

The Competing Roles of Educator, Music Teacher, and Musician in Professional Identity Development: A Longitudinal Autoethnography

Authors : Thomas LaRocca

Abstract : This study explores the development of a public-school music teacher's professional identity within three domains: as an educator in the profession at large, as a music teacher in a school, and as a professional musician. An autoethnographic method is employed by calling upon undergraduate student teaching reflections, graduate writing assignments and presentations, cover letters for employment, professional correspondence, and reflective memos. These artifacts provide a reference for phenomenological insights into the values, hopes, and criticisms within each domain over time -all of which provide a window into the overall ontological perspective of one's professional life at different moments in their career. While the topic of music teacher identity has been examined using autoethnographical methods before, by accessing materials over the course of ten years, the study is able to investigate the 'how' of identity development in a temporal context; from undergraduate student to established professional. Additionally, while the field offers a considerable amount of work surrounding the child and adolescent identity development, there are unmined opportunities to examine identity development in the adult years, especially surrounding adult professional life. Employing a postpositivist approach with social constructionism as a backdrop, this study examines adult identity formation and the contradictions, resonances, and priorities within each domain, between each domain, and perceived expectations of the professional community. What is revealed is a journey of self-improvement motivated by failure and success, marked by negotiation and sacrifice; as each domain competes for mental and temporal resources, identity is viewed as not just who one is, but also as what one leaves behind. These insights offer a window into the ontology of identity of a music educator and may provide considerations for differentiating professional development based on what stage educators are at in their careers.

Keywords : identity, longitudinal autoethnography, music teacher education, music teacher ontology

Conference Title : ICME 2021 : International Conference on Music Education

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2021