Measuring Music Teacher Identity: Self-Efficacy and Commitment Among Music Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This paper review is based on measuring music teacher identity and the self-efficacy and commitment among music teachers. Focusing on music teachers' identity, the paper reviewed the concept of music teacher identity stating that music teacher identity is one's conception of himself or herself as a music teacher. The paper also reviewed pre-service and in-service music teacher identity, music teacher self-efficacy and music teacher commitment. In comparison, the paper also reviewed the relationship between music teachers' self-efficacy and their commitment. Thus, the paper concluded that within the education profession, teachers have varying and continually changing perceptions of themselves as facilitators of knowledge. But for each those perceptions constitute his or her professional identities. One of the recommendations made was that ministries of education should organize workshop and seminars for the professional development of music teachers and this should look beyond their competency development to facilitating and supporting a more holistic consideration of music teacher identities.

KEYWORDS: Music Teacher Identity, Self-Efficacy and Commitment

Introduction

Music teacher professional identity is an important area of study (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Within the education profession, teachers have varying and continually changing perceptions of themselves as facilitators of knowledge (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004). For each teacher, those perceptions constitute his or her professional identities. Enveloped within professional teacher identities are "sub-identities" that interrelate and "harmonize" knowledge within a range of professional practice. Since the late 1980s, researchers have struggled to define the attributes of professional teacher identities (Beijaard et al., 2004). The term self-identity has implied finding meaning from the past that is continually evolving in the present (Garrett, 2013). Conkling (2015) remarked that within the profession of music education, teachers are always in the middle of their careers, as they are actively engaged in teaching as well as in the process of evolving professionally. How teachers use knowledge acquired in the past and present is central to professional development within teacher identity (Eraut, 2009). In-service and pre-service teachers established the most important skills and behaviours for initial teaching success; this development initiates the perceptions of professional teacher identities (Teachout, 2007). Although findings on effective teaching are extensive, researchers have just begun defining

teaching behaviors within diverse contextual teaching environments (Conway, 2012). As music teachers actively engage in various types of teaching experiences, reflection on their teaching has the potential to be a powerful and necessary tool for professional development (Powell, 2016).

Concept of Music Teacher Identity

According to Wagoner (2012), music teacher identity is one's conception of himself or herself as a music teacher, as affected by five facets: (a) music teacher self-efficacy (i.e., one's sense of his or her ability to affect students in the classroom setting, influence parents, administration and community, and be resilient in the face of adversity); (b) music teacher commitment (i.e., one's willingness to expend personal time, money, and energy to teach; and to be involved in professional activities); (c) music teacher agency (i.e., one's power to take charge of a particular situation and produce change); (d) music teacher collectivity (i.e., one's belief in the ability of the team of teachers and administrators within the school to execute courses of action required to produce desired results); and (e) musician-teacher comprehensiveness (i.e., the broadness or narrowness with which one see's one's self as a musician and as a teacher). Understanding music teacher identity construction may assist in developing effective teacher preparation and mentoring support for new teachers, and in turn, strengthening the professional teacher collective, increasing retention for music teachers, impacting school children, improving educational outcomes, and improving quality of teaching lives (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hancock 2008; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Furthermore, music teacher identity is differentiated from teacher identity, primarily because to become a music teacher, one must first claim identity as a musician, and then, as a music teacher (Hargreaves, MacDonald and Miell, 2002). Research in music education suggests that music teacher identity is socially constructed (Austin, Isbell and Russell., 2010; Isbell, 2008; Russell, 2012). People hold multiple identities and envision provisional selves that they negotiate through identity construction (Austin, et al, 2010).

Pre-service Music Teacher Identity Research

Music teacher identity development is a complex, fluid process that is impacted by an individuals' specific social context that provides exposure to influential experiences as well as influential people (Isbell, 2006). Pre-service music teachers seek validation and support for their music teacher identity within the social context of the music school (Bouij, 2004). They negotiate a sense of self that includes not only their self-perceptions, but also perceptions of identity that are inferred from others (Isbell, 2008). In the balancing of self-views and the views of others, an individual's cognitive complexity (or ability to make meaning of their experiences in a complex way) impacts the degree to which they preference the views of others in establishing an identity for themselves (Abes, Jones and McEwen, 2007). There are two distinct dimensions of a music teacher identity: the musician/performer self and the teacher self and the conflict that exists between these two competing views of self in pre-service music teachers is well documented in the research literature (Bouij, 2004; Hargreaves & Marshal, 2003; Roberts, 2004). Much research has shown that undergraduate music education majors view themselves first as a musician or performer and second as a music teacher (Arostegui, 2004; Freer and Bennett, 2012). Many pre-service music teachers have difficulty integrating the teacher and musician aspects of their identity (Isbell, 2008; Roberts, 2004; Bouij, 2004) and several researchers have suggested that this problem is exacerbated by the fact that music education majors are socialized as musician/performers within the music school and not as teachers (Scheib, 2003; Woodford, 2002). Freer and Bennett (2012) revealed details of the

teacher/musician conflict found to exist in pre-service music teachers in two parallel studies of undergraduate music majors in urban universities, one in the United States and one in Australia. Seventy participants were asked to complete three surveys, give written responses and submit drawings over the course of a semester. Results indicated that the musician identity appeared first (before the teacher identity) and it was the lens or framework through which they determined the relevance of the pedagogical techniques and experiences they had in courses and in fieldwork.

In-service Music Teacher Identity Research

There are powerful forces at work between the individual life history of a teacher and classroom experiences as a student teacher that lead up to the beginning of a teaching career (Richardson, 2006). A novice teacher enters the profession with limited classroom experiences, armed with a general base of knowledge, and an identity which is tenuous at best and generally rooted in the recently completed student teaching experience (Ronfeldt and Grossman, 2008). Moving beyond the student teaching experience into induction has frequently uncovered dissonance for novices among their understanding of teacher identity, the collective identity of the profession, and the realities of such in the workplace (Ritter, 2007). Music teachers have been socialized as musicians in the university setting, drawing on strong technical performing skills entering the teaching profession (Bouij, 2004; Woodford, 2002). Problems experienced by beginning teachers may be related to the dissonance between perceived roles and actual roles in the context of the teaching job. Those focused on the performing identity may indeed be disappointed with their low-status roles as music teachers (Mark, 2008). These tensions and disappointments may be related to teacher role construction during pre-service training (DeLorenzo, 2009).

Conway (2002) evaluated music teacher preparation programs through interviews and observations of novice teachers during their first year of teaching. Coded data revealed the most valuable experiences from preparation programs to be student teaching, fieldwork, ensembles, and applied lessons. Least valuable experiences from the preparation programs were early observations without context, some instrumental methods course, and courses in the College of Education. Novice music teachers were found to have difficulty connecting theory and practice, mirrored by Isbell's (2008) results on pre-service music teachers who demonstrated similar problems making connections between theory and practice. In an examination of Arkansas music teachers Cox (2008) completed three in-depth interviews and further illuminate the primary and secondary socialization influences on perception of music educator roles as musician and teacher. The most current findings supported her ({1994} study on occupational socialization as musicians and educators from childhood through post-college years) showing the musician role as the most encouraged during the pre-college years. Those found to be influencing the teacher role during post-college years were administrators, colleagues, and other teachers. Teacher role influences were more pronounced during induction than at any other time. By contrast, the primary role focus of pre-service music teachers was that of being a musician. Social constructivist theory appears to provide a foundation for both of Cox's studies, with results implying different socialization to roles and occupational identity between pre-service and in-service music teachers.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy has been examined to inform issues regarding teacher preparation (Swackhamer, 2009), retention and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), and how self-efficacy affects educational reform (Rots, Aelterman, Vlerick and Vermeulen, 2007). Labone (2004) asserted that self-efficacy research needs to expand into alternative paradigms, particularly in how teacher self-efficacy beliefs are constructed. Few studies have examined pre-service music teacher self-efficacy (Hargreaves et al., 2007) or in-service music teacher self-efficacy (Bergee and Grashel, 2002; Matthews and Kitsantes, 2007) and these studies are not often connected with music teacher identity. Social constructivist theory supports Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy in which he differentiated an "outcome efficacy" from an "efficacy expectation." An outcome efficacy is the belief that one can achieve a particular goal. "An efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the outcomes". Hargreaves et al. (2007) defined measureable behaviours relating to the construct of teacher self-efficacy as: (a) management of time, (b) perseverance through adversity, (c) security in one's own abilities, (d) problem- solving abilities, and (e) setting goals and priorities in achievable ways. The present study uses the term teacher self-efficacy to focus on the behaviors that demonstrate a teacher's self-appraisal of his or her ability to affect students in the classroom setting, influence parents, administration and community, and be resilient in the face of adversity.

Music Teacher Commitment

Commitment, as a construct of teacher identity, has also been well documented, particularly as it relates to retention of teachers (Strunk and Robinson, 2006), teacher effectiveness (Ebmeier, 2003) and agency (Ebmeier, 2003; Nir, 2002). Definitions of commitment to teaching are somewhat similar. Commitment is a high level of attachment to someone or something in a social endeavor. It is simultaneously psychological and social and describes an intrinsic attachment to that endeavor (Tyree, 2007). Commitment in teaching is defined by Lortie (2005) as the intention to use personal resources of time, money, and energy in one's work, where a sense of involvement is developed and persists over time. Lacey (2007) defined commitment as an intention to make teaching a career. Teachers themselves use the term commitment in different ways to evoke different meanings. Nias (2008) determined that there are four ways in which teachers use the word "commitment": (a) as caring, (b) as concern for occupational competence, (c) as a sense of identity as a teacher, and (d) as a signal for continuing in one's career. Nias suggested that these different meanings merge how long a teacher remains in the profession or is tied into the career structure of teaching. The practice of commitment falls into several categories of perception: (a) a clear set of values and ideology informing practice regardless of context, (b) a clear sense of standards, (c) a willingness to reflect on experience and context of the experience for adaptability, and (d) intellectual/emotional engagement (Ross and Gray, 2006).

Commitment may be understood as a nested phenomenon that is related to a set of more permanent values based on self-identity and personal beliefs. Studies have indicated that commitment may be obscured with related construct of self-efficacy (Ebmeier, 2003), effectiveness (Louis, 2008) or teacher empowerment (Bogler and Somach, 2004). It is influenced by differing organizational conditions of the school (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 2009) and by work variables of leadership support, stress, and ambiguous roles (Billingsly and Cross, 2002). More recently, researchers have focused on issues of teacher commitment as defined through the

loss of autonomy due to school reform (Day, 2002), highlighting commitment as a complex construct. For the present study, music teacher commitment is defined through the dimensions of willingness to expend personal time, money, and energy to teach (Nias, 2008), demonstration of involvement in professional activities (Mowday et al, 2009), demonstration of involvement in teaching activities (Tyree, 2007), and attitude toward the profession.

Relationship Between Music Teachers Self-efficacy and their Commitment

Self-efficacy is one of the important factors influencing music teachers' commitment (Schunk and Ertmer, 2009). Self-efficacy beliefs lead to the individuals' excellent performance through increasing commitment, endeavor, and perseverance (Pintrich, 2003). Darling-Hammond (2003) also noted that teachers' self-efficacy perceptions affect their performance, commitment and their situation whether might remain in the profession or not. Chi, Yeh, and Choum (2013) identify self-efficacy as one of the primary constructs of teachers' commitment. In a study done by Arya, Sharma and Singh (2012) revealed that a positive relation exists between self-efficacy and commitment. Further the regression analysis indicated gender role orientation along with self-efficacy is the strongest predictor of commitment among employees. Sinha, Talwar and Rajpal (2002) studied 167 members of Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company of India and explored the relationship between self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Results revealed that organizational commitment is positively related with self-efficacy. Alyami, Melyani, Al Johani, Ullah, Alyami and Sundram (2017) conducted a study on 214 university music lectures and revealed that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on level of commitment. Similarly, Kozikoğlu (2016) also conducted a study on 349 teachers working at the districts of Van province, his findings revealed that positive, moderate level and significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and professional commitment. This shows that as teachers' self-efficacy perceptions increase, so does their commitment. Also, in Ware and Kitsantas (2010) study which aimed to determine to what level teachers' general and personal self-efficacy explain their professional commitment, it was found that 18% variance in teachers' professional commitment can be explained by teachers' personal and general efficacy. In fact, literatures have highlighted that teachers' self-efficacy and professional commitment are closely related (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy, 2011) and teachers' self-efficacy affects their professional commitment (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Consequently, the teachers with high sense of self-efficacy performs better in their teaching profession and commitment will increase (Ware and Kitsantas, 2010).

Conclusion

No doubt that within the education profession, teachers have varying and continually changing perceptions of themselves as facilitators of knowledge. But for each those perceptions constitute his or her professional identities. In the profession of music education, teachers are always in the middle of their careers, as they are actively engaged in teaching as well as in the process of evolving professionally. Thus, music teacher identity is differentiated from teacher identity, primarily because to become a music teacher, one must first claim identity as a musician, and then, as a music teacher. Furthermore, music teacher self-efficacy has been seen to be closely

related to their professional commitment Teachers with high sense of self-efficacy performs better in their teaching profession and commitment will increase.

Recommendations

Based on the reviews of this paper, it was deemed necessary to recommend that

1. Ministries of education should organize workshop and seminars for the professional development of music teachers and this should look beyond their competency development to facilitate and support a more holistic consideration of music teacher identities.
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2. Government and stakeholders should support music teachers in ways that can help them engage positively with the contexts and the environment they operate. This implies that the development of music teachers should not just be focused on functional aspects, such as musicianship and pedagogy, but should also be relate to their musical selves and their respective social contexts.

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