, their teaching successes and struggles, their tenure experiences and the use of their undergraduate coursework in their current teaching. Analysis reflected that these teachers felt they had been prepared well. They felt their classroom management, ensembles, rapport with students and student attitudes were successful; they struggled with scheduling issues, the balance of teaching with graduate study and with colleagues differing philosophical views. A variety of tenure-process experiences were reported by the teachers. Finally, participants implement strategies learned in their undergraduate coursework, such as positive reinforcement, being organized and having back-up plans.

An advertisement for Menchey Bowed String Gallery. The background is a black and white photograph of a violin gallery with many violins hanging on the wall. A large, stylized white letter 'W' is overlaid on the image. The text reads: "Whether you are just beginning your musical journey with a student instrument, ready to step up to a better instrument, or searching for a professional instrument, Menchey Bowed String Gallery can accommodate all your needs. The bowed string gallery has an extensive selection of violins, violas, cellos, basses and electric instruments set up by an award winning luthier." At the bottom left is the Menchey logo, a white outline of the state of Pennsylvania above a square containing a stylized 'M'. At the bottom right is the address and contact information: "80 Wetzel Drive, Hanover, PA 17331 1-888-636-2439 x 236 www.menchey.com".

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