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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

By

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Joseph Abramo sets the tone for this issue with his article exploring core practices for an instrumental music methods course. He outlines a rationale for using core practices as a conceptual framework for this course. Abramo includes a brief history and context of how teacher educators in the United States negotiate a tension between teaching behaviors and dispositions. He proposes some guiding principles for practice-based teacher education and defines the concept of core practices. These practices include providing feedback, structuring and pacing rehearsals, eliciting thinking through questions, selecting appropriate repertoire and materials, teaching higher-order thinking, and creating a student-centered pedagogy. In the concluding section, Abramo describes a pedagogy of practice-based education and suggests areas for future development.

We follow Abramo's ideas with a literature review where Michael Wall compiles research on improvisation in schools. Focusing on research that discusses the experiences of younger instrumentalists in schools, he presents literature on conceptualizing improvisation in learning spaces where instrumental music education happens. He also suggests strategies to help music teachers include improvisation as a routine part of instruction. Also of significance in his article is his challenge for teachers to reflect on

their own understandings of improvisation and define clearly what role improvisation may play in their engagements with instrumental music students.

In her article, Patricia Riley discusses participant perceptions of improvisation as a result of taking part in a collaborative music and dance free-improvisation project. Her research addressed how participation affected preservice music teachers' perceived competence, confidence, and comfort both with their own improvisation skills and in implementing improvisation activities in their classrooms. From her data, she found themes that included feeling apprehensive, experiencing growth, having time constraint challenges, creating in new ways, thinking about improvisation differently, and opening new cross-media collaboration possibilities. She concluded that participants' positive perceptions about improvisation increased following the experience.

Moving in a different direction, Lisa DeLorenzo and Marissa Silverman express concern about the rising numbers of minority students and the shrinking number of minority K-12 music teachers. They investigated why there are so few students of color preparing to teach music in urban public schools. Focusing on Black and Latino music students and teachers in northern New Jersey, they designed a qualitative methodology to listen to their participants recount their race/ethnic-related experiences in college along with their ideas about the scarcity of music students of color in music teacher education. Consistent with the literature, they found that urban minority students largely live in unsafe and violent neighborhoods and often encounter issues of malnutrition, inadequate housing, inferior medical care, and lack of access to resources inside and outside of school. These issues set them apart from students in more affluent schools in suburban

neighborhoods. DeLorenzo and Silverman's data revealed that stereotypical thinking promoted a perception that teaching music in an urban school was not a viable option.

Perceptions of respondents to teaching music in urban schools was not positive. They reported that the lack of role models of color who teach music in public school and the lack of music resources and music opportunities were also factors. The researchers concluded that "until we move to create more socially just conditions (i.e., by valuing the expertise, experiences, and knowledge of all peoples), we are simply engaging in dialogue without any practical ends." Further, they note the need for change in the ways that colleges and universities prepare preservice teachers. They conclude, "Public schools are not simply sites for fieldwork and student teacher placements. They are indispensable spaces for promoting and renewing a public invested in democratic citizenship."

With this volume we welcome Patricia Riley, Joseph Abramo, and Adam Bell to the editorial board. We are delighted to have their support and expertise as reviewers.