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Source: *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, No. 201 (Summer 2014), pp. 23-41

Published by: [University of Illinois Press](#) on behalf of the [Council for Research in Music Education](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.201.0023>

Accessed: 27-08-2015 18:34 UTC

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A Phenomenological Study of Music Education Majors' Identity Development in Methods Courses Outside Their Areas of Focus

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore music education majors' identity development within the context of two music education methods courses. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a lens, two music teacher educators examined the experiences of vocal music education majors enrolled in an instrumental methods course and instrumental music education majors enrolled in a choral methods course (15 total participants). Data collection included participant interviews, peer teaching self-reflections, field experience journals, and researcher field notes. Data analysis included epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. Findings indicated while participants remained invested in initial identities created as early musicians, university contexts helped dimensionalize and expand their self-definition. Every participant articulated a greater appreciation for music education contexts outside of his/her area of focus. Implications for music education majors who perform on multiple instruments and musicians who frequently perform outside of traditional contexts are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of music teacher education programs is to assist undergraduate students in building identities as music teachers. To Erikson (1968), one's identity can be traced from the past and projected into the future. Hence, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the professional identity development of preservice music teachers and to examine how teacher preparation programs can be structured to assist them. Previous music teacher identity development literature has addressed primary and secondary socialization, musical and teacher role identity formation, the influence of context on identity development, and whether university coursework fosters the development of preservice teacher identity.

Extant studies have indicated future music teachers are socialized into the profession through early-life experiences with family and peers, termed primary socialization, and through later experiences with music teachers serving as role models, termed secondary socialization (Woodford, 2002). Many applicants to music teacher education programs made their college major decision in high school, having identified with music teacher roles (Beynon, 1998; Cox, 1997; Duling, 2000; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999). Beynon (1998) observed that music majors were socialized into the norms of the profession throughout their preschool to high school (P-12) experiences. Once they began a university music program, music education students auditioned for university ensembles and found themselves placed within a new hierarchy among their peers. These students, who were often at the top of their sections within high school ensembles, were now placed at the bottom of their sections or placed in secondary ensembles (Roberts, 1991a; Pitts, 2004). Isbell (2008), in a national survey of preservice music teachers, found that secondary socialization was more highly correlated with music teacher occupational identity than primary socialization, with school music teachers serving as the primary influence. He also found that influential experiences (e.g., performing experiences and early teaching experiences such as leading sectionals) were more predictive of occupational identity than influential people.

Music classes contributed to preservice educators' preparation, but findings indicated that participants did not recognize these as actual preparation (Beynon, 1998; L'Roy, 1983). Additionally, teaching experiences within methods courses may not have strengthened undergraduates' identities as teachers (Dolloff, 1999; Paul, 1998; Powell, 2011). However, Haston and Russell (2012) and Hunter, Fuster, Suta, and Trincanati (2009) found that teaching experiences specifically tied to methods courses may have fostered the development of professional music teacher identity.

The dual roles of performer and teacher added to the ambiguity of music education undergraduates' identity development (Dolloff, 1999; Mark, 1998; Prescesky, 1997; Roberts, 1991b). Though music education majors appeared to be socialized as performers first and teachers second (Beynon, 1998; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; L'Roy, 1983), they were often able to draw on their varied roles to inform the other (Haston & Russell, 2012). Conkling (2003) found that preservice music teachers took the same learning approach in teaching and performing, valuing models, feedback, and practice strategies in both contexts. In Conkling's study, participants reported that secondary school and university ensemble conductors, as well as university-applied teachers, were the strongest teaching models. Similarly, Dolloff (1999) found that preservice music teachers' images of teaching were based on their applied lesson teacher, who may have not been an appropriate model for classroom teaching. Like Conkling (2003), Campbell (1999) discovered that preservice music teacher identities were strongly influenced by their secondary school experiences, with an emphasis on performance as participants saw themselves as "directors."

Music education undergraduates may be conflicted about their role as a performer versus that of an educator, and they may identify as a major on their instrument before identifying as a music education major (Roberts, 1991b). Additionally, students' statuses within schools of music seemed to be more aligned with performing skill than any other attribute (Roberts, 2004). Bouij (1998) identified conflicts in music teacher identity between musical roles (performer versus all-around musician) and professional roles (teacher versus musician). Bouij found that teaching may be a "fall-back" for those who fail as performers. Individuals may have developed the "all-around musician" identity when it became apparent that they would not become professional performers on their instruments (Bouij, 2004). In a case study of double majors in performance and music education, Sieger (2012) reported that performer or teacher identity was situation-dependent and conflicted. Insecurities arose when preservice teachers taught outside of their comfort zones, which were articulated as their primary instruments.

Through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group sessions, Conway, Eros, Pellegrino, and West (2010) found that instrumental music education majors perceived themselves as "different" than performance majors, felt that they had more to prove within applied studios, and thought that their musician/teacher identity changed throughout the degree program. The competing demands of the performance and education areas made excelling in both difficult for these students. The authors urged music education faculty to work with other music faculty to create a supportive environment for music education students.

To date, there is no apparent inquiry that has studied music education majors' identity development through participating in methods courses outside their primary areas of focus. Thirty-one states consider music a single-subject area for certification purposes, while only 15 states differentiate between vocal and instrumental music (Henry, 2005). Music educators are often expected to be competent in all music-learning contexts, so their preparation and development in previously unfamiliar musical contexts is important.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore music education majors' identity development within the context of two music education methods courses. We examined the experience of vocal music education majors enrolled in an instrumental methods course and instrumental music education majors enrolled in a choral methods course. In order to more fully understand participant experiences, we addressed two related areas of development, including early musical identity and the first two years of university music school coursework. Research questions included (a) how vocal music education majors described the experience of an instrumental methods course and how instrumental music education majors described the experience of a choral methods course, (b) how music education majors' early musical identity development contributed to their present identity, within and outside of P-12 schooling and university music school contexts, and (c) what insights were gained from methods experiences.

THEORETICAL LENS

We used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory as a theoretical lens. An ecological surrounding is conceived as a nested arrangement of concentric circles surrounding the self, including microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem (see Figure 1). Individuals impact their own environment and constantly restructure where they reside. Within the microsystem, individuals participate in molar activities that help them continually define their own processes. Molar activities are added as the individual engages in meaningful psychological growth and participates in an activity for its own sake or as a means to an end. Molar activities also hold a time perspective, as individuals may see their participation in the present or within a larger temporal trajectory. Finally, molar activities usually include a goal structure and may hold different meanings to the extent that they may invoke objects, people, and/or events in the past (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 45).

In this study, molar activities included experiences within methods courses, field-work, and applied music as well as the university music school context. Mesosystems represented interconnections and relationships between microsystems. Mesosystems included home, peer, and community influences outside of the university music school and P-12 schools. Exosystems and macrosystems did not interact directly with the individual but affected them. An example of a macrosystem might be the United States's education policies.

Though Bronfenbrenner (1979) did not refer explicitly to identity in his ecological systems theory, his articulation of an individual's evolving developmental status aligns with Erikson's (1968) theory of identity. To both Bronfenbrenner and Erikson, inter-

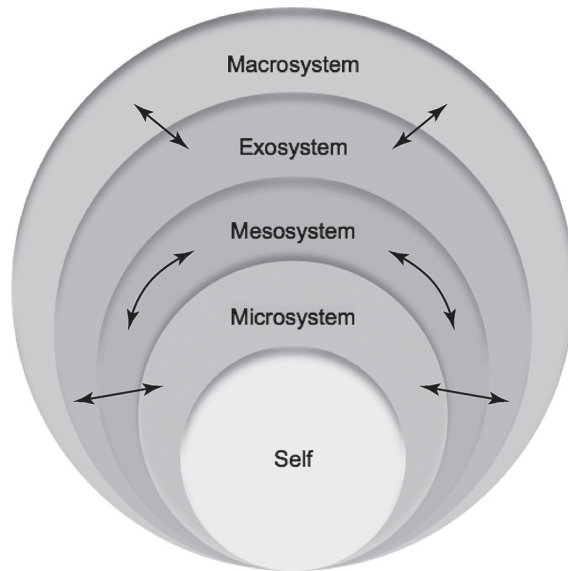


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

actions between the individual and his or her environment are reciprocal and require mutual accommodation. Individuals consistently mediate growth of the self through their perceptions and interactions with others as well as plan for future actions. An individual's development may also be enhanced when building new systems with others whom she or he has participated with in prior settings. Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes this development becoming "multiply linked" with others (p. 211).

Individuals are unique; their ecologies are different from one another because they modify structures that hold meaning to them including activities, roles, and relationships. An ecological transition, therefore, is a change in role (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Different settings "give rise" to new patterns of roles, activities, and relationships for participants (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 109). Furthermore, roles tend to evoke the behaviors expected of them. Development is carried over to other settings and times (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as individuals become consistently themselves (Erikson, 1968). Individuals are able to build positive identity through the integration of self and social worlds (Kroger, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes his theory as phenomenological (p. 23), drawing on the work of Kurt Lewin (1931). To Lewin, the environment is not as it is in the objective world, but how it exists in the mind of the individual. In addition, the foundation of one's existence is not only his or her own perception and experience, but how she or he shapes the environment that holds meaning.

In this study, we used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems as a theoretical lens because it is both generative and useful. Ecological systems theory helps to explain how participants may perceive their worlds as they live them, how they accommodate their music teaching and learning activities, how they mediate the many roles and relationships within their own development, and how they may project their own development into the future as music teachers. It is our hope that ecological systems can help to highlight, identify, and bring greater dimension to the complexities of participants' music education identity development.

METHOD

We used phenomenology in order to understand the lived experience of individuals. Phenomenology has been used within several music education studies, examining topics such as preservice teaching experiences, underrepresented populations, and professional development (Hourigan & Edgar, 2014; Powell, 2011). Phenomenology is descriptive, as the task is to capture the essence of human experience through textual expression. It also makes the distinction between appearance and essence, "between the things of our experience and that which grounds the things of our experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). It is understood, however, that descriptions of lived experience cannot be identical to the experiences themselves. Hence, writing phenomenologically is complex and requires rewriting, rethinking, and reflecting.

Through interaction, human beings are able to reach one another. As music teacher educators, one of the ways we are oriented to the world is pedagogically. Thus, through this inquiry, we hoped to build relationships between our experiences and our participants' experiences to further our collective knowing. The goal of this study was to discover the essence of identity development of vocal and instrumental music education majors within upper-level music education methods courses.

Fifteen music education majors were enrolled in instrumental (7 participants) or choral methods (8 participants) courses within a mid-sized university located in the southeastern United States. Site sampling was both opportunistic and purposive, and participants were chosen based on the criteria that they were enrolled in music education methods courses within the same semester (Patton, 2002). The vocal music education professor interviewed vocal music education majors enrolled in the instrumental methods course while the instrumental music education professor interviewed instrumental music education majors in the choral methods course. The instrumental methods course focused on achieving basic facility on woodwind and brass instruments and gaining instrumental teaching experience through in-class peer-teaching episodes. Participants were also required to complete fieldwork by observing private studio instruction within the university music school setting. The content of the choral methods class included peer- and field-teaching experiences, instructor-led vocal technique lessons, diction, rehearsal strategies, and student-led discussion. Participants were placed within middle and high school choral field settings for twenty hours and were required to teach at three different times using specified tasks. Because we were each the instructor for one of the methods courses, we decided to interview participants enrolled in the other instructor's class. The Institutional Review Board within the university reviewed and gave consent for the project.

Data were derived from interviews, peer teaching self-reflections, field experience journals, and researcher memos. In spring 2012, each participant was interviewed for approximately 30 to 45 minutes using a semistructured protocol (see the appendix for interview protocol). Interview questions addressed musical identity, participation in methods courses, similarities and differences in methods contexts, and insights about instrumental and choral communities. Peer teaching self-reflections included general comments and specific prompts regarding modeling use of gesture, pacing, and sequencing. Field experience journals asked participants to describe the school music teachers' work with public school students, repertoire choices, classroom management styles, and, finally, what it takes to be a music teacher. Interview data were audio recorded and transcribed. Two types of researcher memoing were used (Creswell, 2013), including analytic (e.g., questions and speculative thoughts about the data) and reflective (e.g., researcher impressions, classroom interactions with participants, and ethical considerations). Memos were composed during data analysis as well as when the courses were in session.

The first step in our phenomenological analysis was to acknowledge our own experiences as music students in an attempt to perceive participant experiences "as if for the

first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). During this process of epoché (Patton, 2002), we wrote down and discussed our own experiences as preservice teachers as well as teacher educators who have taught these courses previously. We began by discussing our assumptions about instrumental and vocal contexts, acknowledging what we perceived as considerable differences in teaching approaches, performing practices, professional organizations, and communities at large. We acknowledged the silos that exist and the distance between these settings in both P-12 and university contexts, bracketing our experiences. Although an absolutely unbiased state may be impossible to achieve in reality, “the value of the epoché principle is that it inspires one to examine biases and enhances one’s openness even if a perfect and pure state is not achieved” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 61).

We first coded the data independently then met weekly to compare analyses and come to agreement. In our analysis (following Moustakas, 1994 and Creswell, 2013), we reduced the data to significant statements that exemplified participant experiences (horizontalization) and combined them into themes. We then developed a textural description of participant experiences. Through imaginative variation, we described the contexts that influenced interaction with the phenomenon. Finally, we developed a description of the essence of participant experience. Verification procedures included established relationships with participants that assisted with rapport (Seidman, 1991) and different data types including memos, journals, and interviews in addition to the rigor of the data analysis process.

FINDINGS

Five themes emerged from the data analysis. The first three themes were contextual and laid the foundation for participants’ identity formation. Themes four and five directly addressed the purpose of this study, exploring methods coursework and its impact on the many ways in which participants viewed themselves. We discuss our findings under two main headings: (a) contextual themes and (b) primary themes related to participant development through methods courses.

Contextual Themes

Contextual themes one, two, and three related to participant experiences prior to the inception of this study. Participants described their music teacher identity development beginning with music in the home, in private study, and/or in an ensemble. Influential teachers helped to support and nurture participants’ music teacher development. Once participants entered university music school, they broadened their self-definition as musician.

Theme One: Developing as an Early Musician. Participants articulated that their music study occurred “at the very beginning” of their development by studying privately and/or singing and playing in an ensemble context. Parents and other family members,

many of whom were avocational or professional musicians, were highly influential in encouraging participants' beginnings and progress in musical contexts. While some participants used school ensembles as self-identification points, others identified with their instrument alone or with multiple roles.

For three participants, their early musical lives existed in many contexts, coded as "multiple roles." They played several instruments, participated in bands and choirs, and one began as a composer. When it came time for a music school audition, they were asked to choose a singular instrument on which to focus. Interviews with these participants highlighted the choices and struggles they encountered as well as how these dilemmas presented themselves throughout their early musical development. As Martin described it:

I was halfway band and chorus the other half. But still, even when I did get in to chorus, I was still in concert band and jazz ensembles and brass quintet and all the combos . . . so I was doing double duty . . . [I had] the combo of the band ensemble, and I really like to sing. I wanted to see what I could do if I decided to take voice up, and so I was still tussling with it. And sometimes I still tussle with it now.

A few participants described themselves as "independent musicians." Independent musicians did not only play in school ensembles or take private lessons, but they also "gigged" in garage bands, in praise bands, and with other combinations of instruments. They were largely self-taught and self-motivated to make music with others, with or without profit. When they articulated their independent musician world, they spoke of residing outside of traditional music study. Interestingly, as participants discussed university music school later in their interviews, they did not continue to include details of their playing or singing as independent musicians. They did, however, state they were excited to utilize their diverse skills in a future teaching context.

Theme Two: Transitioning to Music School. Participants began their transition from early musician to university music major with the aid of key individuals such as parents and music teachers. Every participant discussed the importance of teachers as encouragers of their future in music, witnessing the potential of what their teachers could do and their impact. For many, participants decided to audition and major in music because they looked at their music teacher and saw themselves reflected in him or her. Participants saw their own potential to affect change in future students. Eileen described the experience with her music teacher:

She was so good, and she made the band fun. It had a terrible reputation when I was there, but she really brought the program up, you know, picked up by its bootstraps and the kids felt really good about themselves. She made me decide that I wanted to major in music education.

Kate described her teacher's influence in her becoming a music major: "Having a teacher telling you, 'Hey, you've got talent, and I think you could pursue this and do well.' That's when I thought, 'Okay, maybe I could.'"

Participants also introduced their parents as supporters of the decision to major in music. One participant stated her mother perceived it would be difficult for her to get a job, while others indicated their parents were glad they were interested in a degree that would help them gain positions after graduation. Kayla said, "They are still very supportive, especially financially . . . they love what I'm doing."

Theme Three: Broadening Identities in Music. For participants, the first two years of music school facilitated a broadening of identity as they moved from early musician to an expanded view of themselves. Every participant discussed required courses such as music theory, music history, aural skills, ensembles, and applied lessons. However, it was not the courses or instructors directly responsible for the transformation of the participants, but it was how the participants themselves impacted their musical experiences, stretching their identities from choir kid, band kid, percussionist, or saxophonist to musician. The skills and training helped integrate participants' previous identities into a newly formed sense of who they were as musicians:

In high school I guess I didn't really think about it . . . I was singing, listening, [and] thinking about techniques to use as singer or a vocalist, but I wasn't thinking about learning how to write music or, you know, do any . . . all the aspects of music. It was a big step for me when I got to college. (Allison)

It's not just about singing or singing in a group with people, but it's about understanding the music and coming together in that aspect. Understanding theory and history now has made me realize that it isn't just about my instrument or their instruments—[it is] about all of our instruments and combinations. (Robin)

Robin's words articulated a shift in not only what she knew about music, but also how the shift changed her perspective on the musical experience itself. Another participant, Allison, indicated she did not know that music theory or history existed at all. Others, such as Leah, viewed the academic and artistic aspects of their world as separate from one another. Leah identified herself as a music educator, but placed certain subject areas within an academic, rather than an artistic, framework, such as music history, poetry, and reading. She viewed her own performance work as artistic, and while she embraced both academic and artistic realms, she described them as separate. Overall, participants did not expect that required courses would have such a great impact upon their self-definition.

Primary Themes Related to Participant Development Through Methods Courses

Participants articulated that they expanded their teacher identities through active engagement in coursework outside of their areas of focus. Instrumental students were immersed in choral/vocal methods and vocal music education students in instrumental methods. Themes four and five highlight participants' development through coursework and their growth toward a future in music teaching.

Theme Four: Experiencing and Gaining Knowledge About Other Music Education Contexts. Theme four emerged from specific discussion within interviews as well as from written and observational data in instrumental and choral methods courses. Most participants approached the methods course with apprehension or trepidation, except for a few individuals who had years of prior experience. After they completed their coursework, participants discussed their newfound ability to view instrumental and vocal contexts with greater clarity.

Many vocal music education participants articulated the technical aspects of playing the instrument. Manipulating an instrument with fingers on keys and creating an effective embouchure were challenging. They were also unaccustomed to the struggle to create sound and described much frustration in understanding the basics, specifically on woodwind and brass instruments. Allison said, "I was very nervous when I first started playing the trombone . . . the buzz. I couldn't get my lips to buzz the first week. I guess the buzz and the breath work together."

Many instrumental music education participants described feeling overwhelmed by the pedagogical requirements for the choral methods course. They indicated having little experience with the voice as an instrument or choral music as a practice. Participants described feeling uncomfortable in front of their peers as they led peer teachings. For those participants who had discussed experience within "multiple roles" in music, they appeared to have greater comfort initially with each course.

Eileen describes the difficulty of the choral methods course:

At the very beginning of the semester, I did a vocal warm-up and it was so terrible, I didn't even finish it. I didn't realize I didn't finish it until I watched the video on the computer. But I went out there and I only did half of it, I think, because I was so nervous, and then I just wanted to sit down.

As participants gained more experience, many discussed the awareness of their own choral or instrumental limitations and their feelings of overwhelm with the considerable amount of knowledge needed for the course. Learning more about the pedagogy of the new context opened up the field and helped each participant realize how much more there was to know. Kathy said, "I guess from an instrumentalist's point of view, if you've never been involved in choir and learning the pedagogy, when you get into it even a little bit you realize how much more there is that you don't know."

Most participants articulated feeling completely lost with what they were trying to accomplish in class, both instrumentally and chorally. Though some discussed using their basic musicianship skills to address musical concepts such as articulation, blend, balance, and pitch, others expressed they were acting as if they knew what they were doing. John said:

In the back of my mind, I feel like I have no idea what I'm doing. [I think] "How can I make it seem like I know what I'm talking about?" And that's what my whole lesson seems to be based off of, like, "What can I say to make them think that I know what I'm doing?"

Data from participant peer teaching self-reflections confirmed participants' unease. Choral or instrumental techniques did not come naturally, and many discussed taking the safe route. One participant stated that she did what was comfortable in her initial warm up teaching and would work on more complex teachings later. Reflective memos indicated that throughout the semester we encouraged participants to immerse themselves in unfamiliar contexts, as it would assist their overall comfort level. Memos also detailed how we complimented participants' comfort in this new environment and encouraged them to look at repertoire teachings for a new point of challenge. Participants were asked to strengthen pedagogical skills by employing tight teaching sequences, verbal efficiency, and consistent eye contact, and thorough score study. We suggested they stay focused on concepts, rather than trying quickly to attempt mastery of this new context, whether it be vocal or instrumental.

As the semester progressed, participants who initially discussed their multiple roles in music also began having challenges. They indicated a comfort with their specific instrument but a lack of pedagogical knowledge in the new field. Thomas participated in both choir and band in high school but said he knew nothing about how the voice functioned. Martin, a vocal music education major, had experience playing brass instruments but had no experience on woodwinds. In his interview, he stated, "I am totally brass."

Participants described peers as understanding and willing to help. They also articulated a newfound respect for their colleagues who were instrumentalists or vocalists. They enjoyed the freshness of the course, and a few expressed feeling more familiar by the end of the semester. Teresa said, "By the third peer teaching, I felt really comfortable with it, and it was exciting. I felt like, you know, I could teach chorus if I needed to, and it was actually really fun." Corey stated, "So, it's been certainly challenging, but rewarding at the same time." While some participants described remaining uncomfortable within these new contexts, others found this new area exciting.

Theme Five: Embracing Musician and Educator. As participants became involved in music education methods coursework, many discussed a subtle shift from musician to music educator. For some, there was a specific point where an educatorship role began to take hold, while others stated they were equally musicians and educators. All participants recognized themselves as "well rounded" because of applied study and music education coursework. Eileen described a poignant transition:

In the beginning I saw myself as a horn player, definitely. Going horn was like: "Yeah, I'm a horn player!" But over time I started taking more education classes, and I started watching my mom get her doctorate, and I don't know when, I don't really know how, but I just realized one day, "You know what? I'm more of a teacher than I am a musician." At least that's how I see myself. I guess in my inner core I see myself as being the teacher and then being a musician is like the icing on the cake: It allows [me] to be like a little something extra, I guess, but in my core I consider myself a teacher.

Many participants embraced fuller visions of themselves, and a few expressed their solo instrument did not encapsulate their identity at all. Teresa said, "I love to study music itself, and I like to play other instruments, and a little bit to sing, so I don't really consider myself just a clarinetist." Others, like Eileen, described their instrumental development as the beginning of their musical identity. As they progressed in the music education major, they realized they were more than their instrument alone.

Toward the end of interviews, participants described their previous identities being further strengthened by methods coursework. While they may have enjoyed coursework in largely unfamiliar areas, they did not see a future for themselves in other contexts of the course. Rather, through studying more unfamiliar contexts, their identities as early musicians and educators were reinforced. Thomas, an instrumental music education major said of choral methods, "I actually learned more about being an educator in general, than, maybe, specific choral techniques."

Participants indicated that as their coursework progressed, musicianship and teaching experiences melded into a newly formed identity as music educator. To several participants, their evolution to musician and educator occurred through their interactions in several contexts within music school coursework, field experience teachings, and peer teachings within methods courses. Other music students, who acknowledged and confirmed participants' identities as music education majors, helped to validate this as well. Being viewed in public schools as music educators helped participants embrace their identity as music teacher.

It makes me feel like I'm a more rounded musician now, because I have this new information and the new tools to teach choral methods, if that is the job that I got. So it does make me feel like a better overall musician for taking that class. (Teresa)
I guess with the classes we take and stuff, being put in schools, and when you go into a school, you're seen as an educator or a future educator. And then by your peers you are too, just by teaching in class. (Kathy)

At the end of interviews and reflective journals, many participants expressed feeling more confident about their identities as educators and musicians. They attributed their arrival as a sum of their initial identities in music, undergraduate applied lessons and music classes, and methods courses. Though some acknowledged feeling more comfortable in one area or another (vocal or instrumental contexts), they stated they felt they could soon call themselves music teachers.

ESSENCE

The essence of participants' experience was the centrality and continuity of their early musical identities from the beginning P-12 private study and ensemble contexts. Within the context of the university, participants broadened their early musical identities, more fully dimensionalizing who they were as musicians in theory, aural skills, and music history coursework. As they progressed within the music education degree

program, participants articulated their identity more fully and began to see themselves as music teachers. Even with additional music education coursework, however, early musical identities resided at center for most participants. Their expanded definition could be expressed as a drawing out of the initial self, rather than creating a wholly new sense of who they were.

DISCUSSION

Participants' decisions to begin and continue musical involvement may have represented their first molar activity in music. Though each participant articulated specific individuals who inspired their musical development, the presence and support of teachers, parents, and friends were significant. Musical involvement was central to each participant's development, and it invoked multiple meanings. Participants remembered teachers, physical settings of their music-making, as well as performances of solo and ensemble playing. Key individuals and experiences had a dramatic impact on participants' choice to major in music and, more specifically, music education, confirming many extant studies (Beynon, 1998; Cox, 1997; Duling, 2000; Gillespie & Hamann, 1999; Woodford, 2002). In a slight departure from Woodford (2002), the consistent presence and support of music teachers throughout the participants' P-12 musical development acted as primary, rather than secondary, socialization into music teaching. Through music teachers' mentorship, participants began to realize their musical involvement, resulting in a music education major. Though this occurred at different times for different individuals (some deciding earlier in high school and others later), it appears that the support participants received in their musical activities was instrumental toward their beginnings of music teacher identity. Hellman (2008) posited that a lack of strong teacher identity may contribute to attrition among music teachers. Perhaps early and continued support from key individuals, such as music teachers, may assist teacher retention.

For those who began on a specific instrument, they appeared to move seamlessly into the university setting, adding another molar activity to their developing ecology. For those who identified as multiple roles or independent musicians, they described experiencing challenge and choice. Independent musicians, such as Teresa, were fortunate because, in addition to vernacular music-making, they played a traditional band or orchestral instrument and were able to audition using it. Multiple-role musicians, like Martin, had the considerable challenge of choosing an instrument and becoming wedded to it for seven semesters of applied study and ensemble. Though participants described the experience of studying one instrument as beneficial because of the focus and high level of artistry expected in a specific context, choosing one represented a loss for many who viewed themselves as musicians first and identified with their applied instrument second.

University music school signified a time for broadening identity as participants added molar activities onto existing structures. Rather than abandoning high school

systems, however, music education majors reflected on their experiences and added more extensive systems to the development of self. As Allison articulated, the depth of each system became more considerable with additional class experience, such as theory, history, aural skills, ensemble, and conducting. Relationships with peers within and outside of the major helped to define these systems and support the ecology that was being created.

Unfamiliar methods coursework such as choral methods for instrumental music education students or instrumental methods for vocal music education students did not appear to dramatically alter musical identity for most participants. Rather, instrumental and choral methods courses confirmed and strengthened participants' established molar activities, continuing to shape their identity. A few participants, such as Teresa, articulated they felt they could teach in the other context, but more often, participants described having a newfound respect and appreciation for unfamiliar areas. It is possible that coursework in unfamiliar areas may have caused participants to feel more foreign and less capable than before. This may also have occurred because of specific activities that required group teachings in schools and in front of and with their peers. Those who felt most comfortable described their limitations, while those who felt least comfortable described their failures.

Though molar activities may not have shifted, participants in this study viewed their new knowledge as preparation for teaching, unlike Beynon (1998) and L'Roy (1983), who found that participants did not see coursework as real preparation. Participants indicated their emerging identities as music teachers were highly influenced by music coursework that contributed to who they were, a finding similar to Haston and Russell (2012) and Hunter et al. (2009). As Conway et al. (2010) found, participants in this study transitioned from performer/musician to teacher through the course of their undergraduate degree. However, unlike Dolloff (1999) and Conkling (2003), only one participant articulated the specific influence of his applied instructor. Though the absence of applied instructors and ensemble members may be noteworthy, it also may be related to the focus of interview questions on music teacher identity development. It is possible participants did not see applied instructors aligning with their future classroom teacher roles.

Findings in this study indicated that individual participants were in varied stages of identity development in their university experiences. Eileen and Kate described viewing themselves as teachers earlier in their time as undergraduates, based on influences such as parents and teachers. Others, such as John and Allison, more fully embraced their teacher identity as methods courses, field experiences, and peer teachings began to take hold within them. Though all of their experiences were unique, in methods courses it appears many participants were both individually and simultaneously accommodating new ecological structures within their own development. Simultaneous mutual accommodations may have spurred additional identity growth. In this study, it is impossible to ascertain whether the increased momentum toward teacher identity may be a function

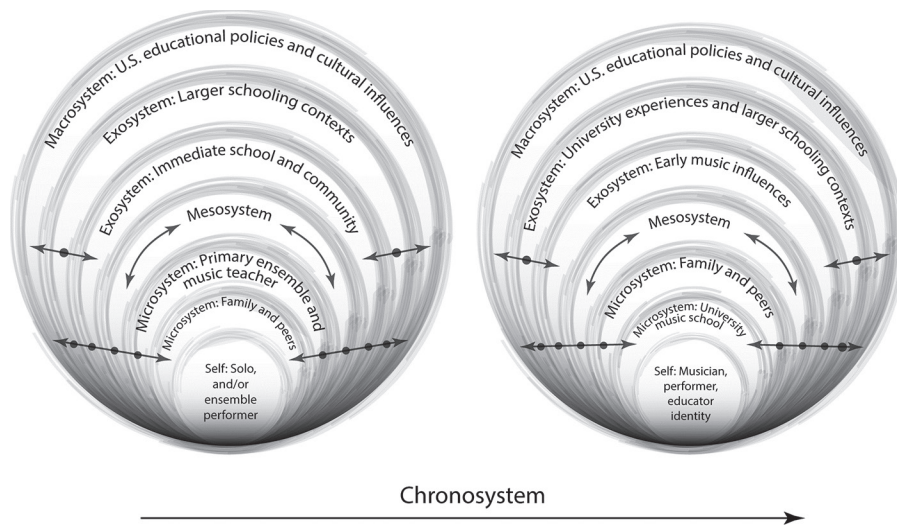


Figure 2: Ecological system of early musician (left) who evolves into upper level music education major (right).

of the participants' upper-level engagement in the music education major, with the specific participants involved, or both. Yet, as participants engaged in the methods courses, they spoke about becoming teachers, some described forming their actions as teachers, and many began viewing one another as future teachers.

Figure 2 illustrates the evolving identity of the group of participants. On the left-hand side of the figure, the ecological system of participants prior to music school indicates their identities began as solo and/or ensemble performers. The main influences and interactions included family and peers, primary ensembles and music teachers, immediate school and community, larger schooling context, and, finally, U.S. educational policies and cultural influences. The concentric circles located closest to center are the most influential individuals and environments for participants.

The right-hand side of Figure 2 illustrates participants' developing molar activities as university music school experiences broadened their views of themselves. Participants' experiences in music school appeared to interact with their earlier music influences and experiences, which included teachers, peers, and music ensembles. The interactions between new molar activities and more established activities from their days as early musicians helped create additional identities: musician, performer, and educator.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the development from early musician to broadening musician to musician and educator was considerable. Participants added additional systems and molar activities during their experiences, refining their ideas and expanding their skills.

Almost all participants claimed a future of music education for themselves. However, many participants remain aligned with their initial identities, defined at the beginning of their university work. This is congruent with Schmidt (2010), following Dewey (1934, 1938/1963), who found preservice music teachers' previous experiences determined what they valued—and thus what influenced their identities—within the undergraduate program. Multiple role and independent musicians described their difficulty with the traditional constraints of music school. Upon graduation, they restated their ambivalence and appeared open to teaching in multiple contexts, including choral settings, band settings, or general music, attempting to embrace their varied roles. At the end of this study, two participants were deciding what they would focus on in graduate school, whether education or performance. The challenge to choose was before them yet again.

Findings in this study regarding multiple role and independent musicians highlight the limitations of many music school admissions' requirements. Applicants who demonstrate strong musical skills, but who do not play an acceptable instrument or do not practice the standard repertory, can be excluded from music schools and music teacher education programs. Furthermore, music schools may unnecessarily limit multiple role and independent musicians who will need varied skills for performance and educational contexts. Perhaps it might benefit music teacher education programs to consider what P-12 music programs need in order to determine their admissions criteria. The P-12 school music programs could then impact music teacher education programs by advocating for their needs. University music schools could respond and reciprocate, altering programs in response to P-12 schools.

Results in this study encourage researchers to investigate teacher preparation coursework and licensure. Thirty-one states certify teachers with a P-12 music-teaching license that includes general, choral, and instrumental areas (Henry, 2005). Time to develop each of these discrete areas, however, is scarce, given the competing demands of required courses. To remedy this problem, music teacher education programs have attempted to offer a course or two to help students gain facility in unfamiliar areas, such as choral or instrumental methods. The efficacy of these courses, however, remains in question, and further study is needed.

In conclusion, given the limited number of participants (15) and the different structure of methods courses, it is difficult to know how much of participant experience was based on specific class activities rather than on the unfamiliar courses themselves. It is possible some participants' experiences were related to the specific expectations of the course rather than their overall involvement in choral or instrumental methods. As students and methods courses continue to evolve, the current study will be replicated with the pursuit to more fully comprehend preservice music teacher identity development in courses outside of participants' areas of focus. Exploring music teacher identity development longitudinally will also be important in order to understand how taking courses outside of one's area of focus influences the individual's choices and career.

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

1. Beginning as far back as you can remember, please talk about your musical experiences. What associations or labels have you used, or have others used on you, regarding your musical involvements?
2. Tell me about your university music experiences. What associations do you use for yourself today? Where did they come from?
3. Tell me about your choral or instrumental experiences up until now (instrumental students are being asked about choral experiences, choral students are being asked about instrumental experiences).
4. What experiences did you have in high school with these types of ensembles?
5. What has it been like to participate in an instrumental or choral setting for this semester?
6. What do you think are the similarities between choral and instrumental contexts?
7. What is different?
8. What insights might you have about these communities now that you have been in these courses?
9. How might these influence your teaching practices?
10. Do you see your participation in choral/instrumental methods courses changing the label/association that you have had about yourself (what was discussed at the beginning)? If so, how? If not, why?
11. Is there something about the instrumental or choral methods experiences that you would like to share that I might not be asking?
12. Do you have any additional comments?

AUTHORS' NOTE

There were no funding sources for this research. This study was presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in April 2013.

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