Some considerations on research dissemination with particular reference to the audience and the authorship of papers

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VIEWPOINTS

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This paper suggests that some refinements might need to be considered to current codes of ethics for dissemination of research. The growth of research in music education over the last decade is reviewed, with examples from new journals, conferences and professional associations. It is argued that nowadays researchers have to address a multidisciplinary number of audiences and this should be taken into account in the regulations for conferences and publications with the incorporation of guidelines for contributors to address their specific audience and to explain any previous dissemination. The authorship of papers is also considered, in particular issues arising from multiple authorship, as well as the research participants' contribution to the final report. Some of these issues are discussed with reference to studies focussed on a particular topic (creativity in music education) within the context of music education research, but it is acknowledged that the discussion also applies to other fields of the humanities and social sciences.

Introduction: the recent growth of music education research

During the last decade, there has been an increase in research focussed on creativity in music education. This has been reflected in several special symposiums at research conferences, such as those organized by the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE, formerly the Society for Research in Psychology of Music and Music Education [SRPMME]), the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM), and the biannual International Conference of Research in Music Education (RIME). The interest in creativity and music education has also been evident from the number of articles published in journals by English-speaking scholars, including Brinkman (1999), Burnard (1999, 2002), Berkley (2001), MacDonald and Miell (2000), Byrne and Sheridan (2001), and Savage (2003). It may be argued that increased research in this field coincided with

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a rising number of research studies in several other areas of music education. Indeed, the number of academic journals on music education has grown in the last decade, with the incorporation of new titles: *Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* (1990), *Research Studies in Music Education* (1993), *Philosophy of Music Education Review* (1993), *Music Education Research* (1999), *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* (1999), and *Music Education International* (2002). This increasing research has been documented by the British Educational Research Association in the document *Mapping music education research in the UK* (BERA, 2001). The pace of development of music education research has also been outlined by Hanley and Montgomery (2002) and Hickey (2002) in *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning*, published by the American National Association for Music Education (Colwell & Richardson, 2002).

Although these developments will be regarded by music educators as encouraging, it is necessary to recognize that research in music education is still fairly limited in comparison with other areas; for a long time it was a minor field in the university-led arena of educational research. The recent formation of a Special Interest Group (SIG) on Music Education within the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the biggest professional association of its kind, is an indication that music educators are more concerned with research than they were previously.

Addressing multiple audiences

In the current context, multiple audiences have developed, and researchers need to engage with them if they wish to increase the dissemination of their work. Examples of this multiple dissemination can be found in recent conference proceedings, articles and books. For instance, Burnard has written several articles and papers concerning her study of pupil's compositions and improvisations (e.g. Burnard, 1999, 2000a, b, 2001, 2002, 2003), all of which report on different conceptual slices of a large project and are addressed to the particular audience of the conference or journal in which they were presented or published. Hence, *the audience* seems to be an important issue to take into account, which is not often considered in the codes of ethics for dissemination of research. For instance, the code of ethics for research publication/presentation of the American National Association for Music Education includes the following statement:

> Papers submitted for presentation via any format (i.e. posters, paper-reading sessions) should not have been presented at another major conference. If the data have been presented in whole or substantive part in any forum, in print, or at previous research sessions, a statement specifying particulars of the above must be included with the submission. (MENC, 1998, paragraph 6)

This code of ethics is based on the manual of the American Psychological Association (1994) and the 'Ethical Principles of Psychologists'—published in 1981 in *American Psychologist*, number 36. The MENC's guidelines are taken as an example by journals (*Journal of Research in Music Education*) and major conferences in the field, such as the seminars of the Research Commission of the International Society

for Music Education (ISME), but given that several associations exist (e.g. ISME, AERA, ESCOM, SEMPRE), with their particular audiences, strengths and geographical locations, it would be reasonable to assume that, as long as the audience is properly taken into account, an investigation should be able to be reported in more than one major conference. Referring to this multiplicity of professional associations, the former Chair of the ISME Research Commission observed:

> Although it would be relatively simple, hypothetically, to set up an 'International Society for Research in Music Education' by drawing on different membership networks and activities, this could create a 'Chinese wall' between research and practice. This separation is something that we actively strive against. Our intention is always to foster evidence/research-based practice as well as basic research within our particular 'learning community'—a community that should be seen as representing neither an 'activity', nor a 'sector', but is rather a multi-faceted, multidisciplinary, intercultural grouping that shares a multiplicity of interests under the research umbrella. (Welch, 2002, paragraph 10)

Hargreaves (2002) pointed out that when delivering conference papers one had to take into account the professional practices of the audience and in so doing change the emphasis of the communication, whether they were educators, psychologists or musicologists. In fact, the dissemination of studies in more than one conference is a fairly common practice, and authors sometimes present abridged versions of their books in the form of papers. As long as this is openly acknowledged (e.g. Green 2001a, b, 2003) there is no reason why this should be censored when the message disseminated can be of great value for music educators, and when one of the aims of our music education culture should be this (i.e. communication).

In my own case, aspects of an investigation of teachers' perceptions of creativity in music education (Odena, 2001a, b, 2003) were presented to a mainly British audience at a BERA conference and to a European audience at the Annual Conference of the European Educational Research Association (EERA). At the first conference, it was necessary to comply with the guidelines of a seminar organized by the BERA Special Interest Group 'Creativity in Education'—relating the discussion of findings to the research field of creativity in education (Odena, 2001c). At the EERA conference, the European dimension and the methodological focus of the seminar, organized by the EERA Ethnography Network, had to be taken into account (Odena, 2002), whereas at the RIME 2001 Conference, other aspects of the same project were discussed with the stress on music education matters (Odena, 2001d).

Issues of authorship

Another sensitive topic in the dissemination of research is the acknowledgment of authorship. The Code of Ethics referred to earlier states the following:

> Authorship is reserved to those who make major contributions to the research. Credit is assigned to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their professional contributions. Major contributions of a professional character,

made by several individuals to a common project are recognized by joint authorship with the individual who made the principal contribution listed first. (MENC, 1998, paragraph 4)

From this quotation, it can be interpreted that research assistants and postgraduate students that participate in research projects would be included in the authorship. Nevertheless, when referring to the individuals 'who make major contributions to the research', research assistants and students are not mentioned. This is not to suggest that Ph.D. supervisors appropriate their students' research without acknowledgment but rather, that large and long-term projects are often reported by the main academics that contributed. Totterdell (2003) supports the involvement of research students in activities likely to lead to the generation of intellectual property. In addition, he suggests that there should be a serious conversation between student and supervisor from the first year of supervision regarding the future use of the student's project. He observes that his experience of major conferences and research culture in Australia and America (e.g. Bubb *et al.*, 2003) is that the work of doctoral students and research assistants seems to be more openly used, regulated and acknowledged than in the UK context—see for example the documents by the Australian National University (1999) and the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (2002). This situation, he argues, enriches the research culture of these associations.

The data from postgraduate students' investigations needs to be acknowledged by anyone using it, especially those who work in the academy. In this way, both students and academics can engage in an intellectual dialogue that is enriching and can open paths for further research. Examples of this interaction are the investigations by Hentschke (1993), Stavrides (1995), Lennon (1996), Silva (1998), Papapanayiotou (1998) and Markea (2002). These studies, which were supervised by Keith Swanwick, fed from Swanwick's earlier work and at the same time tested some of his ideas in different educational settings. For example, Lennon (1996) and Markea (2002) used Swanwick's musical development theories to analyse piano teachers' thinking on practice, in Ireland and Greece respectively. Silva (1998) used them to assess musical understanding across various modalities of music making (composing, performing and audience-listening). Swanwick (1999, 2001) then referred to some of these research results when developing his later work. These intellectual dialogues sometimes crystallized in combined authorship of papers (Swanwick & França, 1999).

An additional issue to consider, particularly in qualitative studies focussed on a small number of individuals, is the involvement of participants in the dissemination of research. This is discussed very little in current research in music education. Following the standard codes of ethics in the Social Sciences—such as the ones by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2000), BERA (1992), British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002) and the guidelines of research methods manuals (e.g. Cohen *et al.*, 2000)—the identities of participants in educational research are often automatically undisclosed, unless the researcher investigates his or her own practice (action-research). For example, the latest guidelines of the British Psychological Society present the following recommendation:

> [The researcher] shall endeavour to communicate information through research or practice in ways that do not permit the identification of individuals or organizations. (BPS, 2000, p. 4)

and the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (1992) state:

> [The] right to remain anonymous…should be respected when no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached. Researchers are responsible for taking appropriate precautions to protect the confidentiality of both participants and data. (BERA, 1992, paragraph 13)

In this way, sharing the data and the analysis with participants is not often discussed, ruling out any possibilities of dissemination of research *with* them, for instance presenting papers at conferences. This may perhaps increase the feeling of 'Chinese wall' between research and practice. For example, music teachers attending a major conference commented to the author that they could 'hardly draw implications for practice' from some of the papers which did not include 'the views of the individuals involved in the research'. Upitis (1999, p. 220) advocates that researchers should be sharing their work 'with audiences far beyond those who live and work in the academy'. Encouraging research participants to get involved at the dissemination stage could facilitate such process.

A recent article by Rex *et al.* (2002) shows that even participants can be acknowledged as authors when they have a substantial contribution in the final report. Their article illustrates to what extent the teachers' pedagogical stories shape the students' classroom participation and performance, focussing on two teachers of English literature and their classrooms. At the outset, the two teachers (Hobbs and McEachen) and the university researchers (Rex and Murnen) agreed to share the data and the analysis to serve their professional purposes, and they also agreed that 'all four voices would be represented in any publications based on the data' (Rex *et al.*, 2002, p. 795). To this end, a section is included in the paper with the teachers' response of the researchers' analysis, providing their own perspectives of the investigation. These are then taken into account in the final discussion of implications by the researchers.

Conclusion: some suggestions to consider in codes of ethics for research dissemination

If one of the aims of music education research conferences and journals is to disseminate the results of studies amongst a multifaceted and growing research community, it would be reasonable to assume that their guidelines for participation give further consideration to the sensitive issues discussed here: the current multiplicity of audiences and the authorship of papers.

For the dissemination of reports to multiple audiences, combined authorships have been used to present data from previous research. For instance, Burnard and Younker (2001, 2002) presented a combined paper of some aspects of their investigations on creativity in composition, discussing sets of data from their previous studies in Canada, UK and Australia. In fact combining data from different

investigations, some of which might have been presented elsewhere, is a frequent practice in educational research (e.g. LeBlanc *et al.*, 2002). This would need to be encouraged, especially when the datasets come from different countries, given the apparent benefits of comparative research. Lepherd (1995, p. 3) observes that the study of different educational systems and practices offers music educators 'a broader perspective within which they can assess and attempt to resolve their own problems'. Re-examination of existing data drawn from a range of previous studies has been recognized as a good exercise in educational research:

> It is only by drawing upon and drawing together the findings from each other's work that a synthesis of research in a particular area can begin to influence and improve music teaching practice in the way that it should. (Stevens, 2000, p. 72)

Burnard and Younker (2002, pp. 248–249) observed that reusing the same data from a variety of datasets from their earlier projects for further interrogation 'offered the opportunity to construct links between findings, conceptual frameworks and theoretical positions developed from them'. In fact, as long as some basic information such as the origin of the data, the context in which it was collected and the authorship of the original study is disclosed, researchers should be allowed to present 'new research from old data' without restrictions, always taking into account the particular audience to be addressed.

Consequently *addressing the audience* and the *previous dissemination* of studies would need to be considered further in the codes of ethics and the calls for papers for conferences and journals, which might need to incorporate specific guidelines to report these issues. For example a statement encouraging authors to submit 'new research from old data' and a further statement explaining the type of public of the conference or journal and how to write for them. Regarding the *authorship* of papers, it has been suggested that those who make significant contributions to the research process—including research assistants and postgraduate students—need to be acknowledged in the reports. The discussion in this paper has been focused within the context of music education research. Nevertheless, a glance through the catalogues of international publishers and the Internet shows that these matters are also relevant to other areas of the humanities and the social sciences, due to the increasing number of new journals and research conferences. This situation has been accentuated by the rising number of new journals published exclusively online.

A further issue has been discussed concerning the participants of research projects. Although ethic protocols advise researchers to protect the participants' identity, in some qualitative studies where a small number of persons are involved the confidentiality could be negotiated individually with them. They could then use the data and its analysis to serve their professional purposes. For example, in investigations where educational settings are observed (e.g. for the study of student–teacher interactions, musical development or musical creativity) there would be no apparent ethical reason to keep the identity of particular teachers confidential, if they agreed to do so. In addition, if prospective participants (music teachers) were willing to share the analysis of the data, their point of view from both the practice perspective and the research process experience could be incorporated into the final

analysis. They would then be able to share the research dissemination with the researchers, which in turn might increase the impact of research on practice. Invitations for researchers to share where possible the research dissemination with participants could be included in the codes of ethics, and this would surely enrich the overall experience of delegates at major conferences, benefiting our music education 'learning community'.

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