“Not Changing the ‘What,’ but the ‘How’”:
“Disrupting” Pre-Service Music Educators’ Occupational Identities

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change
Review of Literature

Pre-Service Music Teacher Occupational Identity

Values and identities formed during primary socialization may influence pre-service educators to “teach as they were taught” (Brewer, 2009, 2014; Campbell, 1999).
Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998)

Entry courses

Student Teaching

Methods classes

Faculty

Peers

Collegiate education organizations

Social interactions (faculty, peers, fieldwork experiences, collegiate education organizations)
Review of Literature

Culture and Communities of Practice

- Culture is created and sustained by the interaction and borrowing of ideas among its constituent communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).
- Studying institutional culture is essential for revising music curricula and helping musicians adapt to an ever-changing society (Landes, 2008).
“Disruption” (Walker & Smith, 2004)

- Preparation of UK pre-service visual art teachers to become creative educators who embrace diverse and innovative teaching methods

- Examined how a gallery workshop program challenged visual art pre-service educators’ preconceptions and attitudes towards art by employing critical thinking techniques and reflecting on contemporary art that defied conventional visual art norms.
Purpose of the Study

Examine the interactions within the cultural cohort communities of a music teacher education program embedded within the culture of a school of music and the role that these interactions played in “disrupting” pre-service educators’ emerging occupational identities
Design
Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods
(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011)

**QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS**
(Survey distributed to all pre-service educators)

**QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS**
(Interviews and focus group discussions)

**INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATIONS**
Research Questions

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS
(Survey distributed to all pre-service educators)

Which structural components, communities, persons, and interactions, if any, assist with “disrupting” pre-service music educators’ emerging occupational identities and their conceptions of music education?

Which are the most “disruptive” influences on occupational identity?
Research Questions

Why are certain structural components, communities, persons, and interactions particularly “disruptive”?

How are these “disruptions” created and how do they manifest themselves in pre-service music educators’ emerging occupational identities and conceptions of music education?
Survey information

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS
(Survey distributed to all pre-service educators)

Survey link sent to 130 music education majors

\[ N = 83 \] (response rate of 63.8%)

14 first-year students
16 second-year students
18 third-year students
15 fourth-year students
16 fifth-year students
4 sixth-year students
Greatest difference in mean:
Educator (-1.24)
Greatest differences in mean:

- Early Childhood (-1.47)
- Middle School General (-1.51)
- Elementary General (-1.25)
- High School Performance-Based (0.32)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Change in conceptions of music education</th>
<th>Think differently as music educator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUS 467 – Teaching Elementary General Music</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 465 – Teaching Early Childhood Music</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 177 – Introduction to Music Education</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 468 – Teaching Choral Music</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 277 – Foundations of Music Education</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 455 – Teaching Instrumental Music</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 210 – Song Writing</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 469 – Teaching Secondary General Music</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 336B – Ensemble Conducting II: Choral</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 495 – Student Teaching</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUS 125 - Women's Chamber Ensemble</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional influences

• Music Education peers
• Music Education graduate students
• Music Education faculty
• Collegiate Music Education organizations (e.g., NAfME, ACDA, ASTA)
• Music Education sponsored activities
Why are certain structural components, communities, persons, and interactions particularly “disruptive”?

How are these “disruptions” created and how do they manifest themselves in pre-service music educators’ emerging occupational identities and conceptions of music education?
MUS 177 & 277 - Foundations

• MUS 177/277 made them think differently about music education:
  • Different ways of teaching music
  • Pressing sociological issues in music education – emerging identity shifts.
  • Less about competition

• Both the topics that were discussed and how they were facilitated in class led to a deeper understanding of what music education is and what it could be in pre-service students’ future contexts.
Second-year student: “Going through 177 and 277, what I’ve learned...I haven’t changed the ‘what’ I want to do. I changed the ‘how’ I want to do it. Music education is about understanding the bigger picture. The story behind music and the feeling and the emotion. That’s what I think can really connect with students. I’ve also kind of been a little more relaxed with my competitiveness. I really don’t care if my future students are prodigies or don't know the fingerings. All I care about is if they love music or not.”
MUS 177 & 277 - Foundations

• Observations to inform class discussions and broaden students’ worldviews

• Emphasis on discussion of philosophy in the first two years, rather than towards the end of the degree program
Fourth-year student: “Honestly, I would rather see the philosophy aspect bookend the degrees, because they try to get it all first in two or three semesters, and they’re like ‘What’s your philosophy?’ I’m like, ‘I don’t know! I don't have a philosophy!!’”
MUS 177 & 277 - Foundations

Student teacher: “I’ve developed more thoughts on my philosophy this semester than I did my entire first two years here because you have more context in your student teaching. I feel that the student teaching seminar can be where a lot of the philosophy can be, because you’re like, ‘I’m in a class.”
I’m seeing a class. I see the administration in this class...I see how teachers are evaluated. I see how testing affects the kids.’ You’re seeing everything and then you can start talking about your philosophy.”
MUS 177/277 & Peer Interactions

• Listening to peers’ experiences and opinions grounded in those experiences have been influential learning opportunities

Second-year student: “I’ve learned a lot from interacting with my peers and my friends. I feel like, at least for me, when there’s that relationship there, that’s really strong, I’m better at listening and applying and changing the way I’ve thought about things. I know that Mike and I will talk about music stuff all the time and from those conversations, I learn a lot and develop my philosophies and ways of approaching music.”
MUS 469 – Secondary General

• Secondary general methods class
• Perform cover songs, arrangements, original songs
• Ukulele lessons and performances
• Music technology – sharing of apps, create ukulele YouTube lesson, teaching through technology
• “Emerging” ensembles
• Listening lessons
MUS 469 – Secondary General

• Great ideas in terms of how to reach more students beyond those in our performance-based ensembles.

• Big drawback: no observations to see class ideas implemented in a real life setting; no teaching with real, live kids to add context and reinforce what was learned in class.

• Lots of conflict with current student teachers: expectations of the community for ensemble-based programs, scheduling, financial resources, staff
MUS 469 – Secondary General

- Justification of these types of secondary general classes to administrators? No “festivals...”
MUS 469 – Secondary General

Fourth-year student: “So much of our degree and all the classes are about pointing us in the direction of ensembles. We had to take all the methods classes. We always had to be in an ensemble. But, all of our education classes, it’s like, ‘Oh no, you should actually be doing this.’ It’s very conflicting ideologies.”
MUS 469 – Secondary General

Fourth-year student: “An underlying thought was that band, choir, and orchestra may not be the best for every student. It wasn’t trying to degrade what’s already in schools. I think it’s trying to add to what’s already in experience and make music, as a whole, better at the secondary level.”
MUS 465 & 467 – EC/Elementary

- EC and Elementary General Methods
- Music Learning Theory based
- Peer Teachings
- Fieldwork experiences with Community Music School’s early childhood program (observation & microteachings)
- Observations and microteachings in area schools
MUS 465 & 467 – EC/Elementary

• “Disruptive” in that it was quite challenging musically; “SO different” from their elementary music education experiences
• Structured but informal and improvisational
• Fieldwork experiences and peer teachings were critical towards being comfortable and creating an educator identity
MUS 465 & 467 – EC/Elementary

Third-year student: “Thinking about the purpose of everything that you do. ‘We’re going to learn this song and you’re going to learn about flow and you’re going to learn about minor tonality and you’re going to keep a beat and you’re going to do all the stuff’ and, like, ‘Wow! They can do so much with just this one thing.’ But, at the same time, they have no idea that they’re doing it.”
Graduate Student Influences

• Help current music education students with becoming educated in current topics and trends: preparing them to be relevant in the classroom

• Actively involved in the undergraduate music education program as guest presenters and class instructors
Graduate Student Influences

Fourth-year student: “The faculty are so aware of what kids today need and I think a lot of that is because of you guys [graduate assistants]. It’s because we work so closely with our grad students and our grad students work so closely with us. I mean, the whole project where we had to do partner songs and arrange songs for middle school. That’s stuff that I feel people at other schools probably didn’t do but our great grad students did and they’re sharing their knowledge with us.”
Graduate Student Influences

Student teacher: “David’s sensitivity about gender identity...I have a student in my chorale who is going through an identity, kind of finding herself and I just, on a side cuff, somebody was like, ‘Well, only the guys should be in it.’ I was like, ‘Well, I don’t know. I don’t always buy into that gender binary thing.’
Graduate Student Influences

And she just lit up and that was her moment when I said that. I think so much has been changed by the professors in the classes, but also just some of the grad students who really change your philosophy, too.”
Sampling of Implications

- Consider “exit interviews.”
- “Bookend” the creation of students’ philosophy of music education in the degree program.
- Implement and facilitate fieldwork experiences throughout the degree program.
- Tension between performance-based school of music and music education cultures
Suggestions for Future Research

• Replication of study at other types of institutions: teaching-intensive, small liberal arts, etc.
• Longitudinal study of pre-service participants: how and what do they teach 5-10 years after matriculation into the profession? How do they identify?
• “Track” emerging occupational identities of a cohort group from matriculation to graduation.
• Examine how institutions have changed their music teacher education curricula
Thank you!

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Copy of study & References