

From the Editor

In 2013, I had the opportunity to visit the University of Exeter in Great Britain and attend the *International Research in Music Education Conference (RIME)*. At that time, I thought *RIME* was perhaps the best conference I had ever attended! This was due both to the welcoming nature of the wonderful organizers and attendees, and also to the many qualitative research studies being presented at that conference. *RIME 2013* was one of my first exposures to qualitative research presentations in a conference setting. It was simply amazing! What fascinated me most was the stories of human beings and their interactions and experiences with music. Although this was clearly research, the stories were so engaging because the research was so intimate, and I found it fascinating. When I came home from Exeter, I tucked those experiences away and, every now and again, would revisit those memories. As I continued to teach, write, read journals, and attend conferences, I wondered what role I might play in contributing to a deeper conversation about human beings and music-making.

Fast forward to 2015 when I was working with a doctoral student, Mark Dillon, and we began to discuss the kernel of an idea – a qualitative research journal for the music education profession. We were discussing this as part of a larger conversation about the difficulty qualitative researchers have had in getting their work published. Although we have certainly seen a distinct rise in the number of journals publishing qualitative research (this is awesome!), Mark and I both felt that a journal dedicated to qualitative research in music would illuminate this very important and often-overlooked avenue of inquiry. At one point in this ongoing discussion, Mark sent me an email containing web addresses to articles about starting an online journal. Needless to say, that email sat in my Inbox for about two years before I had the courage to act on it.

Finally, in Fall 2017, I was ready to pursue this idea with Mark’s blessing (he finished his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Spring 2018 and I had the privilege to be his Doctoral Advisory Committee Chair). When I look back on my notes from this time period – August 2017-December 2018 – I can easily see keywords that illustrate my core values for *Qualitative Research in Music Education (QRME)*: rigorous, innovative, indicative of the human experience with music, interesting. Thus, the mission of *QRME* is to disseminate innovative qualitative research pertaining to music education. *QRME* publishes articles that carefully examine the human experience in music through qualitative methodologies that embody rigor and depth.

As I began to explore what hosting an online journal entailed, I wrote these notes to Daniel Rice (*QRME*’s extraordinary webmaster) related to my chosen image for *QRME*:



I love this image because this is how I perceive qualitative research in the vast scheme of music education research (MER). MER is mostly quantitative in nature and only in the last decade or so has qualitative research become more common/popular. I perceive the blue lines on this image as representing quantitative research - the bigger picture that gives us more generalizable ideas about music, learning, teaching, etc. Also, the blue lines represent the connection of ideas and knowledge to other information and pathways.

The white points of light represent qualitative research to me, where we are able to “drill down” into a topic with individuals and small groups and see how that topic relates to many others, sending us off in new directions (for investigation and corroboration) on the blue lines.

And in this, the debut publication of *QRME*, I feel even more strongly about this image.

Qualitative research grabs your attention because it is thought-provoking and exciting, and often impossibly messy. Human beings are complex and multifaceted, and when investigating music and human beings in qualitative research, the intensity, power, and greatness of the research increases exponentially.

I pursued a career in music because music (and eventually teaching) fed my soul in ways nothing else could. To be able to contribute to the exploration of human beings and their interactions and experiences with music is one of the biggest professional accomplishments of my life. I hope you enjoy *Qualitative Research in Music Education*.

Jennifer S. Walter, Founder and Editor-in-Chief