In 1990, Lee Bartel and I began work on a national research project focused on music curricula in Canada. The study, sponsored by the University of Toronto, Canadian Music Education Research Centre and by the John Adaskin Project, investigates the Canadian content of elementary and secondary school music curricula. In the initial phases of our research, we presented data drawn from detailed content analyses of music curriculum documents produced since 1980 by the provincial ministries of education and by local boards of education in Ontario. We analysed published curriculum documents to discover what proportion of the recommended musical material was Canadian, using as our benchmark John Adaskin's recommendation of 25% Canadian content. We also examined the types of recommended musical materials (e.g., individual pieces of music, music books, reference books, recordings, films and videos, computer software), and we analysed the recommended music in terms of aspects such as length, language, and folk or composed origin. We also determined whether or not curriculum documents included policy statements regarding the use of Canadian and multicultural materials.

We then moved to an exploration of the relationship between published music curriculum documents and the actual practice of teachers, acknowledging that there is frequently a gap between curriculum as prescription and curriculum as instructional reality. Although educational authorities publish documents to guide teachers, teachers do not necessarily follow the published recommendations. Since 1997, we have been collecting data on teachers' use of music curricular materials, drawn from observation in schools across Canada and from surveys of teachers, and have reported our findings in two publications. University of Toronto Music Education students have assisted us in collecting data, and our colleague Lori Dolloff has joined our research team. We have developed a database of all the Canadian and non-Canadian materials used in the music programs which we have surveyed since 1997. This data provides a rich resource for further study. To obtain more in-depth information on the factors influencing their choices of curricular materials, I have surveyed selected teachers.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, we will continue to collect data on music curriculum materials used in schools across Canada. We are particularly interested in obtaining information from teachers outside Ontario. If you would be willing to assist in our data collection, or if you have any questions about the research project, please contact me by phone at (416) 978-3752, by Fax at (416) 978-5771, by mail at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, M5S 2C5, or by email (pshand@chass.utoronto.ca).

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