On the occasion of my retirement from Northwestern University, I expressed the hope that the profession would actively consider seven big ideas that should guide research and practice. In my new position at the Thornton School at the University of Southern California, I continue to refine my thinking about these and do so for this conference with an eye toward what might be termed, “popular music pedagogy.” My big ideas are noted below:

1. My first big idea is the consideration of teaching as a blend of constructivist approaches and direct instruction that values student-centered work primarily as evidence of learning.
2. Related to this, I believe a big idea in music education is the development of personal philosophies of music teaching and learning that place *creative thinking in music* as a central tenant
3. Another big idea for me is interdisciplinary connections between music and a host of allied fields in the arts and in other disciplines as well
4. From an evaluation perspective, a fourth big idea in music education for me is embedded and student-centered assessment that involves more sophisticated and often more complicated evidence for music learning;
5. Turning to more broadly conceived big ideas, a complete rethink of **who** we teach is now upon us as never before. Somehow we must find ways to balance our attention between those students that show interest in what we call traditional ensembles such as various forms of bands, orchestras and choruses that celebrate the great Western art music tradition with more alternative ensembles and classes that expand music horizons.
6. Of course, this relates to more sophisticated thinking about **what** we teach. The whole question of the role of vernacular and world musics as partners with our great Western art music is perhaps the most critical curriculum issue we face today. Lest you imagine I am advocating for abandoning the music of Brahms and the Chicago Symphony for the music of Beyoncé and Cold Play, let me assure you that that is hardly my intent. Rather, the heart of this big idea is just the opposite—to better understanding Brahms and the performances of the CSO because we must do a better job in understanding the value of Beyoncé, Cold Play and hundreds of other carefully chosen artists that represent the complicated contexts of todays’ music.
7. Finally, **where** we teach is so important. This is driven, in part, by the technological advances that we now experience and the future technology that we can only barely imagine.

For my paper at Modern Band Rockfest and Symposium 2015 in Fort Collins, I propose to address each of these seven in relation to the development of solid popular music pedagogy in college and university teacher preparation. I will make the case that to do this honestly and authentically requires careful thinking about popular music teaching in context with the complex traditions of classical western art music and non-Western musics from around the world.

From this conceptual base I will propose a reconceptualization of music teacher education that will be rich with multiple pathways for music making in schools. I will do so by suggesting that the current system of music methods course be redesigned with strong links to field work and with ties to the development of creative products that are rooted in composition, improvisation, creative performance and music listening.

I will end my paper with a strong endorsement of the spirit behind the recent task force manifesto for curriculum change that was presented at the recent College Music Society’s national meeting in St. Louis.

References

Allsup, R. (2011). Popular music and classical musicians. *Music Educators Journal, 97*(3), 30-34.

Barrett, J., McCoy, C. & Veblen, K. (1997). *Sound ways of knowing: Music in the interdisciplinary curriculum*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Bowman, W. & Frega, A. (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of philosophy in music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Colwell, R. (2011 ). Roles of direct instruction, critical thinking, and transfer in the design of curriculum for music learning. In R. Colwell & P. Webster (Eds.), *MENC handbook of research on music learning*, Vol. 1. (pp. 84-139). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Colwell, R. & Webster, P. (Eds.) (2011). *MENC handbook of research on music learning*. Vols. 1 and 2. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Conway, C. (Ed.) (2014). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research in American music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Conway, C. and West, C. (2014). *History of qualitative research in American music education*. In C. Conway, (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research in American music education* (pp. 40-56). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Damasio, A. (2010). *Self comes to mind: Constructing the conscious brain*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Green, L. (2013). *Music, informal learning and the school: A classroom pedagogy*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Guilford, J. (1067). *The nature of human intelligence*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Hargreaves, D. & North, A. (1997). *The social psychology of music.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Hebert, E. (2001). *The power of portfolios: What children can teach us about learning and assessment.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hickey, M. (2002). Creativity research in music, visual arts, theater and dance. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 398-415). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Higgins, L. (2012). *Community music: In theory and in practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hodges, D. & Sebald, D. (2011). *Music in the human experience: An introduction to music psychology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mark, M. & Gary, C. (2007). *A history of American music education*, 3rd ed., Lanham, MD: R&L Education.

Mark, M. & Madura, P. (2014*). Contemporary music education*, 4th ed., New York, NY: Cengage/Schirmer..

McHaney, R. (2010). *The new digital shoreline: How Web 2.0 and millennials are revolutionizing higher education.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

McPherson, G. & Welch, G. (Eds.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of music education*, Vols. 1 and 2. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

*National Standards for Arts Education.* (1984). Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

Radocy, R. & Boyle, D. (1987). *Measurement and evaluation of musical experiences*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books.

Ravitch, D. (2013). *Reign of error: The hoax of privatization movement and the danger to America’s public schools*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Strand, K. (2006). Learning to inquire: teacher research in undergraduate teacher training. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *15*(2), 29-42.

Thibeault, M. (2012). Commentary: Media, music, and education, In, G. McPherson and G. Welch (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education Volume 2.* Pp. 515-516. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Webster, P. (1992). Research on creative thinking in music: the assessment literature. In R. Colwell (ed.), *Handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 266-279). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Webster, P. (2011). Construction of music learning. In R. Colwell & P. Webster (Eds.), *MENC handbook of research on music learning*, Vol. 1. (pp. 35-83). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wiggins, J. (2009). *Teaching for musical understanding* (2nd ed.) Rochester, MI: CARMU, Oakland University.

Williams, D. & Webster P. (2008). *Experiencing music technology*, 3rd ed., New York, NY: Cengage/Schirmer.