Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education

The refereed scholarly journal of the

Thomas A. Regelski, Editor

Wayne Bowman, Associate Editor

Darryl A. Coan, Publishing Editor

Electronic Article

Professional Need and the Contexts of In-Service Music Teacher Identity

Carol Frierson-Campbell

_____

Professional Need and the Contexts of
In-Service Music Teacher Identity

Carol Frierson-Campbell, William Paterson University

Learning to negotiate the "personal war between oneself as a musician and as a teacher" (Roberts, 2000, p. 73) is an important part of the identity construction of pre-service music educators. Several discussions in the literature support this premise (Woodford, 2002). Bouij's matrix of music teacher identity provides a clear picture of this conflict, proposing that identity construction occurs at the intersection of two "anticipatory dimensions": the continuum of musical comprehensiveness (from broad to narrow) and that of music teacher-ship (from performer-self to teacher-self) (1998, p. 25).

A primary assumption of this research is that understanding the process by which music education students form their music teacher role-identity will inform collegiate educators who prepare students for careers as music educators (Woodford, 2002, p. 676). Several researchers suggest, however, that in-service music educators may face different identity challenges than music education students. Roberts (2000) notes that development of a teacher identity is crucial during the student years "since schools do not offer role support for musicians but they do offer support for teachers" (p. 65). Bouij suggests that the music teacher's negotiation of role identities with students and professionals in the school setting is a "trial of strength . . ." (p. 26).

My purpose is to share some preliminary findings from a study related to the needs of in-service music teachers. This study did not begin as a sociological inquiry; it began as a needs assessment for the purpose of creating a Professional Development School (PDS) partnership between a state university and the music teachers in three urban school districts in northern New Jersey. Three years of conversations about music teacher need uncovered issues related more to professional identity than to traditional professional

development. Most current research related to the development of role identity in music educators focuses on the struggles faced by pre-service and novice music educators. This inquiry into in-service music teacher need suggests that the professional identity of music teachers continues to be unstable even after their initiation into the profession. This instability is characterized by a conflict between an idealized view of music education and the perception of how other educational professionals view the role of music in the school community.

The Partnership

In 1999, the College of Education (COE) at William Paterson University joined two other New Jersey universities to form the *New Jersey State Teacher Quality Enhancement Consortium (NJTQEC)*. The NJSTQEC was created to implement a 5-year Federal Teacher Quality Enhancement grant that was awarded to support emerging PDS partnerships between Colleges of Education and high-needs, culturally diverse urban schools across the United States. Our COE initially chose 3 schools from three city school districts in New Jersey as preliminary PDS sites. A COE faculty member was recruited to serve as a liaison between each PDS site and to plan and coordinate partnership activities at the site. The grant required the involvement of arts and science faculty at both the university and public school level, and as a result I was invited (as a music education faculty member) to join the project in the second half of year two of the grant.

While the grant and the mission of the partnership were clear about the importance of including the arts in the PDS model, details of what that might mean were sketchy. This is consistent with other school reform literature; the importance of the arts in education is often stressed but seldom given form or substance. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but requires the involvement of arts (in our case music) faculty from both the university and the partnership schools if a meaningful collaboration is to be realized.

_____

The professional development school model is based on the premise that colleges of education and public schools should share responsibilities for education both at the collegiate and public school levels. A primary assumption of the PDS movement is that improving teaching depends upon giving teachers the opportunity "to contribute to the development of knowledge in their profession, to form collegial relationships beyond their immediate working environment, and to grow intellectually as they mature professionally" (Holmes Group, 1986, p. 56). An equally important assumption is that university-based research and instruction in education should be rooted in the practice of teaching (p. 56).

Although it has been suggested that "the professional development school notion might accommodate networks of types of classrooms" such as a collection of sites for music educators (Zimpher, 2001, p. 44), at the present time there are only three arts education partnerships in the Professional Development School literature. The music education PDS relationships described by Susan Conkling of the Eastman School of Music and Warren Henry of the University of North Texas (1999) are similar to the traditional model: University professors partner with an excellent pedagogue in their region to provide practice-based methods classes where college students are able to construct pedagogical knowledge in the context of teaching. Parsons (2000) describes a different kind of arts partnership. The art department at Ohio State University partnered with a group of art teachers from four school districts in their region. The purpose of this relationship was to address the need for discipline-specific training and collegiality for art teachers in those districts.

Fortunately for us, the grant administrator and the PDS building administrators were willing to allow us to create a partnership specifically for music education. The process began by setting up a series of unstructured interviews and observations with the administrators and music teachers in each of the three partnership schools. The music teachers initially involved included Rob, Dan, Marcia, and Paul. Rob and Dan share the

_____

vocal (general) music teaching responsibilities at School no. 1, a large K-5 elementary school. Rob has over 10 years' experience teaching music in urban schools while Dan, a recent graduate of WPU, was in his second year of teaching at the time. Marcia, a seasoned veteran with over 20 years' teaching experience, is the sole vocal music teacher at School no. 2, a mid-sized K-8 elementary school in a different district. Paul is an alternatively certified vocal music teacher in his third year of teaching at School no. 3, a small K-5 elementary school in the third district.

Year One: Who are you and what do you want?

The typical PDS model involves a single university faculty member partnering with one or more public school faculty members to co-teach PDS classes and collegiate education courses. This model worked well for the elementary education faculty who coordinated the two most successful sites in the COE partnership. Thus, when I began visiting and interviewing music teachers and administrators in the partnership school, I this model in mind. It turned out that while the music teachers were happy to talk to me a few times (one principal said they thought I was "harmless"), they were not about to share their classrooms with me on a regular basis. A different model was needed for this partnership.

In retrospect, I refer to this part of our relationship as the "who are you and what do you want?" stage. It is not a comfortable place to be, since after committing to a partnership vision and being provided with resources, there is an expectation that a project will suddenly take off. It seems, however, to be a necessary part of the process since it takes time for various constituents to identify roles and purposes they can agree on (Robinson, 2000). This phenomenon is so common in the development of PDS relationships that it is included as part of the process ("a time before the beginning") in the PDS standards sanctioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2001, p. 3).

_____

In spite of initial awkwardness in the start-up phase of the music teacher partnership, the conversations upon which this relationship would be based were informative. Most discussions either focused on the high level of student need or reflected frustration with the roles music teachers were expected to play in their schools. These informal discussions suggested two related themes: *the role of the music teacher*, and *the role of music in the school*.

The role of the music teacher

The most notable aspect of discussions related to this theme is the disconnect between teachers' descriptions of their jobs and the ideals of music education with which they identify. In general, observations and conversations suggest a perception that those who create music teachers' schedules and are supposed to advocate for them actually have little understanding of their needs. Here is Paul's explanation:

> "*. . . this is how things go around here.*" *The special area teachers (art, music, PE, something else) had set up a meeting with the principal to ask about making up their own schedules and he had agreed. But two days later, their schedules were done and posted by the facilitator for Whole School Reform, a recently promoted former 6th grade teacher. She said the schedule had to be set up to accommodate the classroom teachers who needed to be able to have grade level meetings. According to Paul, "They treat us as all we're doing here is filling prep times, that's all.*"

These notes from a later observation of Paul point out the consequences of scheduling music classes in this way:

> *Only twice a week does Paul have two classes back-to-back; usually he has drastic changes grade-to-grade and floor-to-floor. He believes the thing he needs most is a room to teach in. He is not allowed to adjust the classroom setup in the classrooms he visits so they are amenable for music teaching. "Most people in here could care less–they just think of music as their prep period. Music doesn't get much respect."*

Marcia, a music teacher with over 20 years experience in several urban districts in the region, noted that many administrators do not see a need for specific training or collegiality among music teachers:

> *Right off the bat, Marcia told me that "the young lady from School 6" had introduced herself and told her that her principal would not release her. This conversation is in reference to a novice music teacher who is a graduate student at WPU. She tried to get a visitation day to see Marcia teach; apparently her principal won't release her even for a day. Who knows what the reason is? Anyway, this situation led us into an interesting conversation about administrators in the City schools. According to Marcia: "This is what principals do here." They are autonomous and even though there is an administrator in charge of music teachers, the principals can refuse to allow their music teachers to attend music in-services, instead insisting they remain with their buildings.*

The schools in our partnership are among the many urban schools and school districts in New Jersey who are mandated to adopt a "Whole School Reform" model. A common feature of these models is site-based management, in which a small advisory team of teachers assists in the governance of the school. Members of the advisory team each create a secondary team and all members of the faculty are required to serve on one of these teams. Rob describes the impact of this model on music educators and other "special" teachers:

> *It's just that we tend not to be included. And whenever we have been included. . . see, what they do, in here, is that they put together the music teachers, the art teachers, and the gym teachers, and we all sit together and say "what are we doing here" and we write down some issues that nobody reads. You know. . . and that's not right.*

In short, the music teachers in the partnership believe that others in their school see them as a time resource whose purpose is to provide classroom teachers with "prep time." While some music teachers acknowledge aspects of their job that reflect a specific musical role, service to classroom teachers is the only role that emerges consistently.

Music teachers talk about this with distress, but it seems to be so much a part of the administrators' concept of music education as to be invisible to them. According to Kenneth, a district level administrator who supervises music teachers but has no arts background,

> *. . . music teachers need to learn how to coordinate their curricula to "academic teachers" in their buildings. He is concerned with test scores in reading and math.*

Mark, a district arts administrator with over 20 years of experience as a music teacher and arts administrator in several urban school districts, explains it like this:

> *Mark mentioned that "academic teachers" [his term] were "coverage teachers" (by grade and/or subject) and that their buildings would pay for subs when they went out for in-service training. The building administrators do not want to pay for music subs because music teachers are not "coverage teachers." They are "preps" who "cover" for others.*

Music teachers' comments express the perceptions that they are not accepted members of the 'teacher' culture. They believe that building administrators and teacher-peers see their function in the school as a provider of release time for 'real' teachers rather than as professional teachers. Administrators' comments support this perception by indicating that music teachers are not "coverage teachers," and therefore do not need specialized planning or in-service opportunities.

The role of music in the school

Not surprisingly, these conversations and observations also uncovered a lack of clarity regarding the role of the discipline of music in these settings. Teachers and administrators in these schools are so overwhelmed by the academic and social needs they perceive from their students that music gets lost in the shuffle. An important part of the culture of these schools is fear of the 'high stakes testing' that has already defined the schools and their students as failures. Thus, many comments reflect the belief that

_____

traditional "academic performance" (i.e., reading and math) is the primary purpose of schooling and that any other focus will result in severe consequences for the school.

    In many ways the role of music as a research theme is related more to its conspicuous absence than to any specific observations. The traditional role of music education–teaching students to perform for their peers and their parents–is not part of the music curriculum in many schools.

> *Paul said that his principal does not want to have any musical "events," such as concerts or graduation. In Paul's words, they have "never sat as a school" partly because the school's auditorium is only big enough for half of the school's population, and partly because the principal (almost always called "he" rather than named) doesn't want the chaos and trouble.*

    In one of our interviews, Rob talked at length about his struggle to figure out what students "need" from music classes. Even undergraduate and graduate level study did not address how music could and should meet the needs of students in the urban setting. Through trial and error, Rob eventually settled on a compromise that he believed met the students' needs.

> *Rob: I don't think you learn how to teach kids unless you're actually in the setting. And then, what's interesting, is–you have to decide what the kids need. What is the right thing to teach! And even when I was in my master's courses, you think about "what is the right thing to teach" and the teacher didn't address that. Even the good ones weren't addressing that. I think it was kind of. . .*
> *CO: What do you mean: "What is the right thing to teach"?*
> *Rob: Well, in the beginning, I took, some Kodaly courses. And I was teaching the simple songs like "see saw" and I would teach them . . . .*
> *I did that for a couple of years, and I found that I was a little frustrated to teach that, because–they were getting it to a certain point, I was only meeting with these groups once a week, and I thought–is that the primary thing–is that what they need the most? And what came to my mind was–no! What they need the most is to learn how to read!*
> *CO: Read–*
> *Rob: Read words! I mean it wasn't music, but it was bothering me that they weren't reading that well, and that I had an opportunity to help them*

_____

*with that reading once a week. So what I decided to do–and this is
something I enjoy, too–was giving them song sheets and having them read.
And then I play the melody, and they learn to sing on pitch, to the words,
and then I accompany them with chords, and then I play the recording,
and that was my routine. And I would talk about the text of the words.*

The only direct mention of musical need on the part of students was that they lacked
the opportunity hear classical music performed live.

*I asked Marcia what she wanted from the Partnership. She said her kids know
how to act like an audience, so she would like to bring live performances to the
school–live performances of strings, brass, woodwinds, etc. There is no way most
of these students will ever go to a concert, but they would love to have a concert
in the school.*

It is interesting that music teachers' comments related to the role of music in the
high-needs urban setting are only a little more specific than comments made by other
school professionals. The only role for school music that is mentioned consistently in
interviews with a variety of educational professionals (building administrators, district
administrators, education professors) is the vague idea that music education should be
interdisciplinary. Here's what Nan, a principal at one of the most successful schools in
the partnership (where there is not a successful music program), had to say: *Nan said she
would like to know how to use music to unify her building, to give it a common culture for
celebration.*

Paula, the COE University/School liaison with Nan's school, made the following
observation:

*Paula stepped into a meeting where the role of music in the partnership
was being discussed with the outgoing and incoming grant administrator.
She noted that people were looking for integration of music and other
disciplines. Another University/School liaison later said that she believed
any partnership proposals that included music should include literacy.*

_____

At the end of the first year, we did not seem to be any closer to establishing a partnership than when we started. Several music teachers had agreed to be observed and interviewed, but (understandably) they did not seem to want continued contact without a clear purpose. Two teachers had even called my home to cancel a scheduled interview and ask that future meetings be set up off school time so they could receive in-service (professional development) credit for them. My general impressions at that time were that the partnership music educators worked in almost complete isolation–both from building-level colleagues and from music teacher colleagues. The following entry shows my thoughts about planning the second year of the partnership:

> *What do we have to offer a partnership? The most obvious (and quickest)*
> *is simply collegiality. We can set up meetings between the music teachers*
> *in the three schools to help them figure out what they need, and perhaps*
> *can fund some of those things through the partnership.*

Since the music teachers' comments reflected needs related to professional identity, it seemed logical to progress by addressing collegiality and professional growth. Given the historically tumultuous nature of partnerships, creating a constituent group of music educators from the partnership schools seemed like a particularly good idea.

Year Two: The Coalition Music Teachers

Guided by research stating that activities rather than goals propel collaboration through its initial stages (Lieberman, 1986 in Robinson, 2000) the music teachers in the Partnership schools were invited to the university campus for a series of meetings. Since the COE partnership had expanded to 5 schools by year two, a total of 11 teachers were invited to attend.

The first meeting consisted of getting acquainted and brainstorming as a group about music teacher need. The response to this meeting was very positive, and it resulted in an ambitious list of needs on the part of the music teachers. They were primarily in the areas of materials (computers), professional development (teaching music in an urban

_____

setting), and professionalism–particularly professional recognition. While more concrete issues (materials and training) are the easiest to address in a partnership relationship, notes from the first meeting indicate the greatest interest in the area of professional recognition:

> *There is a strong sense among these attendees that they need a collective voice that has the power to speak about the needs of urban music teachers in a more public forum. It must be noted that most of these needs are related to the overwhelming nature of their task–teaching music in a meaningful way when they only see students once a week; meeting the musical needs of students who are literally from "around the world;" carrying their teaching materials around a school "on a cart;" having no office or classroom, having no place in the classrooms they visit to work, write on the board, or post materials; working with students whose reading and math levels are so low that having them read the words to songs is difficult. I asked them if they would like to meet again. The response was: "YES!–If it goes somewhere." To this end, they suggested a series of meetings during the remainder of the school year. In the first meeting they would like to create a mission statement.*

This group, eventually named the Coalition Music Teachers (or CMT's) met a total of three times during the 2001-2002 school year. Discussions continued to center around issues of professionalism, and the two themes (*the role of the music teacher* and *the role of music in the school*) that had emerged from the first year's observations dominated our conversations. During the second meeting, the teachers decided to focus most of their energy on the creation of a mission statement related to the importance of music in urban schools.

The third meeting took an interesting turn as the group requested a change in the format of the relationship for the next year. Prior to drafting their mission statement, they wanted to question their colleagues as I had been questioning them, to find out whether their needs were common among the other music teachers in their districts. They felt that a needs assessment similar to that of their first meeting (brainstorming, followed by discussion, followed by decision making) would be of greater benefit to them and their

colleagues than writing a mission statement based only on their own opinions. This idea propelled us into year three of our relationship.

Year Three*: The Formal Needs Assessment*

The third year's efforts to expand the outreach of the group and draft a mission statement based on collective opinion changed the focus of the CMT's from planning activities for themselves to analyzing the needs of their colleagues. The first step in this direction was hosting all music teachers in the districts served by the COE partnership for a full-day needs assessment and in-service workshop in September of 2002. The needs assessment was based on the question: *"What is needed to take urban music education from where it is now to where it could be?"*

The day was structured to direct teachers through a process of constructing and prioritizing professional need both as individuals and as a group. At the start of the workshop, attendees were divided into focus-type groups of approximately nine people. Initially, the participants were trained in the process of dialogue so they could get to know each other and share a few useful teaching techniques. Next, they were asked to brainstorm answers to the question of the day by creating a 'mind-map' of their ideas and sharing their maps with a partner and later with their groups. Each group then created a prioritized list of professional need based on the similarities between the individual mind maps. Finally, each group presented their 8-10 priorities to all of the teachers in attendance. A list of the needs (summarized for analysis) listed by two or more groups can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Music Teacher Priorities	Needs
Facilities	8
Supplies/Instruments	7
Administrative/Collegial (non-music) support	5
Funding	4
Scheduling	4
Discipline	3
In-District Networking/Staff Development	2

Interestingly, these needs are very much in agreement with the themes uncovered in the first and second years' data. As a group, the music teachers throughout the partnership districts perceive a conflict between their own professional needs and their administrators' understanding of their needs in relation to the overall priorities of the schools where they are employed. The more tangible issues faced by the music teachers in these three districts (facilities, supplies, and instruments) are controlled by the less tangible priorities (administrative and collegial support). Administrators also control funding and scheduling for music education. While this perception has yet to be verified through extensive observation or interviews with non-music educational professionals, it certainly suggests a lack of congruence between the role identity of the music educators in the study and the role expectations other school professionals have for them.

To further define the data, participants were asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire related to their professional needs. The questionnaire, based on a survey by

_____

Fiese and Decarbo (1995) was returned by 52 out of the 76 music teachers in attendance at the workshop. Because of the open-ended nature of the survey, not every respondent answered every question. Still, answers provided by those who did respond clarified many of the issues raised by the large group.

The first question involved pre-service and graduate training: "Did your undergraduate/ graduate education courses prepare you to teach in the urban setting? If yes, what specific areas in your education prepared you? If no, what areas would you suggest need to be included?" As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (66.7%) indicated that their undergraduate preparation had not prepared them for teaching in an urban setting. Specific areas of concern are displayed in Table 3. Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that undergraduate training should have involved *Experience teaching in the urban environment.* An additional 16% felt that their studies should have addressed *Navigating the school culture* (dealing with administrators, getting by with limited resources, understanding that the system breaks down sometimes). Other areas included *Discipline specific training, Educational issues* (primarily having to do with overcoming language barriers), and *Musical/cultural issues* (music for diverse cultures of students).

Table 2

Did your undergraduate/graduate education courses prepare you to teach in the urban setting?	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	33.3
No	41	66.7

_____

Table 3

Areas needed for undergraduate preparation	Number	%
Experience teaching in urban environment	25	57
Navigating the school culture	7	16
Discipline specific training	4	9
Educational issues	4	9
Musical/Cultural issues	2	4.5
Other	2	4.5

The second question was related to the classroom practices of the teachers in attendance: "Can you describe one or two specific teaching techniques, strategies, or approaches that you have found to be particularly effective for teaching music in the urban situation?" While a few respondents mentioned specific musical approaches (i.e., The Kodaly Method) or specific teaching approaches (i.e., Gardner's Project Approach), the majority (displayed in Table 4) responded with either a *General teaching approach* (present content in small doses in an organized way) or a *General musical approach* (use movement to keep students interested; relate concepts to music the students are familiar with).

Frierson-Campbell, C. (2004). Professional need and the contexts of in-service music teacher identity. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education. Vol.3*, #3 (November 2004). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/FriersonCampbell3_3.pdf.

Table 4

Specific approaches for teaching music in the urban situation.	#	%
Specific music and/or teaching method	5	10.9
General teaching approach	19	41.3
General musical approach	19	41.3
General personal approach	3	6.5

The third question was designed to elicit responses related to teacher success: "What factors have most contributed to your personal success as a music teacher in the urban setting?" Most responses, summarized in Table 5, fell into two categories: *Personal traits* (flexibility, love of music teaching and/or children, patience, and stubbornness) and *Professional traits and knowledge: Teacher-ship* (ability to relate to students, having and communicating high standards, putting in extra effort, and being involved in the school community). A notable number of responses fell into the category of *Professional traits and knowledge: Musicianship* (knowledge of piano, knowing what students listen to).

Interestingly, Teachout (1997) found that both novice and experienced music teachers actually prioritized personal traits and general teaching skills over musical skill for success in the first years of teaching. Other categories revealed in this question include *Professional opportunities* (workshops, seminars, and earning a paycheck), *School environment* (mentioned by only 4 participants), and *Prior experience* (having primarily to do with growing up in an urban environment). A few teachers (4 out of 46)

_____

mentioned that administrator support and school size were important aspects of their
success.

These answers differ from those described by Fiese and DeCarbo (1995). Their
survey (upon which this one is based) was designed to question successful urban music
educators about the reasons for their successes. Those respondents indicated that
networks and professional development opportunities were the keys to their successful
careers.

Table 5

Factors contributing to success as a music teacher in urban settings.	#	%
Personal Traits	20	40.8
Professional traits and knowledge: Teacher-ship	12	24.5
Professional traits and knowledge: Musicianship	7	14.3
Professional opportunities	5	10.2
School environment	5	10.2

The next question asked respondents' about improving their teaching situations:
"What general comments do you have related to improving music education in the urban
schools?" The largest number of responses were related to *Facilities/Supplies/Funding*
(Provide all teachers with a <u>decent</u> place to teach; need proper facilities; if it's important
enough to have, provide facilities and time for it). The next largest category was
Professional development, and there were a number of variations on this theme (need to

_____

understand music in context of culture; eliminate bias against non-Euro-centric music; music must become an integrated subject; higher standards for students from teachers). Teachers continue to be concerned about *Administrative support/Support from the school community* (administration must make music an important course; drum up support from the parents and the rest of the school community). Several teachers also mentioned *Scheduling* (more teacher time in each school) and *Class size* (smaller class sizes). Another issue of concern was the coordination of the music teacher agenda (networking and sharing ideas, centralizing supplies, maintaining high hiring standards, seeking a state mandate for music). Responses to this question were markedly similar to those of the focus groups discussed earlier and shown in Table 1.

Responses to the final two questions, shown in Tables 7 & 8, have interesting implications for the professional development of this group of teachers. When asked: "Which of today's activities was most valuable for you?" 52% of respondents said that *Networking* (getting out of school–being with colleagues; talking to the person next to me, who does a job similar to mine, but on the other side of town) was the most valuable part of the day. Other activities (the jazz workshop, the mind mapping exercises, the setting of priorities, even venting) were also mentioned.

Table 6

Comments related to improving music education in urban schools.	#	%
Facilities/Supplies/Funding	15	33
Professional development	8	17
Administrative support/Support of school community	6	13

_____

Scheduling	6	13
Class size	5	11
Coordination of music teacher agenda	5	11
Other	1	2

Table 7

Which of today's activities was most valuable for you?	#	%
All	4	9.5
Networking	22	52.4
Brainstorming/Prioritizing	10	23.8
Content area workshop	6	14.29

When asked: "What issues do you suggest we target for our next workshop?" the majority of respondents mentioned issues that are in some way 'political,' implying action beyond the classroom. Suggestions include *Policy issues* (bringing our needs to the larger educational community; state mandated; getting teachers to agree on a plan of action), *District-level issues* (educating administration as to the viability of music and its relation to education), and *Building level issues (*convincing and educating administrators and building level peers, improving scheduling and facilities).

Frierson-Campbell, C. (2004). Professional need and the contexts of in-service music teacher identity. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education. Vol.3*, #3 (November 2004). http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/FriersonCampbell3_3.pdf.

_____

Table 8

What issues do you suggest we target for our next workshop?	#	%
Policy Issues	13	35.1
Subject-area issues	13	35.1
District-level issues	8	21.6
Building-level issues	2	5.4
Urban Issues	1	2.7

A Profound Conflict

The research that comprises this data includes three different types of interactions. On-site interviews and observations of a small number of music teachers and administrators make up the first year's data. Data from the second year consists of notes from a series of meetings on the WPU campus with a somewhat larger group (n=9) of music teachers who became the advisory group for the fledgling music partnership. The third year's data reflects the results of a formal needs assessment administered to all music teachers from the three districts served by the COE partnership (n=76). In spite of these differences there is a consistency in the themes that have emerged from this inquiry.

The responses from the music teachers in this study suggest a profound conflict between the idealized "music teacher" identity that they hold and the role expectations they perceive from other school-based educators, most notably administrators. The "personal war" (Roberts, 2000, p. 73) that they faced as students forced them to accept the role identity of teaching musician in a performing musician's world. The conflict they face in the professional teaching theater compels them to construct a music teacher

_____

identity in a world that "does not offer support for musicians" (Roberts, p. 65) and does not include a clear role for music.

This perception of being outsiders working in a world that doesn't understand them is reminiscent of Becker's (1973) groundbreaking study of societal 'deviants.' One of the outsider groups Becker focused on was jazz musicians, whose employment depended upon non-musicians with different musical tastes than their own. Musicians who refused to consider the desires of their employers felt they were being true to their art, but they usually did not make a successful living as musicians. The lack of professional control perceived by the music educators in the present study is similar to the experience of Becker's jazz musicians:

> *Control is exerted by the outsiders for whom musicians work, who ordinarily judge and react to the musician's performance on the basis of standards quite different from his. The antagonistic relationship between musicians and outsiders shapes the culture of the musician and likewise produces the major contingencies and crisis points in his career. (p. 102)*

> *While this "antagonistic relationship" is certainly part of the identities of these musician-teachers, they cannot lay claim to this 'deviant musician' identity in its entirety since they are, in fact, teachers. Interestingly, Becker notes that: The career line of an occupation take their shape from the problems peculiar to that occupation's position vis-a-vis other groups in the society. (p. 102)*

It seems to be this position–their own in relation to other groups–that causes the greatest difficulty in identity development for both student and professional music educators. This difficulty is an important part of the identity of both groups. Yet Becker notes that negotiating a personal compromise between one's preferred identity and the wishes of the group that controls the rewards and prestige awarded by the occupation is common in many fields:

> *Studies of more conventional occupations such as medicine have shown that occupational success (as members of the occupation define it) depends on finding a position for oneself in that influential group or groups that controls rewards within the occupation, and that the actions*

_____

> *and gestures of colleagues play a great part in deciding the outcome of*
> *any individual's career. (p. 102)*

The strong sense of disaffection among this group of teachers with the professional compromises demanded by their jobs is certainly worthy of further study.

Implications for the PDS relationship

This inquiry began by asking whether a university music department and music teachers from several urban schools might work together in a PDS relationship. Over the course of the study, several music teachers described not only their identity-related needs, but the conflicts that make it difficult for them to establish satisfactory professional identities in their school settings. Although the focus of this paper is on the issues of identity uncovered by the research rather than the partnership itself, recent conversations have indicated a strong interest in PDS relationships for music education. For this reason a brief discussion of the emerging PDS partnership at WPU seems appropriate.

The data gathered in our formal needs assessment and through informal data collection suggests four areas that connect the needs of music educators, administrators, and university-based PDS planners: music teacher collegiality, building level collegiality, interdisciplinary training, and connection to pre-service education. Our present plan is to continue to support a district or regional network of music teachers, preferably with both a university and district-based coordinator, to provide the collegiality and support so badly needed by specialist teachers.

The CMT's will evolve into an advisory group of excellent music teachers who serve as cooperating teachers for pre-service music education students from the university. In addition, we will collaborate with a few buildings in two or more urban school districts in our region (probably the schools served by the COE partnership) to sponsor interdisciplinary teams of classroom teachers, music teachers, and other special area teachers that meet on a regular basis to work on shared interdisciplinary content. This will foster the building level collegiality so badly needed by music teachers, and will

_____

enable generalist teachers access to the specialized knowledge music teachers hold. Since both music teachers and school administrators have noted a need for interdisciplinary training, this topic will be addressed in both of these venues. Finally, the partnership will forge a connection to pre-service education. In this way, we will strengthen the music departments in the urban districts where our students are most likely to be placed for field experiences and eventual employment.

Implications for research

Those of us who are interested in the problem of music teacher identity are not the detached participant observers that our sociologist counterparts are. We bring to the table a vested interest not only in music teacher identity but in the institution of school music education as a whole. The observations and interviews that comprise this research suggest that the conflict between the role of music education as perceived by schools and the ideals of music educators may be difficult to negotiate by any standards. For Becker's jazz musicians, understanding their (non-musician) employer's expectations for their performances was necessary because it helped them navigate their way to prestigious high-paying gigs. For school and collegiate music educators the stakes are also high. Our concern is ultimately not with the employer, but with the musical education of students.

This research is hardly generalizable–it applies to a specific population in a specific situation. But the issues raised by these teachers inspire questions about whether their needs might somehow be related to the larger practice of music education. What can we do as a profession to help inservice teachers strengthen their identity construction? Researchers must ask how interaction with the many contexts of schools affects the professional identity of practicing music teachers.

References

Altschuld, J. W. & Witkin, B. R. (2000). *From needs assessment to action: Transforming needs into solution strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

_____

Becker, H. S. (1973). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: The
    Free Press of Glencoe.

Bouij, Christer. (1998). Swedish music teachers in training and professional life.
    International Journal of Music Education, 32, 24-31.

Conkling, S. W. (2003). Uncovering pre-service music teachers' reflective thinking and
    its implications for their professional growth. In Press.

Conkling, S. W. & Henry, W. (1999). Professional development partnerships: A new
    model for music teacher preparation. *Arts Education Policy Review, 100* (4), 19-23.
    Retrieved February 8, 2003 from http://www.hwwilsonweb.com.

Fiese, R. K, & DeCarbo, N. J. (1995). Urban music education: The teachers' perspective.
    Music Educators Journal, 81(6), 27-31.

Holmes Group. (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group*. East
    Lansing, MI: Author.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2001).

Standards for Professional Development Schools. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on
    December 9, 2002 from http://www.ncate.org/2000/pdsstands_10-00.pdf.

Roberts, B. A. (2000). A North American response to Bouij: Music education student
    identity construction revisited in Sweden. In R. R. Rideout and S. J. Paul (Eds.), *On
    the Sociology of Music Education II*, 63-74. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

Robinson, M. (2000). *A Theory of Collaborative Music Education*

Between Higher Education and Urban Public Schools. Rochester, NY: Unpublished
    doctoral dissertation, Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester.

Teachout, D. J. (1997). Pre-service and experienced teachers' opinions of skills and
    behaviors important to successful music teaching. *Journal of Research in Music
    Education*, *45*, 41-50.

Woodford, Paul G. (2002). The social construction of music teacher identity in
    undergraduate music education majors. In Colwell, Richard. (2002). *The new*

_____

handbook of research on music teaching and learning. New York: Oxford
University Press, 675-694.

Zimpher, N. L. (2001). Creating professional development school sites. *Theory into
Practice, 29 (1),* 42-49.