

## Arts-based Research (ABR) and Pedagogy: How a Research Framework Can Support Teaching Practices of (Music) Educators

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### Abstract

Tenets of the Arts-based Research (ABR) framework share similarities with a praxial music education. An ABR framework can support music educators' teaching practices ranging from novice to the established teacher. This can be achieved by establishing and maintaining strong student-teacher relationships through the creation, development, adaptation and implementation of curriculum.

This article aims to illustrate how ABR practices can support (Music) educators' teaching practices. This will be achieved by examining overlapping concepts between ABR and a praxial music education: Holistic Self, Caring (Ethic of Care), Personal/Individual (Inclusive), and Collaborative. Furthermore, vignettes are presented to illustrate the theory into practice for in-service teachers. These overlapping tenets can serve to aid/support (music) educators' teaching practices through curriculum development, pedagogical practices, project creation and implementation, or assessment in K-12 or higher education. Educators with a range of experience can use these similarities to further develop their craft and aid their continual growth and development.

### **Introduction and Methodology of Analysis**

Tenets of the Arts-based Research (ABR) framework share similarities with a praxial music education. These include being holistic, inclusive, relevant, and practical (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Gouzouasis, 2008; Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2013). As a result, an ABR framework can support music educators' teaching practices ranging from novice to the established teacher. This includes creating, developing, adapting and implementing curriculum while establishing and maintaining strong student-teacher relationships.

A qualitative instrumental case study utilizing an ABR component is the impetus for this argument (McElroy, 2022). This research sought to gain a deeper and richer understanding of music composition as a pedagogical tool at the undergraduate collegiate level. Examining students' individual music compositions, the study investigated the impact music composition pedagogy had upon the student's learning experience. The research and education approach were situated within a praxial framework. The parallels between ABR and a praxial music education became apparent from this examination. Additionally, the possibility for ABR's tenets to facilitate and support music educators' teaching practices was illuminated. This article examines in detail the unique overlap between ABR and a praxial music education approach to illustrate how ABR methodology can support (Music) educators' teaching practices. The relationship between ABR and a praxial music education is critically reflected upon and presented through theoretical examination and vignettes.

### **Arts-Based Research and Praxial Music Education: Overlapping Concepts**

Education is a continually active process. This includes educators' self and critical reflection, adaptation of curriculum, and the fostering and maintaining of dialogic relationships between student and teacher. An engaging educational experience provides students the opportunity to explore, question, refine, and develop their understanding and knowledge. To facilitate this experience, educators should aim to establish an environment in which the student is centered in the curriculum.

Students are best served in environments where they are encouraged to be in the drivers' seat of their experience. The primary goal for teachers in these types of environments is to bring out the best in them... (Randles & Burnard, 2023, p. 9)

Randles' and Burnard's (2023) discussion of the role of creativity in music education aligns with Dewey's (1933) argument that a teacher should guide a student's learning. Furthermore, this guidance should adapt to best fit students' educational needs. This illustrates an educational approach in which the teacher works alongside the student to provide support based upon their unique self. "All of the ways that Elliott and Silverman (2015) describe

personhood and musical praxis can be articulated as a branch of creativities research” (Randles & Burnard, 2023, p. 4). The creative process of creating, developing, adapting and implementing an engaging curriculum has clear connections to music as praxis.

A praxial music education (Elliott, 1995, 2012; Elliott & Silverman, 2015) is informed by the philosophies of Freire (1970/2000), Dewey (1933, 1938), and Noddings (2013). This is evident in the importance of dialogical relationships, working alongside one another to facilitate continual growth, which are based in an ethic of care. The importance of communication and collaboration illustrates the social nature within the education experience. Social praxis in education necessitates holistic, ethical, communal, and dialogical practices in “education, learning, teaching, and schooling” (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 142). The intertwining of these four practices provides a glimpse into the complex nature of being: “... a *holistic* concept of persons and personhood argues that a person is an embodied, *enactive*, socio-cultural being that interacts continuously with his or her sociocultural world(s)” (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 156). Our holistic self, personhood, is in a continuous state of modification and change. Dialogue between the educator and student facilitates a relationship informed by our personhood while situated within an ethic of care.

The benefits of ABR as a research framework have been examined by several researchers (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Gouzouasis, 2008, 2013, 2018; Gouzouasis & Bakan, 2018; Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2013, Rankin, 2014). Examples include the facilitation of unique perspectives and a deeper understanding of the examined phenomenon (Rankin, 2014). Viewed holistically, McNiff (2018) described ABR as “the *artistic process of inquiry* [author’s emphasis] that can be used to explore art, as well as the totality of human experience” (p. 25). ABR has the potential to facilitate and illuminate the sharing of varying unique perspectives through creation/creativity based within the human experience. These facets share a connection with the concept of person and personhood within a praxial music education (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). Furthermore, Gouzouasis (2008) and Leavy (2018) describe the methodology and research strategies of ABR as holistic and transdisciplinary. Self-expression through ABR fosters a plethora of perspectives which aids in a gained understanding.

We argue that it is important to have different forms of understanding for understanding complex phenomena that can be viewed in many ways. It is the plurality of view that we seek in the long run, rather than a “monotheistic” approach to the conduct of research. (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 7)

This fosters a plurality of viewpoints which enables a broadened perspective. Randles’ and Burnard’s (2023) discussion of creativity in music education speak to this plurality as a means to develop and adapt curriculum. To simultaneously grow as educators and further support

students' educational experiences, "we need to think plurally to help move our [teachers'] thinking and practice worlds to many more curricular options that can open doors to more radically impactful experiences" (Randles & Burnard, 2023, p. 8).

Education is a cyclical and exploratory process navigated together by the student and teacher (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Noddings, 2013; Siegesmund, 2014). The tenets of an ABR framework overlap significantly with the concepts of a praxial music education. This article will illustrate how the ABR framework can support (Music) educators' teaching practices. This is first achieved by examining overlapping concepts between ABR and a praxial music education: Holistic Self, Caring (Ethic of Care), Personal/Individual (Inclusive), and Collaborative. Second, vignettes are presented to illustrate the theory into practice for in-service teachers.

### ***Holistic Self***

Education is a continually cyclical process based within the intertwining student-teacher and students-teacher relationship. Simultaneously, the educational experience-based relationship is micro-level, between one student and the teacher; and macro-level, between the students (class) and the teacher. This complex relationship is situated within additional layers: the school, community, state or province, and country. Learning is a sociocultural experience situated in a constructive process. This is evident given the experiential nature of learning and that knowledge is socially constructed (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Regelski, 2016; van der Schyff, 2015a, 2015b; Wiggins, 2015). As a result, a concern for the holistic nature and growth of each student is central to a praxial music education, and education as a whole. Opportunities for student growth are facilitated through self and critical reflection. This is fostered through collaboration, exploration, creation/creativity, and authenticity. Furthermore, these facets are situated within a learning environment that welcomes and benefits from pluralistic viewpoints and ways of musicing. This educational approach has been examined through the lens of creativity (Bhabha, 2004; Burnard, 2012, 2013; Randles & Burnard, 2023), music as praxis (Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Regelski, 2016), the 4E concept (embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended) (Silverman, 2020; van der Schyff et al., 2022), and an Ethic of Care (Noddings, 2013). It is important to note that these lenses do not contrast with one another or offer a competing perspective, but rather overlap, inform and complement one another.

The common thread of an educational environment is one that provides opportunities for students to learn about their holistic self, grow, and connect with their sociocultural educational experience in a cyclical manner. This is posited by praxis-based research (Randles & Burnard, 2023; van der Schyff, 2023; Silverman, 2020; Elliott & Silverman, 2015) and ABR (Bagley, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; Finley, 2020; Jusslin

& Østern, 2020; Leavy, 2018; McCarthy, 2013). It is important that educators establish an educational setting which aids students in realizing and developing their sense of self. van der Schyff (2023) states, "...educators need to provide safe environments where students may explore, adapt to new contexts, take risks, and, in doing so, engage with their potentials as self-creating (musical) beings" (p. 466). This aligns with the concept of personhood (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Silverman, 2020). Personhood is continually changing and adapting to the sociocultural context in which a person is situated. Furthermore, personhood is one facet of "some of the numerous ways in which we bring our self-other worlds into holistic being, and, moreover, the many ways music and music education matter" (Silverman, 2020, p. 5). Our complex holistic self is actualized through numerous intertwining dimensions of personhood: environments; consciousness, unconsciousness; perception, cognition, emotion; and body-brain-world. These processes interrelate and inform one another cyclically and simultaneously (Elliott & Silverman, 2012, 2015; Silverman, 2020; van der Schyff et al., 2022). Similar concepts are used by Jusslin and Østern (2020) to illustrate how ABR as a research tool is situated socio-culturally: "...an ABR approach enables us to shed light on the research process in an otherwise inaccessible way that focuses on affective, holistic, relational, transdisciplinary, participatory, and artistic aspects" (p. 8).

The significance of the holistic self in a praxial music education can also be found in the framework and research process of ABR. Greenwood's (2012) description of ABR acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of being as well as the holistic self. "The arts, as Eisner (1998) and a host of artists remind us, invoke multi-dimensional responses both from their makers and their audiences. They allow an engagement of the whole human being" (Greenwood, 2012, p. 2). These facets of the arts, serving as the basis in ABR, naturally occur and influence this research framework. Kossak (2012) makes this impact explicit.

In art-based research, the phenomenological experience is represented through the creative act itself. The artwork, no matter what the medium (sound, rhythm, movement, enactment, poetry, paintings), opens up a space in which both the world and our being in the world is brought to light as a single, but inexhaustibly rich totality. (Kossak, 2012, p. 22)

The phenomenological experience in ABR described by Kossak (2012) aligns with an individual's personhood as their sense of being informs their holistic self (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Silverman, 2020; van der Schyff et al., 2022).

These phenomena do not occur in the vacuum of the classroom but are cyclically informed by the sociocultural setting in which the students/participants are situated. Music education research and ABR framework examination addresses this important factor, and similarly, view

this as a necessary component for individual growth and a gained understanding (Bagley, 2008; Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Finley, 2020; Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Leavy, 2018; Silverman, 2020; van der Schyff et al., 2022). Randles and Burnard (2023) discuss this in relation to students reaching their potential. In agreement, van der Schyff (2023) states, “Revealing these potentials also requires extending the cognitive reach of students and teachers beyond the conceptual (and physical) boundaries imposed by institutional environments so that they may engage with the diversity of the broader community in which they participate” (p. 466). In addition to the institutional and environmental boundaries, student and teacher expectations are limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed. Kay (2008) describes how ABR addresses this concern, stating, “Arts-based research allows students, art teachers, and researchers to link their ideas in a non-linear way that brings a deeper understanding of a given phenomenon” (p. 147). Like a praxial music education, a non-linear and deep understanding of a phenomenon, experience, and person is possible through ABR.

Why Art? The entry emphasizes the representational aspects of arts-based research and the power of emotions, feelings, and sensory and embodied experiences as methods that broaden the audience of research to make it more available to local communities and that generate interest outside the academy. (Finley et al., 2020, p. 2)

Situated within different sociocultural layers, a praxial music education and ABR framework emphasize the importance of critical reflection, personhood, expression, and creativity which lead to growth and gained understanding of our holistic self.

### ***Caring (Ethic of Care)***

Self-growth, while personal, is rarely achieved in isolation. Self and critical reflection are necessary for a gained understanding of our holistic being. Situated in a layered sociocultural setting, it is the relationships we have which often foster, aid, and support this change. Within the music education/education setting, it is imperative that the student-teacher relationship be informed by an ethic of care. The care, dialogue, and positive transformation of students’ holistic growth is centered in every music teaching and learning experience (Noddings, 2013, 2015). Dialogue is central in establishing and maintaining a caring relationship. The educator meets the student through dialogue, caring, modeling, and action (Noddings, 2013; Silverman, 2012, 2013). A caring relationship in action is largely referred to as care ethics. However, in an educational setting, Noddings (2013) identified this process as teaching educatively. An educative learning experience extends from a dialogic and caring relationship. Care ethics is a foundational element of a praxial music education: “A caring relationship emerges when we take responsibility for and attend to the needs of the other...” (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p.

141). It is important that educators embrace the responsibility of being aware and attend to students' educational needs within the understanding that we are holistic beings situated socio-culturally.

In addition to fostering a caring relationship, educators engage students in dialogue about caring. This is achieved through the intertwining of curriculum and pedagogical practices as students and teacher work alongside one another in an educative setting – a praxial music education. The dialogic student-teacher relationship within an educative setting is collaborative. Collaboration within ABR and a praxial music education will be examined later in this article. However, similar to the praxial concept, an ethic of care is foundational in an ABR framework. Many researchers have spoken directly to this connection or have discussed the importance of establishing a caring relationship to benefit the research process (Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; Finley, 2020; Greenwood, 2012; Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Kay, 2008, 2013; Löytönen, 2016). An example includes research designs that aim to facilitate the emergence of authentic and practical findings within a phenomenon's socio-cultural setting. Furthermore, it is an attempt to address biases, assumptions, hierarchical and power dynamic influences stemming from the researcher-participant relationship. The subjective and deeply personal connection one may have with the arts, particularly of their own creation, can magnify the importance of establishing a caring relationship. This growth and established level of trust within a caring relationship parallels the student-teacher relationship in education and participant-researcher in ABR. Noddings (2013) describes the educational relationship: “The special gift of the teacher, then, is to receive the student...Her commitment is to him, the cared-for, and he is—through that commitment—set free to pursue his legitimate projects” (p. 7). In the ABR setting, the researcher (teacher role) and participant (student role) are collectively pursuing a gained understanding of a given phenomenon (projects within education). Noddings (2013) describes the role of teacher as special, and specialized, in a caring relationship. Researcher(s) using an ABR framework share a similar role and responsibility. “In the context of [ABR] research methodology, a new approach to research evolved that was based in an ethic of care and that adapted research to represent the complex worlds and experiences of research participants” (Finley et al., 2020, p. 9). Finley et al. (2020) describes the role of an ethic of care in ABR as impacting the findings, examination, and shared human connection within the research framework. This illustrates a direct parallel in the importance of establishing a caring relationship to achieve an educative setting described by Noddings (2013). A caring relationship is a joint endeavor by student-teacher or participant-researcher, to establish trust and support as both strive for the emergence of authentic, practical, and a deeply personal gained understanding.

### ***Personal/Individual (Inclusive)***

The holistic concept of persons and personhood situated within the nested layers of a

sociocultural setting is fundamental to a praxial music education (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). This is through the construction of a dialogic student-teacher relationship within an ethic of care. The education experience, through continuous dialogue, facilitates opportunities for self and critical reflection for the student and teacher, individually and collectively. In this manner, a praxial music education is transactional as students are active participants in their educational experience while they work alongside the educator. The student and educator develop a gained understanding of the topic at hand, while simultaneously strengthening the student-teacher relationship as they learn more about one another's holistic self. This cyclically informs the socio-culturally situated educational process and experience. An opportunity for a personal connection and continual growth is facilitated through students' self and critical reflective practices as their holistic self is centered within their education experience (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Noddings, 2015, Regelski, 2016, van der Schyff, 2015a, 2015b; Wiggins, 2015).

Siegesmund (2014) describes Dewey's concept of education, continual growth without a specific end, as a main element of ABR. Similar to a praxial music education, a gained understanding through ABR is a collaborative and cyclical process situated within a socio-cultural setting. Siegesmund (2014) describes this process, stating, "A/r/tography focuses on individual Deweyian rebuilding with a keen eye to Dewey's insistence that this is always a formative work in progress. There is no reliable summative end product" (pp. 4-5). A/r/tography purports the perspective that the roles of artist-researcher-teacher overlap and serve as one (Gouzouasis, 2008). In alignment with the concept of the holistic self, these multifaceted entities inform one another as an individual situates themselves socially, culturally, and within the world. A gained understanding through an ABR framework is achieved when a person's holistic self is centered in the education/research experience with the understanding that knowledge is continual growth.

Continual growth within the education setting is facilitated through self and critical reflection. Dialogue generated from this reflective process is simultaneously private (internal) and communicative (alongside the educator/researcher and fellow students/participants). Greenwood (2012) and Finley (2020) speak to the importance of the ABR process as fostering a sense of power and varying moments for reflective dialogue to facilitate a participant driven self-analysis and self-definition. The individual student and participant contribute to a gained understanding as individual processes of self and critical reflection, educational growth, and the developing holistic self cyclically inform and illuminate the phenomenon at hand (education or research): "The outcome of art education is that students develop self-identity as they learn to move through their communities and the world" (Kay, 2013, p. 10). Similar to a praxial music education, an ABR framework highlights the important role participants' holistic self has in the gained understanding of a phenomenon through self and critical

reflection within a dialogic relationship.

### ***Collaborative***

Collaboration within the student-teacher and participant-researcher relationship provides a glimpse into the complex socio-cultural nature of a person's sense of self. Various experiences inform and impact our embodied, enactive, embedded and extended sense of self (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Silverman; 2020; van der Schyff et al., 2022). As such, collaboration can be fostered through the dialogic relationships established within an ethic of care (Noddings, 2013), praxial music education (Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Regelski, 2016), working alongside students (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Elliott & Silverman, 2015), and a learning environment supportive of creativity (Burnard, 2012, 2013; Randles & Burnard, 2023). These concepts and educational approaches cyclically inform and support one another. Student's and educator's holistic selves grow as knowledge and understanding are constructed within their socio-culturally situated relationship as they work alongside one another. Within a praxial music education, the student-teacher relationship is best described as collaborative.

The importance of collaboration between student and teacher in a praxial music education is paralleled by the participant and researcher in ABR. Löytönen (2016) describes "the notion of learning from experience through repeated cycles of reflection and action" as collaborative inquiry (p. 8). The importance of self and critical reflection as student-teacher and/or participant-researcher work alongside one another is evident in achieving a gained understanding. A collaborative relationship can impact teaching or research practices with an aim to develop an understanding and implementation of a methodology (Buono & Gonzalez, 2017). The participants of an ABR project are central to the development and gained understanding of a given phenomenon. This is similar to that of students' development and gained understanding within a praxial music education. When an ABR framework is used to examine pedagogical practices, this parallel becomes unequivocal. "Who we were as well as what we brought to the team and to the meetings shaped the pedagogical realities of the project and what kind of teaching pedagogies we were able to develop" (Jusslin & Østern, 2020, p. 20). The socio-cultural situated nature of how we bring our self-other into the world as we simultaneously inform one another's sense of being is illustrated through the integration of a holistic self utilizing critical reflection in a collaborative effort.

...for us as teachers, those facts about our students' learning are more valid when we see them embedded in the bigger framework of their emergent knowing. Thus, I would describe the robustness of an arts based study both in terms of the rigour with which the research fine tunes the processes in order to probe deeply into a particular issue, and in terms of attention to unintended discoveries and to

connections with other concerns of the participants. (Greenwood, 2012, p. 18)

The collaborative nature of a praxial music education is facilitated through a dialogic relationship as students are centered in the education experience. Knowledge and a gained understanding emerge as student and teacher work alongside one another cyclically informing and developing their holistic self. This aim is central to an ABR framework in which the collaboration between participant and researcher steer the inquiry.

### **Application for Educators**

The overlapping tenets between an ABR framework and a praxial music education can serve to aid/support (music) educators teaching practices. This includes curriculum development, pedagogical practices, project creation and implementation, or assessment at the K-12 or higher education level. Additionally, educators with a range of experience can use these similarities to further develop their craft and aid their continual growth and development.

#### ***Curriculum Development: Relevant and Engaging Curriculum***

##### *Vignette*

To facilitate a connection and engaging education experience in an Ear Training class, the teacher explains that the students, as a class, will create course curriculum through individual projects. The first 5-7 weeks follow a traditional practice of the teacher working with students on specific elements, such as melodic intervals. However, during these lessons and throughout the weeks, students journal songs and other personal music listening habits they connect to these lessons, as well as any challenges they are facing. At the half-way point, students begin to create and develop their own lesson plans on a specific Ear Training topic from their journal. The lesson plan is a combination of their personal song choices, listening habits, and a challenging concept/practice. Their favorite song or artist provides an entry point into better understanding a music practice situated within the Ear Training course the student found challenging. An opportunity for students to make a relevant connection to the curriculum is facilitated by creating and implementing a lesson plan based upon their personal connection and a challenging Ear Training topic. The teacher and student work alongside one another to develop curriculum unique to the individual student, the class, and the topic as it intersects with the students' unique selves.

It is imperative that curriculum be relevant and engaging (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Elliott, 1995; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Noddings, 2015; Silverman, 2013). Working alongside students provides the educator a glimpse into a student's education experience. As a result, the

educator has an informed understating of how to evaluate curricular practices and determine if any adaptations and changes are warranted. Combined with self and critical reflection by the educator, this reflective practice throughout the school year or semester illustrates a concern for students' educational experiences. The students'/participants' holistic self is centered in an education or research setting. As a result, adaptations to the curriculum/research methodology are made to meet the needs of those whose participation and input are vital to the phenomenon itself. A relevant and engaging experience can be achieved through adaptive curriculum/research methodologies. This illustrates the tenets of a praxial music education and research approach within an ABR framework.

### ***Pedagogical Practices: Pedagogy Enhanced through Self and Critical Reflection***

#### *Vignette*

Writing lyrics can be a deeply personal and vulnerable experience. Combine this with the study of a music style and culture, and the learning experience can become reflective and facilitate growth unique to the individual. The culminating project for students in a course examining Rap and Hip-hop culture is the creation of their own original rap (beat and lyrics). Throughout the semester, "rap check-ins" are held so that students can discuss and share their progress and challenges. Students first meet in groups with classmates and then share common themes and concerns from these group discussions with the class. These sessions provide students the opportunity to reflect upon their writing/composing experience and consider new methods or practices as they progress in their creation. This process expands as students work with classmates and engage in self and critical reflection to support one another. What often results is the sharing of a deeply personal experience or phenomenon unique to the student reflected in their lyrics. Students have the option of sharing their rap during the last week of the semester. However, all share their writing/composition approach and experience. Sharing the writing/composition process often reveals a significant moment in the self and critical reflective process in which students engaged throughout the semester.

Pedagogical/research practices and their implementation are enhanced through self and critical reflection by the educator/researcher (Elliott, 2012; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Löytönen, 2016; Regelski, 2016). Additionally, the dialogic student-teacher or participant-researcher relationship provides insight into current successes and/or challenges students/participants experience. This perspective provides an opportunity to develop or amend pedagogical practices to better meet student/participant needs. This facilitates a relevant and personal education/research experience socio-culturally situated and informed by all participants' unique and holistic self. A gained understanding is achieved in a praxial music education and in an ABR framework through the support and active involvement of

student/participants. The collaborative nature of a praxial music education and ABR facilitates a unique generation of knowledge.

### ***Project Creation and Implementation: Student-centered Education Experience***

#### *Vignette*

The opening prompt for college/university students in a music teaching philosophy course is, “Draw a picture of what teaching looks like?” The students are asked to share their drawing with classmates to explain the significance and meaning of their artistic choices: setting, design, conception, etc. The personal connection and perception as to why students are embarking upon this area of study is an introductory step in the early discussions of lesson planning and curriculum creation, development, and implementation. Creating an image of their intended profession gives students the opportunity to reflect upon their motivations, perceptions, and the field overall. Next, students reflect upon “What they want their students to learn.” Their response is first examined at the macrolevel (education and/or holistically) and then narrowed down to the microlevel (classroom and/or specific lesson). From this, students incorporate their unique holistic self as a basis in the creation of lesson plans and curriculum. This is in conjunction with a continually growing understanding of state and national standards, education theories and approaches, and their teaching philosophy. As students learn about teaching and the many resources available to aid and develop their craft, the development of utilizing one’s experience and instincts is important in lesson and curriculum development. Understanding the numerous and ever-changing resources available to educators is imperative. However, understanding our own role in teaching in relation to our assumptions, biases, and perception is equally important to grow in our craft. Centering the students in the learning and examination of education theories, and state and national standards facilitates an opportunity for a deeper connection and understanding of these concepts. In turn, future music educators may continue this same practice by centering the student in their own classroom.

Projects, assignments, and other means to facilitate student engagement should reflect the personal, relevant and caring tenets of a praxial education. Likewise, data collection methodologies and additional research components should reflect these same tenets of an ABR framework. Students of a praxial music education and participants of an ABR framework should be centered. The framework for an assignment/project or data collection should be designed to facilitate an individual’s participation which simultaneously encourages development of one’s unique self and informs the educational experience or data collection. As a result, participation in the educational and research setting cyclically informs and is

informed by the students'/participants' unique self. This fosters an opportunity for a personal and relevant experience that is authentically socio-culturally situated for the educator/researcher and student/participant. Projects, assignments or data collection methodologies are not rigid designs of the educator or researcher. Rather, they are specifically and carefully created to encourage student/participant growth and development based upon how the individual situates themselves within the educational or research setting. Students and participants, respectively, should be actively involved in a praxial music education or ABR framework (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Leavy, 2018; Löytönen, 2016). Knowledge creation and a gained understanding are deeply personal and are informed by those participating. Therefore, projects, assignments, and data collection methodologies should facilitate a personal experience that encourages participation and growth unique to the individual.

### ***Assessment***

#### *Vignette*

A large music concept or theory can take weeks, even a lifetime, to understand and begin to master. Students in music theory classes or music history classes across all levels often experience this phenomenon. The anxiety and challenges students face in this circumstance can be alleviated through the established student-teacher relationship. This is achieved through a respectful and open dialogue which addresses the challenges that arise as a student navigates a particular project. An example includes establishing multiple steps or “check-in” points throughout the creative process of a research paper. Students in a music history literature course write a research paper through five steps. The aim of the paper is to illuminate and examine a connection between a current music artist, song, or interest of their choice to a music element/practice ranging from Antiquity through the Baroque period. The fifth step is a culmination of the previous four, in which teacher/educator feedback is discussed between the student and teacher. While due dates are established for each step, grades are not emphasized. Rather, feedback and assessment are qualitative and are discussed through the established dialogic student-teacher relationship. As a result, students' confidence in the examination and discussion of their topic, as well as the paper's final draft, is palpable. Student involvement at each step of assessment in the writing process fosters confidence and excitement in their work. Additionally, an opportunity to remove stress and anxiety barriers during the research and writing process stems from this practice. The student focus shifts from evaluation and grading to inquiry, writing, and personal connection.

The concept of education as continual growth can be applied to assessment. This is evident in an approach which includes the student, self-assessment and/or critical and self-reflection, as

well as one which cyclically evolves with the student and project/assignment. This approach can blend formative and summative assessment practices in which a final grade is achieved after being in flux throughout the submission and educational process. Abrahams (2019) posits an Integrative Assessment approach in which students are active participants in their education and assessment. Educators working alongside students to develop and implement assessment practices is illustrative of a praxial education approach. The aim of the education and assessment experience is facilitation of a joint effort by student and teacher in which both grow through the process. This is reflective of the role and importance of participants in ABR. Authenticity and gained understanding are achieved through the collaborative relationship between participant and researcher in which implementation and reflection upon collected data are conducted reciprocally. In both instances a predetermined or prescribed outcome is not the aim, but an understanding of an emergent phenomenon through which participants are actively engaged.

The four vignettes provide examples in which the overlapping tenets of ABR and a praxial music education were leveraged to support and enhance a (Music) educator's teaching practices and students' education experience. This provided a glimpse into the unique phenomenon in education and ABR in which individuals' (researcher, participant, teacher, student) holistic self cyclically informs, and is informed, through the education/research process.

### **Conclusion**

The education process is a unique experience that is deeply personal while simultaneously collaborative. Self and critical reflection, an individual process, is fostered through the dialogic student-teacher relationship. It is through this relationship that students' individual growth is facilitated and supported within the communal setting of the classroom, while situated within a larger socio-cultural setting. As educators, the practical implementation of an education theory or approach is also informed by this unique process. This is an illustration of the transformative nature of education. Therefore, teachers should aim to continually improve and grow as educators through reflection, and adaptation and development of curriculum to meet students' needs.

The four overlapping tenets examined in this article, Holistic Self, Caring (Ethic of Care), Personal/Individual (Inclusive), and Collaborative, provide a nexus for educators. For the novice teacher, this is the intersection in which they can begin to develop, adapt, and reflect upon their burgeoning craft. For the experienced teacher, this is the intersection in which they can continue to fine-tune their vocation to maintain an invigorated educational setting and experience.

A praxial music education is continual growth and development. This is a result of the dialogic student-teacher relationship in which self and critical reflection are fostered and nurtured. This collaborative process encompasses an individual's unique self as they engage with one another. Individually, student and teacher grow within the education setting while simultaneously informing the larger socio-cultural community inside and out of the classroom in a cyclical fashion. This facilitates a transformative education.

Music education researchers and ABR scholars speak of transformation, improvement, and the illumination of hidden processes to gain a better understanding of education or arts-based practices (Buono & Gonzalez, 2017; Burnard, 2012; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Jusslin & Østern, 2020; Kay, 2013; Löytönen, 2016; Siegesmund, 2014; Silverman, 2020). These include curricular, pedagogical and/or teaching practices, as well as personal predispositions and how these facets intersect. "...a third criterion of a work of arts-based educational research: does it illuminate how we will *act*, as an educator, *tomorrow*?" (Siegesmund, 2014, pp. 10-11). ABR and a praxial music education are concerned with individuals' unique self and how one informs and is informed by the experiences/phenomena in which we learn. Achieving a gained understanding is a joint effort between student-teacher/participant-researcher. The implications of this endeavor are practical, relevant, and authentic knowledge generated for the better understanding of how our holistic selves contribute and construct the worlds in which we engage.

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