

### **Doctoral Mentoring Statement ~ William I. Bauer, PhD**

I am a Professor in the School of Music, where I teach students in our comprehensive undergraduate, Master's, and Ph.D. music education programs. In addition to teaching classes, I supervise student teachers, advise graduate research, conduct research and engage in other forms of scholarship, and contribute service to the School, College, University, and profession at large. I served as Area Head of Music Education for six years, overseeing and coordinating all aspects of the undergraduate and graduate music education programs. I continue as the Director of the Master of Music in Music Education Distance Learning program, a role I've held for the entire existence of the program, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year.

Of all these roles and responsibilities, my favorite is unquestionably mentoring doctoral student research. It has become my passion as a college professor. During my tenure at UF, I've served as chair or co-chair of 18 doctoral committees. In the field of music education, doctoral students come to us from K-12 schools where they have been music teachers and ensemble conductors at the elementary and/or secondary levels. They have a strong teacher identity paired with a curiosity and desire to learn more about a myriad of topics that often connect to other disciplines such as psychology (e.g., the developmental process of acquiring musical knowledge and skills; student motivation), sociology (e.g., music education's role in schools and society; the intersection of music education with cultural issues), and technology (e.g., using technology to facilitate creating, performing, and responding to music; professional development in technology for K-12 music teachers), among others. I love working with these students as they discover the role of research in expanding our insights into theory and practice.

Mentoring music education students in research that culminates in a completed doctoral dissertation begins on their first day of enrollment and is a continual process integrated formally and informally throughout the Ph.D. curriculum. My approach to graduate education, including the mentoring of research, is student-centered, project-oriented, and frequently discussion-based. In my experience, graduate music education students seem to enjoy the exchange of ideas that emanate from the intersection of research and their practical experiences as teachers and conductors. It is very satisfying to interact with these individuals who are already skilled educators as they become discerning scholars, and to witness how their perceptions and sometimes teaching practices change as they discover new approaches to music teaching and learning. Advising novice researchers on the formulation of research questions, examination of the literature, development of an appropriate methodology and plan for data analysis, and interpretation and presentation of their results in written or another form is enjoyable and rewarding.

In general, music education students begin their Ph.D. studies with strong identities as teachers and musicians. These are areas in which they've been immersed throughout their undergraduate and Masters degrees, as well as during their careers as K-12 music teachers. However, most students initially encounter formal research in a class that they take in their first semester of enrollment, Research in Music Education (MUE 6785), which I teach. This is where their identity as a researcher begins to form. To start to develop their ability to *think like a researcher* and *think of themselves as researchers*, I begin by asking students to articulate their *wonderments*. Wonderments are "a cause of or occasion for wonder; a curiosity about something."<sup>1</sup> We have wonderments all the time about varied aspects of life. A couple of examples related to music education might include:

- I wonder if using solfège with my students will improve their ability to read music?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wonderment>

- I wonder what types of assessment practices are most appropriate for middle school band students?

There are no right or wrong wonderments. The goal is for students to begin thinking about topics about which they are curious. Often, their initial wonderments come from their experiences as K-12 music teachers and musicians. The personal connection they have to a wonderment helps to drive their initial interest in research.

From that point, I begin to develop students' knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy as researchers in numerous ways. In each course I teach I make sure that I understand students' current research interests and provide them with the flexibility to complete class assignments in ways that are connected to those interests. For example, an assignment in the Psychology of Music class I teach is to write a review of the literature on a topic that connects music/music education to the discipline of psychology. Here, I facilitate class discussions and meet with students individually to assist them in considering ways in which their research interests may connect to subjects such as cognition, motivation, creativity, self-efficacy, human response to music, and so on. In this way, not only does the assignment become more meaningful for students, but they also can move forward in their understanding of a topic that may become integral to their dissertation research. In classes, I'm also always mentoring students on their approach to scholarly writing and their presentation skills.

It is important that students feel supported and part of a larger community as they develop their knowledge and skills as a researcher. One way I have accomplished this at UF has been to establish a doctoral research colloquium. During these monthly events, all students and faculty meet to discuss and further our understanding of various research paradigms, topics, and tools. We bring prominent music education researchers to campus to speak at these events and also connect with on-campus researchers and resources such as the UF Writing Studio. In addition, we have faculty and students present their research, especially to practice for an upcoming conference presentation. Our community of researchers at UF has developed to the point where students are also forming research teams to investigate topics of interest that are not part of any class or assignment. They also engage in peer mentoring about all aspects of the research process, which I encourage and facilitate as appropriate.

As part of the process of becoming a scholar, I believe it is important to encourage doctoral students to connect to the larger world of music education research. Our colloquia do this, but students also need to participate in professional conferences and submit their work for publication. When students interact with music education researchers from outside of UF, receiving interest in their original scholarship from others, it not only expands their scholarly horizons but may also become very motivational to them. Conferences that I attend with students also provide a venue for informal mentoring and networking. Having *real-time* discussions with students about presentations we've both attended and introducing them to researchers from other institutions can be invaluable in their growth as scholars. Throughout my graduate teaching career, I've had many of my graduate students present their research at peer-reviewed state, national, and international conferences and have their scholarly work published in important, peer-reviewed journals.

Finally, a strong form of mentorship that I believe is very valuable to students is to model a researcher mindset through my scholarly activities and by inviting students to work with me as part of a research team. Through this, I'm able to draw on my experiences as a researcher, author, presenter, editorial board member, and journal editor to facilitate students' understanding of, and success in, the world of research in music education.