I recently read an excellent book by James G. Henderson entitled, *Reflective Teaching: Becoming an Inquiring Educator*, and it sparked some thoughts and questions for me as to what qualifies as "research" and how a teacher becomes a researcher. Henderson argues that "the essence of educational inquiry involves taking a questioning, pondering, democratic perspective on the personal and public virtues of teaching and learning" (p 6). This "inquiring attitude" is an additional quality of a reflective teacher. The implication is that the reflective teacher will be constantly alert to problems, find explanations, and seek to find solutions and answers. This attitude is clear in Theresa Mather's journal entry (from her University of Toronto, Master of Music Program, research class portfolio). "September 15, 1995: like most teachers, I have many questions I would like to explore and investigate. I have many hypotheses, or more commonly put, "half-baked ideas" about some of the questions." The question is, however, whether these teachers are doing research.

In an article posted to the World Wide Web International Symposium for Progress in Music Education in May 1996, Richard Colwell raises the question as to what constitutes research in music education. He argues that the definition is fuzzy and that at our professional meetings "almost anything qualifies as research" (p 10). You may suspect that he then goes on to say that "real" research must have rigorous methodology, systematic data collection, and bias-free interpretation. What he does say is that "Discoveries about improved teaching and learning should be distinguishable from findings based only on the use of systematic, if often insightful, procedures" (p 10). Colwell argues that the focus of the study has too often been ignored in the definition of research quality and that in our field priority ought to be on school-based teaching and learning.

In my opinion, methodology is important and the inquiring reflective teacher should become as systematic in seeking answers as possible, but both Henderson and Colwell point to an exceptionally important aspect of research in education: it must be concerned about important issues in teaching and learning strongly situated in pedagogical process and context. The reflective teacher is then ideally situated to do research but often lacks time and the methodological understanding. Theresa points to this in her journal:

September 15, 1995: "I find the idea of research daunting. There is so much to learn and the prospect of having to complete my own research project is very intimidating. Who has the time? I have 301 students to look after, 6 different classes of instrumental music to prepare for each day, a host of committees and meetings to attend, etc. etc. Where would I find the time to complete a research project?"
It is not only the time, however. It is often confidence about the importance of one's robust questions. Without a knowledge of the research literature, teachers often think some important university research authority must surely have a definitive answer to their questions and it is only their ignorance that makes it a question for them. Another inhibiting factor is a misunderstanding of research - that it surely must be absolutely original and substantially significant for it to count as research. Theresa struggled with this in her journal:

September 21, 1996: One of the things that worries me about doing a research project is that, really, there is nothing new under the sun! What could I, a neophyte researcher, possibly contribute? But then I think I may as well not waste my time on something I don't care about. I hope to find something I am truly interested in, something relevant to my teaching, to pursue.

Focusing on a question, reading, deciding on a way to get at an answer to the question, doing the research project (see Bartel, Cameron, Mathers, and Buczakowski in this issue), were the means to confidence, some methodological understanding, and the time within the teaching context for Theresa to become an inquiring teacher. One becomes a researcher by doing research, by pursuing real questions relevant and meaningful within one's own teaching context. And, once a teacher becomes a reflective inquirer, the inquiry is not completed when "the study" is done - it becomes a way of being and doing. After completing the small research study, Theresa wrote:

April 10, 1996: One of the goals that has emerged is to try to pursue my own research in music teaching. I would like to take a look at the method books I now use and probe the conceptual framework and compare it to the understanding I have now, through my research on music reading, of what learning to read music entails. I want to analyze an approach such as the one that Soundstarts uses, and perhaps develop my own comprehensive approach.

The starting point and continuing challenge of becoming a researcher is to find important questions. Colwell (WWW May 1996) says, "Priorities [in research] must be set by good questions; the results and methodology will fall in place."

Ignorance is not a matter of not knowing, but of not knowing that you don't know or mistakenly believing that you do know or at least some expert somewhere does know. Ignorance is not so much not knowing an answer as not knowing that there is a question...The opposite of ignorance is keeping the mind alive, always considering alternatives, never shutting the system down...The opposite of ignorance is never to rest content doing something you do not understand.

(Frank Smith, 1985)