**Inquiry in Music Education: Concepts and Methods for the Beginning Researcher (2nd ed.)**

**IME Worksheet 3.4 Developing an initial Research Plan**

Related to **Moving Forward with the Contract**, p. 65

**Objective**: This handout guides you in crafting a preliminary research plan.

**Background**: If you are writing a stand-alone literature review, a basic research plan may be all that is needed. If, however, you are proposing original research, this plan is an initial step. To turn your initial plan into a full-blown proposal, you will need to add details that are addressed in Chapters 5 - 14, such as methods, procedures, participants, tools, and a timeline.

**Planning for a Stand-alone Literature Review Project**

1. Give your project a title. Make it specific, concise, and distinctive. (Heading: **Title**)
2. Write out your research purpose and any purpose specifications (questions, sub-purposes, hypotheses, etc.). Your purpose may be written in the form of a question if appropriate to your topic.
3. Next, write a “rationale” paragraph that presents a logical or dialectic argumentation *that explains why your purpose matters*. Your perspective, focus, and mode of inquiry should be clear to readers. The sentences or phrases that address your research specifications should use vocabulary that reflects your engagement with the literature so far. Often the rationale concludes with a main claim or thesis statement that emphasizes the importance of the purpose and rationale.
4. Finally, add an additional page with your tentative reference list crafted in APA reference style.

**Planning for an Original Research Proposal**

1. Give your project a title. Make it specific, concise, and distinctive. (Heading: **Title**)
2. Write out your research purpose and any purpose specifications (questions, sub-purposes, hypotheses, etc.). Your purpose may be written in the form of a question if appropriate to your topic. (Heading: **Purpose**)
3. Next, write a “rationale” paragraph that presents a logical or dialectic argumentation *that explains the need for your study and explains why your chosen approach is the logical choice for addressing that need.* Your perspective, focus, and mode of inquiry should be clear to readers. The sentences or phrases that address your research specifications should use vocabulary that reflects your engagement with the literature so far. Often the rationale concludes with a main claim or thesis statement that emphasizes the importance of the purpose and rationale.
4. Finally, add an additional page with your tentative reference list crafted in APA reference style.