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Kristen Pellegrino¹

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the literature concerning the connections between performer and teacher selves in the formation of a music teacher's identity. This article begins by framing an issue facing preservice and in-service music teachers, namely, the tension between a performer identity and a teacher identity. An overview is provided of (a) the literature documenting preservice music teacher identities that privileges the performer identity and (b) the literature that focuses on balancing and negotiating the performer and teacher identities. To understand aspects of the current debate about music teacher identities, the author develops five themes based on a critical analysis of the selected literature: teacher versus performer identity conflict, personal and professional benefits of music making, holistic view of musical identities, roles and situated identities, and defining music teacher identity. The author concludes by synthesizing the commonalities of the recent research and suggesting approaches and topics for future research on music teacher identity.

Keywords

music teacher identity, role conflict, lives-of-teachers research

¹University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Corresponding Author:

Kristen Pellegrino, University of Michigan, 2455 Lancashire Dr., Apt. 1A, Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Email: krispell@umich.edu

The purpose of this article is to examine the literature concerning the connections between performer and teacher selves in the formation of a music teacher's identity. This article begins by framing an issue facing preservice and in-service music teachers (Scheib, 2007), namely, the tension between a performer identity and a teacher identity. An overview is provided of (a) the literature documenting preservice music teacher identities that privileges the performer identity and (b) the literature that focuses on balancing and negotiating the performer and teacher identities. To understand aspects of the current debate about music teacher identities, I have developed five themes based on my critical analysis of selected literature: teacher versus performer identity conflict, personal and professional benefits of music making, holistic view of musical identities, roles and situated identities, and defining music teacher identity. I conclude by synthesizing the commonalities of the recent research and suggesting approaches and topics for future research on music teacher identity.

Framing the Issue

Much of the literature suggests that preservice and in-service music educators view themselves first as a performer and second as a music teacher (Arostegui, 2004; Bouij, 1998; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Mark, 1998; Roberts, 1991; Woodford, 2002). Some authors have suggested that identity conflicts may be resolved at the individual level. Scheib (2007), however, framed the issue in this way:

For music education students in undergraduate music programs, greater emphasis is often placed on the formation and/or solidification of the musician-performer identity, with significantly less support for and attention to the development of the teacher-self. To the contrary, upon graduation and induction into the profession of teaching, little support exists for the musician-performer role. . . . Solutions to this problem might follow two paths: one leading to more effectively developing, supporting, and encouraging initial socialization of the teacher identity through undergraduate education; the other to reaffirm, reengage, and revitalize the musician-performer identity through one's teaching career.

Privileged Status of Performer or Musician Identity Over the Teacher Identity

Preservice Music Teacher Identity

Within the music teacher socialization research literature, the performer identity was found to have a privileged status compared to the teacher identity. In Froehlich and L'Roy's (1985) study, 72% of the band, strings, and choral undergraduate music education majors ($N = 118$) responded to a survey. Then, 39 undergraduates were

randomly selected for follow-up interviews to investigate their occupational identities. The authors found that most students labeled themselves as professional performers first, and this label increased in frequency from freshmen to seniors.

Next, the term *role* was addressed.

A fundamental assumption of sociologists is that occupations are social roles, where “role” denotes the function or expected behavior of an individual in a group. The role provides the pattern according to which the individual is to act in a particular situation. (Froehlich & L’Roy, 1985, p. 72)

In this case, the primary reference group was labeled *performer*.

Although preservice band teachers and those students with classroom teaching experience had a more realistic view of the teaching profession, string players were identified as having a particularly strong *professional performer* identity rather than either a *musician* or *music educator* identity. In addition, those who perceived themselves as professional performers had more anxiety about the future and were less committed to becoming a music teacher. It was suggested that social interaction theory be used as a framework in future studies of music teacher identity, as it “could contribute significantly to the development of a theory of music education as a professional field with a body of knowledge uniquely its own” (Froehlich & L’Roy, 1985, p. 73).

Based on his previous research, Roberts (1991) “attempts to build a theory to account for the interaction of music education students in Canadian universities as they come to construct an identity as a ‘musician’” (p. 30). Data, collected from 108 students from five Canadian universities over a 3-year period, included interviews and participant observations. Roberts’s theory is “largely dependent upon social interaction in the fullest symbolic interactionist’s and Meadean sense of both with ‘other’ and with ‘self’” (p. 30). This sociological perspective continues to be the basis of recent music teacher identity literature. The majority of this article gives examples of students who identify themselves as either *musician* or *performer* first, often identifying with the instruments they play. After wondering why the students who are excited about teaching and who even plan to begin a teaching career in the near future still compare themselves musically to their applied performance major peers, Roberts concludes by asking if we understand what being a musician or a teacher of music means and suggests that future researchers should “unpack the social world in which opportunities and obligations to construct these identities occur” (p. 38).

In Bouij’s (1998) study, music education students from six Swedish higher education institutions were involved in an initial study, conducted in 1987, and 169 participants continued in ongoing longitudinal studies. This study was based on grounded theory with the core category first being labeled *identity/competence*, then renamed *role identity*. Role identity is an “imaginative view of himself *as he likes to think of himself being and acting*” (p. 24). Asking two open-ended questions, “Who

can I be?” and “Who do I want to be?” four categories emerged with different connotations. Participants who were considered “all-around musician” and “pupil-centered teacher” were found to have “a desire to meet different kinds of music and . . . acquire a set of different . . . music skills,” whereas participants labeled “performer” and “content-centered teacher” preferred to “concentrate on *his own* genre and *his own* instrument” (p. 25). In the longitudinal study, changes in role identity were noted over time, but only showing that there was a connection between all-around musicians and pupil-centered teacher and another connection between performer and content-centered teacher. It was noted that performers, however, did not become pupil-centered teachers.

In the literature review article “The Music Teacher’s Dilemma—Musician or Teacher?” Mark (1998) viewed the music teacher dilemma as a larger question for the profession to address, first through preservice programs. Mark illuminated what he called the “dilemma of music teacher training” and pointed to the “hybrid character” of music teacher education with a quote from Leonhard:

As a result of a long series of compromises, the present music education teacher education program results in a human product whom the applied music specialist considers less than adequate as a performer, whom the musicologist considers deficient as a musical scholar, whom the theorist views as lacking in basic musical skills, and whom the school administrator considers unprepared to relate to the total school program. The graduate himself is placed in the unenviable position of having tried to please everybody and having pleased nobody. (cited in Mark, 1998, p. 3)

Mark looked at literature from Europe and North America and concluded that those who primarily considered themselves performers tended to be more disappointed as teachers.

In his chapter titled “The Social Construction of Music Teacher Identity in Undergraduate Music Education Majors,” Woodford (2002) reviewed much of the literature written about this subject before 2001. Most of the chapter focuses on the conflicts of role identities and questions of (a) whether it is possible to help students change their role identity to a strong secondary socialization and, if so, (b) how this would be accomplished. Woodford’s conclusion, based on the literature, is that institutions of higher education should help preservice music teachers successfully adopt a new self-perception in favor of teaching over performing musician. Even though Woodford primarily focused on the conflict, there are a few statements included from the literature that promote balance between identities at the individual level. “In the end, some kind of balance between and integration of the two role-identities is probably desirable. . . . Possibly, that balance may shift and change according to changing occupational demands” (p. 682).

Arostegui’s (2004) case study followed three volunteer undergraduate instrumental music education majors enrolled in the University of Illinois over one semester,

observing them in multiple situations and interviewing them multiple times, formally and informally. The purpose of the study was “to produce knowledge about the conditions, causes and ways in which undergraduate students in music education build both musical and educational knowledge” by reporting how Arostegui viewed their lived experience (p. 127). Extensive interview transcripts and thick description of his analysis and interpretations are in this 83-page chapter. Two findings were that (a) “time is a precious commodity,” saying that “time is scarce” and “coordination is crucial” (p. 130) and that (b) performance is paramount in the student’s interest and attention. In addition, all three students “considered music performance a prime requirement for being a good music teacher in bands” (p. 171).

In-Service Music Teacher Identity

Based on his dissertation, Scheib’s (2003) “collective case study of one high school’s music department in the Midwestern United States, consisting of four music teachers, served as the focus” (p. 126). Data sets included formal and informal observations, field notes, two transcribed interviews for each participant, and artifacts. First defining “what” stresses school music teachers face, Scheib then addressed “why” these issues cause stress, using the lens of role conflict theory when different identities are in conflict with each other. “Role conflict” and “role overload” were the two most common role stressors.

A lack of congruence between expectations can create conflict and tension. Role conflict occurs when two or more contradictory role messages (expectations) are sent to the focal person that result in psychological conflict. Role overload happens when the quantity and wide variety of different roles expected of the focal person is overwhelming to the point that no one role can be performed satisfactorily. (p. 124)

Balance and Negotiation of Teacher and Performer Identities

Preservice Music Teacher Identity

Gillespie and Hamann (1999) reported that most preservice string teachers are those who love both teaching and playing their instruments. Students ($N = 153$) from 17 universities were surveyed with the purpose of discovering how to attract string players to the string teaching profession. The return rate of the surveys was approximately 85%, and the colleges and universities were located in all regions of the country. One conclusion was that “string students most often chose a career in school orchestra teaching because they liked teaching, music, children, and playing their instrument; enjoyed their previous teaching experiences, and desired to be role models for children” (p. 274). Both school orchestra directors and the availability of jobs influenced

their decisions to become music majors. Participant recommendations for attracting others to the profession included encouraging school orchestra directors (a) to model “their love for music and teaching” and (b) to discuss “their personal, musical, and professional growth as a part of their career in string teaching” (p. 274).

According to Isbell (2006), symbolic interactionism combines concepts of personal and social construction of identity. The self perceives how significant others view them (Other) and how they view themselves (Self). After surveying ($N = 578$) preservice music teachers from 30 randomly sampled institutions, Isbell found that preservice music teachers had three identity constructs: teacher-self, teacher-other, and musician. “There is evidence that teacher identity becomes strengthened with age and field experience while musician identity remains stable throughout undergraduate training” (p. 177). Another conclusion was that preservice music teachers seek to balance their teacher and musician identities. A suggestion for future research is to examine whether teachers who share this balance of identities with students have an effect on their students’ career decisions. Isbell wrote, “Performance and teaching related experiences may have a mutually reinforcing effect on the socialization of young music students, particularly in situations where the student perceives the school music teacher as being both a strong musician and excellent educator” (p. 151).

Music Teacher Educators

Kerchner’s (2002) position article reflects on music teacher educators’ roles and values, including how to mentor and model for preservice teachers. Kerchner suggested that many connections can be made “between collegiate developmental theory, pedagogical theory, and teacher modeling in music education courses . . . [including] linking personal and professional experiences . . . nourishing oneself by seeking opportunities to exercise . . . musicianship . . . [and] linking personal interests, musicianship, and pedagogical skill” (p. 19). Examples of being a musician included performing with students or in recitals, conducting, and attending concerts. She suggested that participating in these kinds of activities helps professors gain credibility with students. Offering three models, Kerchner described (a) a teacher with fragmented roles of musician, teacher, and researcher; (b), a teacher with some connected parts that are left to the student to observe; and (c) a teacher who has integrated personal and professional roles and makes the benefits of these connections—such as passion, self-awareness, and enthusiasm—explicit for his or her students. The article ends by quoting Palmer:

As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life . . . knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject. (cited in Kerchner, 2002, p. 21)

In-Service Music Teacher Identity

Bernard (2004) used narrative inquiry to illuminate how music making affects six elementary general music teachers' lives, both in and out of the classroom. Her dissertation begins by asserting that the underlying assumptions in much of the music education socialization literature fall into one of three categories: literature that advocates choosing, balancing, or conflating identities. In her study, six dedicated elementary general music teachers and music makers were observed over a 3-month period while teaching in their classrooms. Each teacher was interviewed twice, once before the observations and once afterward. Although Bernard shared each teacher's story and developed individual themes, there were three general conclusions. All participants felt (a) "compelled to narrate their experiences of music making" when asked to speak about themselves and their work, (b) that "individuals figure out who they are in relation to the music and in relation to other people," and (c) that "musician-teacher identity is processual, continuously under construction, and it consists of shifting positions and contexts" (p. 182). Using grounded theory, Bernard chose to introduce reconceptualist curriculum and the method of *currere* "to re-activate the powerful personal meanings that teachers and students can find in education and in subject matter" as a theoretical foundation (p. 176). "Reconceptualist scholars hope that, through the method of *currere*, people can reflect on and learn from their identity formation so that they can inform their work today as learners and teachers" (p. 177).

Bernard (2004) suggested that preservice music education programs may offer opportunities for students to "construct, make meaning of, and examine their musician-teacher identities, as well as for them to Reconceptualize music education through the lens of identity making" (p. 182). She also envisioned both in-service and preservice music teachers examining their "musician-teacher identities" in the following ways: writing separate biographies of their music making and music education experiences, making music together, teaching and learning music together, and identity making within music making experiences and within music education experiences (pp. 184-189).

In "Policy Implications for Teacher Retention: Meeting the Needs of the Dual Identities of Arts Educators," Scheib (2006) recommended a way to support arts teachers.

If fine arts teachers hold and value their identities as artists, then it stands to reason that to keep them holistically fulfilled with their arts teaching career, professional development should not only include support of their arts teacher identity, but also their identity as artists. (pp. 8-9)

Critical Analysis of Selected Literature

Bernard (2005)

Bernard's (2005) article sparked much debate among music education scholars. First, I will summarize Bernard's article. Then, I will summarize the debate themes.

Bernard (2005) began her article by illuminating a personal dilemma brought on by the decision process of choosing how to introduce herself at a conference. Her internal dialog is written down to make the point that who we are in different aspects of our lives influences who we are in all aspects of our lives. Based on her dissertation, Bernard explained her concept of identity as

processual, as positions and contexts that constantly shift, and is constructed on multiple levels. Identities are always evolving in response to our experiences and to the social context. As we negotiate the meaning of our identities from moment to moment, we construct who we are. (p. 5)

She clarified the difference between her concept and that of social constructionists by saying that “the construction of identity takes place simultaneously on three levels: individual, social, and cultural” as opposed to “primarily (if not exclusively) on the social level-through social interactions, and more specifically, through discourse” (p. 6).

From her own research, she admitted to being surprised by the discovery that music making was a central theme in many musician-teachers’ lives and concludes that music making experiences are “central in the way that musician-teachers make meaning of who they are and what they do” (p. 13). Reiterating that she created a new “dynamic framework for understanding and examining the professional identities of music educators,” Bernard believed that this could “dramatically alter the landscape of theory and practice in music teacher education” and called “for reframing music teacher education” (pp. 27-28). She suggested that music teacher educators (a) honor all students’ multiple ways of understanding themselves in “who they are, what they do, and their individual processes of becoming a music teacher,” (b) “acknowledge the centrality of experiences of making music in the ways that music educators understand themselves and their work,” and (c) both “listen to and validate the personal, individual meanings that people bring to their experiences with music [by] creating opportunities for our students to think about and articulate the ways that music is personally relevant to them” (p. 28).

Development of Five Themes

The January 2007 special edition of the MayDay Group’s journal, *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, was devoted to responding to Bernard’s (2005) article. To understand aspects of the current debate about music teacher identities, I have developed five themes based on my synthesis of the articles in this journal issue (Bernard, 2007; Bouij, 2007; Dolloff, 2007; Regelski, 2007; Roberts, 2007; Stephens, 2007) and selected literature (Dolloff, 2006; Jorgensen, 2006; Nielsen, 2006; Ruud, 2006). The themes are teacher versus performer identity conflict, personal and professional benefits of music making, holistic view of musical identities, roles and situated identities, and defining music teacher identity.

Teacher versus performer identity conflict. Dolloff (2007) believed that Roberts, who studied “the problems of conflicting identities for undergraduate music education students,” set “musician identity versus teacher identity” (p. 9). This view parallels Bernard’s categorization of Roberts’s earlier research. Dolloff cautioned those who study this identity conflict to “tread this path of this dyad carefully” (p. 9).

The issue of conflicting identities underwent a transformation as one author responded to another. First, Roberts (2007) wrote about “a never-ending personal war between our musician and teacher identities” (p. 7). Stephens (2007) identified the teacher versus performer identity “conflict” as being a practical issue, as there is not enough time to do everything. Both Stephens and Bouij (2007) considered tensions created by attempting to balance meetings, paperwork, family life, socializing, and so on as further complicating this issue.

Many of the journal authors discussed their interpretation of the terms *tension* and *conflict*. Bernard (2007) originally interpreted these terms negatively, but Stephens (2007) believed that “conflict can have positive outcome(s)” (p. 6). Roberts (2007) wrote, “Our effectiveness in the classroom depends upon being both strong teachers and strong musicians and that . . . the personal war we wage with ourselves to maintain a balance with these two identities is crucial to our success in the classroom” (p. 11). He adds that this is imperative, not negative. In response to this line of reasoning, Bernard then disagreed with Stephens’s idea that musicianship and teaching are complementary or that “artist” and “teacher” identities should be synthesized, claiming it to be incongruent with the idea that the conflict of identities is necessary.

Personal and professional benefits of music making. Dolloff (2006) identified the role of emotion as “an often overlooked component in the study of teacher identity” (p. 128).

We all agree that music and music-making is ripe with emotions and emotional potential. . . . Eliot Eisner has said that we should remember the passion and context that drew us to music in the first place and offer nothing less than that powerful experience to our students. (p. 129)

Ruud (2006) wrote about a person’s relationship with music as being an “emotional investment,” pointing to music’s “arousing power” and “its ability to make us feel” (p. 63). He submitted that this emotional investment is a factor in deciding what narratives we choose to include or exclude as part of our identity. As a music therapist, Ruud pointed to some of the personal benefits of lifelong involvement with music, which he claimed:

play a role in the formation of a sense of self, establish a sense of agency, help the young when individuality is sought, support the individual to maintain and regulate stability in moods and energies and serve as a device for recollection and integration of life events. (p. 67)

Bouij (2007), Dolloff (2007), and Regelski (2007) agreed that asking “how music teachers satisfy their musical needs is itself worthy of study” (Regelski, 2007, p. 11). Stephens (2007) believed that “both personal fulfillment and applied musicianship are deemed important for the individual and the community in which he or she works” (p. 8). He also believed that we should “consider the different *qualities* of artist and teacher and how these might enrich one’s personal and professional identity” (p. 9). However, he interpreted Bernard’s emphasis as being “more concerned with personal status and fulfillment than application to the classroom” (p. 18). Although he agreed with Bernard that “music is meaningful because of its personal relevance” (Bernard, 2005, p. 28), Stephens added,

The experiences we bring to our study of music and music education are valuable resources that inspire and shape our practice. . . . Focusing attention on the application of our musicianship to the needs of the classroom does not have to—indeed, should not—undermine music’s important role in our lives. (p. 26)

Holistic view of musical identities. Nielsen (2006) wrote about the phenomenon of music and what meanings and significance can be drawn from music through his phenomenological theory. He referred to music as a “multi-spectral universe” of meaning and described people’s experience with music.

We know immediately that music can affect us, even to the point where we become one with it. In certain circumstances it can actually change our understanding of the world and ourselves. It can speak directly to our inmost selves, and that must be assumed to be rooted in and spring from the inmost core of the music. This experience and this assumption ought to entail consequences for both analytical and pedagogical dealings with music, and, in my opinion, in a truly essential fashion. (pp. 166-167)

He explained that we need to understand the structure of this experience to study the phenomenon of music in a way that is consistent with people’s everyday experiences of music. By acknowledging that there are both external and internal structures of music that work together, Nielsen believed that dimensions of musical meanings are integrated. The “acoustic layers” and structural layers, which are the outer, intelligible layers, lead into “more deeply situated layers of meaning of e.g. kinetic-motoric, tensional, emotional, spiritual, and existential kinds. These layers, or dimensions of meaning, mesh together so that each individual aspect is intelligible only when the others are taken into account” (p. 168). “By entering into a relationship with the object (music) the person also enters into a relationship with certain aspects of himself or herself, with potential aspects of his or her own existence” (p. 176).

Stephens (2007) wrote, “Rhoda Bernard is properly concerned for the ‘whole person’—a composite ‘musician-teacher’ identity rather than what she sees as a fragmented identity” (p. 26). However, Stephens called Bernard’s fear regarding

attempts to divide a music teacher's musician-identity and teacher-identity "unfounded."

Roles and situated identities. Dolloff (2007) recognized the benefit of Roberts' examination of identity conflicts to be the "focus of situational goals" (p. 9). Roberts (2007) and Stephens (2007) contended that there are times when one identity may be brought to the foreground while other identities may fade into the background. This shift in focus, however, does not devalue the identities that are momentarily delegated to the background. The context of the situation is a primary contributing factor in determining which identity will be the focus. This is a key point of contention with Bernard's argument, and they questioned whether she was advocating that the musician identity should always be in focus. Stephens believed it is more about "adopting different *roles* at different times-and the roles we adopt should not be confused with a broader *identity*" (p. 19). Not believing that this change of focus causes fragmentation or conflict, Stephens said, "Nevertheless, they remain part of who I am, and in varying ways inform my approach to everything I do-including my music making *and* my teaching" (p. 19).

Dolloff (2007) included discussions of Bouij's idea of role versus identity, the idea of layered identities, and Beijaard's idea of subidentities, among others (pp. 3-5). Even though she contrasted "role," referring to "what a teacher *does*," to "identity," referring to "who a teacher *is*" (p. 3) she preferred to use the distinction of "Identity" with a capital *I* and "identity" with a lower case *i*. "Identity," as "how a person sees him- or herself in general," is distinguished from "identity," which refers to "the individual identities we construct for the variety of contexts in which we exist" (p. 4). Roberts (2007) wrote that the idea of multiple identities is accepted in the field, as is the idea that identity is situated. More specifically, he agreed that our many identities "are positioned in our Self according to the situation in which the identity is required, and perhaps more importantly, supported by Others" (p. 3). Ultimately, both Roberts and Bouij criticized Bernard for claiming that identity is "processual" even though they each categorized her model as being static.

Defining music teacher identity. Regelski (2007) criticized the authors who wrote in the special edition as well as the authors of past literature for failing to define terms. He concluded that researchers understood words such as *identity*, *conflict*, *musician-teacher*, and *role* in different ways. Even though I agree with this assessment in general, I have included some of the definitions provided in the literature. I conclude this section with three views of identity.

Jorgensen (2006) delved into the notion of musical identity and believed it to be "a complicated construct" that, "at its most self-evident, is used to define who we are" (p. 28). She also believed that identity "is socially as well as individually constructed" (p. 29). Ultimately, Jorgensen suggested that identities "are dynamic and in a state of 'becoming,' and social constructs" (p. 39). Ruud (2006) placed the study of identity primarily in the fields of sociology and anthropology. After differentiating between "self" and "identity," he defined identity as "the self-in-context," which is "constructed through narratives we tell about ourselves in relation to musical events and experiences in different contexts—personal, transpersonal, social, and those specifically located in time and place" (p. 63).

Dolloff (2006) summarized that many recent authors are writing “about the changing, dynamic and layered characteristics of identity” (p. 125). Building her definition of identity on those of Bouij, Jorgensen, and Ruud, Dolloff believed that “we construct a dynamic and evolving sense of who we are through our experiences and relationships to our environment, others, and the results of our actions” (p. 125). Similarly, Regelski (2007) presented an analogy of a pyramid, “a three-dimensional, multisided form where the whole rests *primarily* on one base, with the other ‘sides’ always dynamically contributing to the whole and its functions and meanings,” able to shift sides according to circumstance and situations (p. 18).

Setting the Agenda for Future Study of Music Teacher Identity

By combining the ideas represented in the literature reviewed in this article, I have synthesized the commonalities and concerns expressed by these authors into two categories. First, identity can be defined as fluid, dynamic, evolving, situated, layered, and constructed individually, socially, and culturally. However, using theoretical frameworks and/or methodologies that capture preservice and in-service music teachers’ identities as snapshots frozen in time while attempting to represent the changing nature of identities is problematic. Second, music teachers are, ideally, integrated people who bring meaningful musical experiences with them into the classrooms. These experiences may inform and influence teachers personally and professionally and their students’ learning. My suggestions for the future study of music teacher identity are based on these two ideas.

Theoretical Frameworks, Approaches, and Methodologies

Suggestions for studying music teacher identity in its complexity include (a) using sociocultural theoretical frameworks, such as those proposed by Rogoff (1995), Wenger (1998), and Gee (1996, 2000-2001), and (b) using methodologies, such as life narratives (Ayers, 1989), life histories (Goodson, 1980-1981, 2008; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), or narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), that are often found in the “lives-of-teachers” approach to research. Research that examines aspects of teachers’ lives and/or the influences of their lives—such as their past (biography, beliefs, attitudes) and personal and institutional factors—on their practice is considered lives-of-teachers research. These suggestions attempt to capture a holistic view of people who are situated within larger contexts and to acknowledge the centrality of identity in understanding a person’s experience.

Definitions of identity found in both sociocultural and lives-of-teachers literature are compatible with the synthesized definition I have presented. An example of a sociocultural theoretical framework is Wenger’s (1998) identity trajectory from *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Three of the five components of Wenger’s temporal notion of identity are that the trajectory is “a). a work in

progress; b). shaped by efforts—both individual and collective . . . ; and c). incorporate the past and the future in the experience in the present” (p. 158). This theoretical framework compliments the life narrative methodology developed by Ayers (1989).

In Ayers’ (1989) study of six preschool teachers, he named the clearest theme “teaching as identity.” Perhaps the most important contribution of Ayers’ work was his emphasis on finding a methodology that captures the personal, situated, complex aspects of teaching.

This method seeks meaning in reflection and metaphor as well as in action and behavior. It involves classroom observations of teachers teaching, and pedagogical dialogues of teachers reflecting on their lives as they influence teaching practices. It demands collaboration on the part of teacher and observer toward the production of a meaningful narrative text that describes and links together influences, events, people, and experiences that contribute to the creation of the teacher as she finds herself today. This text, assumed to be neither comprehensive nor complete, becomes the focus for the teacher to critically examine her teaching practices and to locate them in a continuum from past to future. (pp. 137-138)

Research Applications With Music

The music education literature suggests that, ideally, music teachers are integrated people who bring meaningful musical experiences with them into the classroom. These experiences can inform and influence them personally and professionally and their students’ learning, and each of these elements may be studied together, separately, or in various combinations. Future research may focus on the integration process and possible tensions and/or ambiguities in the teacher’s life as he or she seeks to balance teaching, music making, and other musical experiences and social and personal aspects of life. Asking questions such as “Where do these musician-teachers find the time to maintain performing, family and teaching?” (Dolloff, 2007, p. 16) may help us to better understand this balancing act that many teachers are actively attempting.

Future research might also both examine music making in the lives of music teachers and ask the teacher-participant’s students to describe their experience in a music teacher’s classroom to provide insights into *how* music making informs and influences teachers and their students’ learning.

Career stages (Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993) may be applied to a longitudinal study or several smaller studies that examine the meanings teacher-participants construct based on their past and present music-making experiences and whether those meanings change over time. It would be beneficial for the initial phase of a longitudinal study to include high school seniors who intend to enter college as music education majors and follow those students through their college careers and into their teaching years.

Future researchers may also explore each element separately, such as the personal benefits of music making. This may include examining music making as a form of spirituality and/or a source of well-being in the lives of music educators. In fact, there has been a recent surge of literature within the past decade that has addressed the need for spirituality or well-being in the lives of teachers in general (Astin et al., 2002; Noddings, 2003; Palmer, 1998; Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2008) and music and art teachers specifically (Bresler, 2007; Jorgensen, 2008; Powell, 1997).

Perhaps interdisciplinary work with music education and positive psychology would bring new understandings. Positive psychology was inspired in part by Csikszentmihályi's (1991) theory of "flow," which describes the "optimal experience." This is a psychological state of intense interest, a time when someone becomes fully absorbed in a challenging activity, causing him or her to lose a sense of time and self, resulting in feelings of satisfaction and a sense of well-being. I suggest examining if and how music making contributes to this sense of well-being in a music teacher's life.

Goodson (1980-1981) wrote, "In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is" (p. 69). In summary, I suggest that future research examine music teachers in a holistic way that honors the current discourse in the music education literature.

Teaching music is not something that exists within a void, divorced from a love for and engagement with one's subject. To separate subject-engagement from subject-application reflects an impersonal model of teaching and learning rather than one that emanates from a dynamic human exchange between teacher and learner—an exchange that draws its life from music itself. (Stephens, 2007, p. 22)

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