

**University of Alberta**

The Negotiation and Reconciliation of Musician and Teacher Identities

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to describe how accomplished musicians who become secondary school music teachers negotiate and reconcile their musician identity with their teacher identity. The study used a multiple case study approach to obtain experiential descriptions of six secondary school teachers who have extensive playing and performing backgrounds. The analysis of the participants' expressions relied upon conceptual frameworks based upon the following bodies of literature: social interactionism, the life-development of musicians, and teacher identity as a formative process. The creation and maintenance of a well-developed musician identity is the most fundamental and significant strategy that the participants use to negotiate the tensions between their musician and teacher identities. This study also determined that the highest form of mutuality and reconciliation between the musician and teacher identities of the six participants is the amalgamation of their teacher self-concepts and musician self-concepts to form a music teacher identity.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acceptance Page	
Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Table of Contents	
<b>MY JOURNEY TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One – INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>13</b>
Introduction to the Topic	13
Description of the Research Problem	15
Justification and Purpose of the Study	21
Purpose Statement	22
Research Questions	22
Significance of the Problem	23
Description of the Document	29
<b>Chapter Two – LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>32</b>
Music Education Students	32
Summary	39
Music Teachers	40
Summary	51
<b>Chapter Three – IDENTITY FRAMEWORKS</b>	<b>53</b>
Self and Identity	53
Musician Identity	57
Structure of Identity Formation	64
Salience, prominence, and motivation	65
Legitimation and validation	69
Summary	71
Teacher Identity	71
“Becoming”	71
“Formation”	73
Occupational self-concepts	74
Personal self-concepts	74
“Transformation”	76

<b>Chapter Four – STRATEGIES OF NEGOTIATION AND RECONCILIATION</b>	<b>78</b>
Life Cycle of the Teacher	79
Negotiating and Reconciling Strategies	84
#1 Needs Met Outside of Teaching	84
#2 Methods of Coping	86
#3 Teaching as Musical Artistry	89
#4 Preoccupation with the Musical Competence of Students	90
#5 Dichotomization and Categorization of the Self	91
Unsuccessful Negotiation and Reconciliation of Identities	92
<b>Chapter Five – METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>98</b>
Theoretical Frameworks	98
Qualitative Research	99
Purpose	99
History	100
Method	100
Strengths	102
Weaknesses	102
Risks	103
Role of the researcher	103
Interpretive Inquiry	105
Purpose	105
Process	105
Research Frameworks	107
Qualitative Research Approach	107
Multiple Case Study Methodology	107
Participants	119
Research Site	110
Dialogical Exchange	111
Interpretive Process	112
Evaluative Process	113
Limitations and Delimitations	114
Ethics	115
<b>Chapter Six – EXPERIENCES AND INTERPRETATIONS</b>	<b>117</b>
Scott	117
Experiences of Conflict	121
Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation	123



<b>MY RETURN TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>230</b>



## **My Journey to the Research Question**

I have vague recollections of my first student. I can see us in the backyard of my first house in Calgary, the one that had white stucco and black trim. I can see her sitting in a lawn chair and I am standing up. I am asking her questions to check for understanding and I promise her candy if she answers all of my review questions correctly. I was four years old and was teaching my neighbor playmate the Bible stories that my mother had taught me. When the little girl relayed her new knowledge to her mother she promptly phoned my mother to complain that I was trying to convert her four year old daughter. I never saw my first student again.

My next teaching experience was a group of students that were very well behaved except for Johnny who would disrupt the class and earn himself a detention pretty much every day. I cannot tell you exactly how many students were in my class, but I do remember my classroom in the basement had a big blackboard (with a few warped spots), two student desks that had the hole for the ink pot, an immaculately organized teacher desk, a nice carpeted area for reading and plenty of scribblers and crayons. I prepared daily lessons, I marked their assignments, I prepared report cards, and class would start promptly after school when I got home from real school. If my imaginary students would answer my questions incorrectly I would find another way to explain the concept to them. I was organized and conscientious and as firm with them as any nine year old could be. While most children would enter a mall and head for the toy store or the pet store I remember spending my time in

the teacher store lusting over the red coil bound teacher weekly planner and the steel chalk holder.

At ten, I took a leave from teaching because my love affair with music began. My mother and father had bought an electronic organ several years before this and finally felt that they could afford to send my sister and me to music lessons. I still have very vivid memories of my first lesson with Shirley. It was instant love – I loved learning and playing music. My parents would have to tell me to stop practicing or would frequently tell me to “turn the volume down” because I would practice robustly with every spare moment I had. I was propelled by an indescribable, powerful affinity and intrinsic motivation towards music: partly it was the sense of challenge, partly it was the aesthetic pleasure, and partly it was the sense of being special and different. I loved the weekly challenges, the sense of accomplishment, the praise, the psychological retreat from life, and the creative outlet. I was just so happy practicing and playing music.

I was progressing quickly and three years later we decided to switch to a new teacher who worked at the music store in the local mall. After a year and a half of lessons with Donna she announced that she was going to move to Red Deer. Just after telling us her news she asked if I would be interested in teaching beginning organ students on Saturday afternoons. My love affair with music was interrupted by my ‘return’ to teaching. I was absolutely thrilled at the prospective of being a real teacher with real, breathing, and responding students.

I was 14 years old and I would spend Friday nights preparing for my music classes when my friends were having sleepovers and going to movies. I developed lesson plan forms, I designed a system and corresponding forms called “styling sheets” to help the students organize their organ arrangements, I studied organ method books in order to understand the best sequence of learning to use with my students, I prepared games and worksheets, and I practiced their songs meticulously. I remember having great teaching days and terrible teaching days and always reflecting on how I could be better the next week. I remember implementing classroom management strategies to deal with behavior issues in the group lessons. I remember teaching a young woman who was about 21 who was developmentally delayed. I remember how challenging it was to teach her and that feeling of the limits of my patience being absolutely stretched. Most notably, I remember the absolute joy I felt when she finally experienced her successes - it was a joy that came from her joy. I remember Mona smiling at me with her pointed and overlapping teeth because she was so proud of herself for her accomplishments. I remember her looking excited to see me each week and I remember her father’s look of relief and gratitude that someone was caring for his daughter. I remember other parents looking at me with uncertainty because I was so young. I remember the feeling of pain when one of my students discontinued her lessons – it was partly pride, but mostly it was my heart that was hurt. I still remember their faces even though most of their names are gone. I loved my little students and I loved teaching them.

At this time, my personal progress in music started to falter. Looking back, I think there were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, my new organ teacher had more of a passion for smoking than she did for music or teaching and she did not inspire me musically or personally. Secondly, I was very occupied with teaching my students and preparing for their classes. Thirdly, I realize now that I needed classical music and a classical instrument to play because the pop music and the organ standards were not enough to satisfy me musically and technically. Lastly, it was at this time when my parents' marriage broke down and everything in our lives seemed to crumble especially the schedule and the routine. At first I was very preoccupied with self-pity and anger, and then I realized that my mother needed my help. I started to teach students at home in order to help out with household finances. I remember my heart aching for my music because I missed it so much and I needed it so much. At 15 years old I had a deep sense of commitment and responsibility to what teaching meant for students. At 15 years old I had experienced what it was like to put my music aside in my life in order to fulfill responsibilities to other people. Perhaps, at 15, I had already set a precedent for how I situated music in relation to my life.

At 16 my parents reunited and our home life started to settle. One day we went to Banff for a picnic and I sat in the park listening to Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and reading a book called *The Enjoyment of Music*. These were resources that I had purchased on my own at some point during that year. Quite by accident I came across an analysis of this piece of music as

I happened to be listening to it. Suddenly, the words on the page were providing description and direction to what my ears were hearing and the words made me hear things I had not heard before. It was aesthetically beautiful and it was intellectually thrilling. It was also a cleansing experience: it flushed away the pain of the previous year and a half. This experience rekindled my fire and love of music – it represented a return to me and a return to music. My thirst to play music was now greatly intensified by my desire to know why it was so beautiful. With this however, came a deep sense of anguish because I didn't know how or where to learn more.

I entered myself into an organ festival that was sponsored by the store I taught for. After playing my piece of music and returning to my seat I felt such sadness because I had an intuitive sense of how poorly I played. I quietly wiped the tears away and made a resolve to quit music. As I was making my way to the door I was approached by a gentleman in his early 60's named Andy who worked at the music store selling pianos and organs. He must have heard me play, he must have seen my heart ache with shame and yearning, and he must have sensed my frustration. He told me that he would teach me music. I had nothing to lose so I went once every two weeks to the music store for a lesson and he refused to take any money from me. He would write beautiful organ arrangements of classical and contemporary music and I would play them. He would cry when I played a passage well and he would literally tremble with excitement when he would describe the way one could push and pull the music with *rubato*. He spoke to me about music in the way I had

always wanted to hear about it: about the life and breath and soul of music. But Andy also made me realize that much of that beauty was related to the compositional elements and the integrity to the performance of these elements. I never fully understood Andy's story. He told me that he used to be an orchestral conductor, but he was quite secretive and his underlying bitterness and sadness always prevented me from asking more questions. It seemed to me that our lives were parallel: despite our love for music it seemed to evade us and we were both grasping for our connection to it. I think Andy was grasping for what he once had. We moved to Edmonton the next year when I was 17 and I would drive back to Calgary once a month to see Andy.

One day I was reading the newspaper about a teacher and the way in which this particular teacher was able to change and affect the lives of his students. The article opened my eyes to the possibility of working with children as a schoolteacher. I realized that as a schoolteacher I could help children feel safe in my classroom even if they didn't feel safe at home and I could help them feel the confidence that comes from learning and growing as a person. I loved music but I also loved children and I saw teaching as a way that I could continue to give to children.

When I compared the music courses that the elementary and the secondary music students were required to take in the University of Alberta calendar I became enraptured with the idea of taking the music courses that were listed for the secondary route. I didn't love bands, actually, I had never been in a band, but this practical consideration seemed secondary to my desire

to learn more about music. I realized that I had to pass an audition to continue in the secondary education route and I made an appointment with the chairperson of the music department to explain my situation and seek some advice. The chairperson told me that "I was not the kind of student that they were looking for and I should seek some other career path." After I left his office I marched down the hall and found the office of Gerhard Krapf, the organ professor at the time, and boldly knocked on his door and asked him for names of people that I could study organ with in order to prepare for a July audition. I didn't even know what a pipe organ looked like, I just knew that I played the organ so I had to take organ lessons. I remember walking into Robertson Wesley church for my first lesson and my breath was literally taken away when I saw the pipe organ for the first time. When Bruce, my new teacher, played it for me I was absolutely awestruck. It was massive, obnoxious, and yet gentle and gutsy, and its intimidating presence just stirred me. My first lesson with Bruce is forever a part of my being. Finally, after all this time, I was learning classical music on a classical instrument. I had a sense of the importance and the dignity and I hung on to every word he said. It was my new challenge, it was also the realization of a life long dream and I worked very, very hard. I loved the coordination element of playing the pipe organ and the intellectual challenge. I played an audition three months later and got in "by the skin of my teeth" as Professor Krapf reminded me many times the following year.

I would be at Convocation Hall at 6 o'clock most mornings to practice and would frequently be there until 2 o'clock in the morning practicing. I was so

busy, but I was so happy playing and learning music. I loved walking down Hub Mall with Bach melodies running through my head, in my own world, thinking, breathing, feeling music – feeling special as a musician and even more special as an organist. I had a feeling that I had finally found my home, finally, I was where I was meant to be, doing what I was supposed to be doing – learning about music.

I continued to have a studio of a dozen private music students that I adored and loved to teach. In my third year of education I found myself in a crisis. The following year I was required to complete my advanced professional term and I would not be able to study organ or take any more music courses. The struggle between teaching and being a musician was very real to me at this time. I didn't feel like I fit in with the education students, but I was not the most accomplished, nor respected student musician in the music department. There was a stigma that you were not a serious musician if you were an education student. Because I spent so much time practicing in the fine arts building most students and professors assumed I was a music student and that never bothered me. Every time I stepped into the education building I felt a dissonance. I felt like a teacher because I had already been teaching for five years and had spent hundreds of hours teaching, planning, and reflecting. I wanted to learn more to be a better teacher, but my heart was with studying and playing music. I remember the feeling of being pulled in two very distinct directions: if I was pursuing my musical studies I would experience feelings of urgency and need to be participating in more band related ensembles and



learning more about the band world. If I was involved with music education courses or related ensembles I would feel panicked that I was not working on my musician and performance skills. I secretly prepared an audition for the Bachelor of Music program without telling my friends or family, I auditioned and was accepted into the program.

The following year I tried to keep one foot in the education world by playing in the concert band and the jazz band and at the same time complete my required courses for the music program. I was stretched very thin and actually failed one course and earned a poor grade in my practical lessons. This was a critical and significant turning point for me because I was forced to choose between music education and playing music. I loved teaching but I realized that what I really wanted to do was play the pipe organ and be an excellent musician. My last year of the music program was a wonderful year because I experienced the satisfaction from focusing and working productively on one goal.

I had one full year course left to complete my Bachelor of Music degree. During this year I started preparing an audition tape to apply to a Masters of Music program. I started developing chronic back pain, and for months I kept denying what I knew deep down – that playing the organ was the cause of my pain. I tried everything - back braces, acupuncture, physiotherapy, multiple doctors, x-rays, drugs, and finally I had to admit defeat. I was suffering from overuse syndrome and by January I was forced to stop playing. I spent the next year and a half resting my back on the floor until 3:30 each day when I

would pick myself up, wipe the tears away and begin teaching piano until the mid-evening hours. Although I was not able to practice or play I did not lose a concept of myself as a musician during this time. There was never a question of whether I would go back to serious practicing and playing; it was just a matter of when I would do this. I understood that I needed time to heal physically and emotionally and when I had this strength I would start again. Starting again meant that I would need the expertise and the help to re-learn how to sit at the organ so as not to injure myself again and I would need sufficient time in order to balance the strain of playing with proper exercise to keep my muscles strong. Once again, I didn't really know where to turn, but as time crept by, I remember just being glad that the physical pain was slowly subsiding.

I remember talking to my cousin who was a lawyer in Vancouver about her quality of life as a lawyer. She lamented the lack of time she had to do other things and in particular, creative things. I reasoned that because teachers make so much less money than lawyers, teachers would work fewer hours in the work and therefore, there would be more time to work on non-occupational pursuits. I believed that if I became a teacher I would have the time that I needed to continue to be a musician. I decided to finish my Bachelor of Education not knowing if I could physically manage the program. Being busy in the after degree program and teaching my private music students helped to ease the pain I felt from not being able to practice – it helped to fill the void.

I became a school music teacher in a junior high school in northeast Edmonton. I was resigned to the fact that the first year or two was going to be very busy because I had so much to learn about bands and the band instruments, however, I always thought that after I worked through this period I would have the time to start practicing. Unfortunately, I never did. Every year I was just as busy as the year before. Every year I would institute a program or a new system to help ease or reduce my teaching load but it would never allow me more time to practice and play. I would start each September or January with resolutions to do less as a teacher in order to incorporate practicing into my daily routine but I was never able to sustain a daily routine of practice. I tried to start an early morning practice routine before classes started but my principal declared Monday morning staff meetings at 7:30. Then she made a mandate that we should have our classrooms open at 7:45 every morning for students to receive extra help. If the students or the band parents heard me practicing they would invariably knock on the door because they had something to ask me – asking to buy clarinet reeds or asking when the next executive meeting was scheduled. Every year practicing became harder to do, and eventually I reached a point where I almost felt as though I didn't know where to start or how to start. I remember being too tired, and having too many phone calls to make at the end of the day, having exams to mark, and having meetings to attend – there was just too much to do. I always felt such a strong sense of responsibility to my students: the quality of my preparation would have an impact on the quality of their learning and their lives. As it was, I was not

able to help all the students that had weak skills or who had fallen behind and I would lie awake at night thinking of ways I could steal time to help them. I could not do everything that I needed to do as a teacher, so how could I fit in a practice routine that would be for me?

I remember standing up in front of my band classes in my first year of teaching and I felt like I was a musician. I remember feeling that sense of uniqueness and expertise and excitement. At the end of my sixth year of teaching I didn't feel like a musician when I stood on the podium. I felt like a skilled teacher, but in regard to music, I felt more like a technician of the instruments. When I saw other music teachers who were still active and vibrant musicians I assumed that I was doing something wrong.

The loss of my identity as a musician resulted in a resentment and bitterness towards the encompassing nature of teaching. I loved my students and I loved teaching them in the same way I loved my first group of six when I was 14 years old. I felt so much satisfaction from seeing them grow and develop as young people, but my deep, inner joy was gone. I had something that was too precious to me, and as wonderful as teaching was, it was not enough to compensate for my sense of loss. Teaching is as natural to me and as much a part of me as breathing – but instead of having an energizing effect like it always did, I felt as if teaching was suffocating me. I wanted to know how other music teachers could maintain such strong identities of themselves as musicians and why I could not.

## Chapter One – INTRODUCTION

### Introduction to the Topic

“Surprisingly, an occupation which has for nearly 200 years attached great importance to the idea of knowing and catering for the individual child has paid little formal attention to the concept of the individual teacher” (Nias, 1989b, p. 160). The essence of teaching is about giving of one’s self to the other individual; hence, it is understandable that most discussion about teaching is focused on the recipient of the giving and often neglects to consider and care for the giver. This study directs attention to the giver in the act or process of teaching and seeks to focus attention on the person that the teacher is. The person of the teacher is the core or fundamental part of the individual that existed before he or she became a teacher. This core, or personal identity, is made up of life experiences and the meanings that the individual has constructed from these experiences and acts as an anchor for what kind of person and what kind of teacher the individual is. This core also contains the individual’s primary motivations for becoming a teacher and, therefore, deserves great care.

Concern for the teacher extends beyond the application of his or her professional knowledge and skills. Hargreaves (as cited in Woods, 1996) describes “good teaching” as being “...rooted not just in knowledge, skill and competence. It is also ignited by passion, challenge, creativity and joy” (p. 60). Dynamic personal interchange between individuals is the medium by which

teaching generally occurs and this interchange requires a healthy vibrancy on the part of the teacher. This vibrancy may be dependent on the degree to which the individual is connected to the person that she was before she became a teacher. The teacher's vibrancy is challenged by the rigorous workload and daily pragmatic demands and complexities related to teaching. The teacher's ability to maintain his or her core, which includes one's passion and motivation for being a teacher, is also challenged by the tacit and pervasive belief that an excellent teacher will make personal sacrifices in the form of giving or giving up personal resources and pursuits for the benefit and enrichment of his or her students. How common it is to hear a teacher described as excellent because he or she puts in many extra hours of personal tutoring, preparation, or willingly agrees to take on extracurricular assignments. This belief, which often evolves into an occupational expectation, exemplifies society's objectification of teachers and denies one of the most important elements of teaching - the humanness of teaching. The belief that a teacher must make personal sacrifices to be an excellent teacher denies recognition of and respect for the person of the teacher. Caring for the teacher means acknowledging the person that the teacher is and the teacher's need to devote time and attention to his or her person in order to be a joyful person and, consequently, a joyful teacher.

Recent educational research has explored and expanded the definition of teaching to consider the life history of the teacher and has, thereby, created a link between the practice and the person of the teacher. Woods (1996)

explains that "...the emotional and psychological needs of a teacher are to be inspired, motivated, enthused, and reassured, - in other words to have an active and vibrant self at the heart of their practice" (p. 47). The topic of teacher identity is problematic because of the inherent difficulty in distinguishing, separating and, therefore, nurturing the line between the person that the teacher is and the teacher that the person is. This study attempts to contribute to our understanding of the interrelatedness and interdependence of the teacher and the person of the teacher and, thereby, contribute to our "knowing" and caring for the teacher.

#### Description of the Research Problem

The workload associated with teaching such as preparation, professional development, delivery of instruction, remedial work with students, school meetings, parent communication, and extracurricular expectations, is extremely demanding, emotionally charged, and never-ending. These expectations often take place in a fiscally impoverished environment and within a power structure that removes autonomy from the teacher. The engulfing and encompassing nature of teaching works against an individual's efforts to preserve a sense of the person and, therefore, to care for his or her person.

Nias (1989b) describes how the human interaction aspect of teaching can easily become an endless cycle of personal expenditure:

So, as an occupation, teaching has a bottomless appetite for *commitment*. As a result, teachers are easily trapped. The more they

identify with their jobs, the greater the satisfaction they receive from their personal relationship with individuals and classes, the more outlet they find in their work for varied talents and abilities, the greater the incentive that exists for them to invest their own personal and material resources in their teaching. They are, in short, beset by the paradox that the personal rewards to be found in their work come only from self-investment in it. (p. 160)

Perhaps it is the personal relationships with students that pose the greatest danger of teachers becoming engulfed because these interactions, exchanges, and these acts of giving are the most gratifying aspects of being a teacher. Hence, the more the teacher gives to his or her students, the more rewarding teaching is because of the positive results and reaction of students, and in turn this motivates the teacher to continue to give even more.

Nias (1989a) explains what may happen to a teacher if he or she allows this cycle of personal expenditure to spiral out of control:

The personal and occupational self may be so closely related that, in their own terms, they 'become' teachers: The persons they perceive themselves to be go to work and the teachers they feel they are come home, often to occupy their sleeping as well as waking hours...Many teachers, for part or all of their working lives, invest their personal sense of identity in their work. (pp. 224-225)

While a certain degree of self-investment in one's teaching is necessary and evokes some degree of gratification, an excessive amount of self-investment



can blur the teacher's distinction between himself as a teacher and himself as a person. The uncertainty of his sense of himself as a person, or his personal identity, may cause him great inner dissatisfaction and discontentment and eventually may cause him to lose his joy of teaching (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002; McCall & Simmons, 1966).

The issue of identity loss is well exemplified by accomplished musicians who become teachers. To honor one's pre-existing identity while formulating a teacher identity and the threat of self-investment to the point of self-engulfment are vital and inevitable issues that music teachers face.

In order for an individual to teach music he or she must be a musician: A person who wants to teach music cannot simply borrow the knowledge about music in order to teach the subject (Roberts, 1991a). "There is no comparison between the professional skills of a first-year medical or law student, who generally knows little about his profession, and a first-year music student, who is often an accomplished musician" (Kadushin, 1969, p. 393). Music students "...have typically invested a significant amount of time in developing the skills on an instrument that makes them eligible to apply to the university" (Roberts, 1990b, p. 65) and, therefore, they generally demonstrate a high-level of musical skill. Individuals who make the decision to teach music come to the teacher education program with well-developed identities as musicians (Cox, 1994; Cox, 1997; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; L'Roy, 1983; Mark, 1998; Prescesky, 1997; Roberts, 1991a; Wilson, 1998).

The musician identity is based on many years of time invested in practicing and studying, close interpersonal connections with family members and teachers, intense personal and emotional involvement, a history of musical successes and failures, and years of recognition from significant others for musical performances (Babikian, 1985; Burland & Davidson, 2002; Cox, 1994; Davidson, 2002; Ericsson, Tesch-Romer & Krampe, 1990; Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Greenberg, 1970; Hargreaves, Miell & Macdonald, 2002; Howe & Sloboda, 1991; Kemp, 1997; Kemp, 2000; Lamont, 2002; Prescesky, 1997; Sloboda, 1990; Sloboda & Howe, 1991; Sloboda, Davidson, Howe & Moore, 1996; Sosniak, 1990). Musical experiences that span almost the entire lifetime of the individual up to the time when he or she becomes a teacher result in the development of numerous concepts about the self that coalesce into a well-developed and extremely salient musician identity. The musician identity becomes the primary means by which the individual interacts with others, perceives himself, and presents himself to others (Davidson). Hence, the integration of music and the person is a way of life that the individual has always known and becomes like a badge that she wears in order to define herself in relation to the events and people in the world (Lamont; North & Hargreaves, 1999). This is illustrated by the belief that many musicians have that they need to be excellent performers in order to be a worthwhile person (Kemp, 2000). For this reason, the individual's "...self-esteem becomes anchored in the possession of musical talent and success" (Kemp, 2000, p. 107). The engulfing and encompassing nature of teaching is a serious issue for

a musician who desires to become a teacher because it threatens his or her musician identity; the individual's musician identity is a fundamental part of who the person is.

The individual must also maintain a musician identity for professional reasons. In order to sustain his or her professional efficacy as a music educator, the teacher must maintain a certain level of musical skill and ability (Klotman, 1973; Wilson, 1998). Music teachers are expected to be able to demonstrate "comprehensive musicianship" (Klotman, p. 26) for their students. To maintain one's musical skills an individual must practice regularly, participate in a program of development and study, have a strong network of emotional support, and receive periodic recognition from others for successful musical performances (Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Kemp, 2000). These requirements are difficult to satisfy given the intense time and physical demands of teaching (Bernard, 2003). As one teacher describes the situation, "You must keep your chops in shape. That means that you must be out there practicing the performing art, and you must also be in shape for your students in school. How can you teach what you cannot do?" (Wilson, p. 85)

The personal and professional challenges to a musician who is a music educator are so complex that Roberts (1993) suggests they will be a "career negotiation" for the individual (p. 106). "The constant responsibilities of scheduling, maintaining good health, and practicing to maintain themselves as teachers and musicians are issues that they [musicians who are music educators] must live with" (Wilson, 1998, p. 161). Most musicians become

music teachers because of their desire to be involved with music and to share their love of music with young people (Wilson). It is an irony that the subject that one shares because of one's affinity for and personal investment in it is inhibited and jeopardized by the act of sharing it.

After conducting in-depth interviews and observation sessions with eight participants, Wilson (1998) came to the following conclusion, "It is of interest that careers that can bring so much joy can also have an adverse reaction and induce pain" (p. 161). The loss of one's musician identity could mean personal distress and decreased professional efficacy (Bannister, 1981; Gergen, 1971; L'Roy, 1983; McCall & Simmons, 1966; Roberts, 1993; Woodford, 2002). If the maxim is true that "...you are yourself, in some sense, what you teach" (Diamond, 1991, p. 17), it lends itself to the question of how much and what a music teacher has to offer to his students if what he is as a person is in a state of confusion, discontentment, or personal loss. Teachers who are threatened by the prospect of change to their self-definition will develop situationally specific strategies to protect themselves from the need to alter the ways in which they perceive themselves (Nias, 1989b). Given this, the question remains: What strategies do music teachers use to reconcile the conflict that they experience between their musician and teacher identities? Accomplished musicians who have become teachers provide an excellent case study of learning about ways that teachers manage and cope with the tensions between personal and occupational identities.

### Justification and Purpose of the Study

This study builds on the extant literature that confirms that the vast majority of music teachers experience conflict between balancing the roles of musician and teacher and that these individuals experience a sense of loss or anxiety for the way in which their personal identities as musicians are jeopardized when they enter the teaching profession and begin to form an identity as a teacher (Bouij, 1998; Mark, 1998; Purves, 2002; Scott-Kassner & Kassner, 2001; Stephens, 1995; White, 1967; White, 1996; Wilson, 1998; Woodford, 2002). While there are numerous studies that verify the existence of this conflict, there are only a limited number of studies that describe teachers who have been able to resolve this conflict and find a place of mutuality between conflicting identities (Bernard, 2003; Cox, 1999; Wilson, 1998). To date no research has been conducted that specifically addresses the topic of the present study: exploring the negotiating and coping strategies that music teachers use to reconcile their musician and teacher identities. This study does not seek to determine whether music teachers face this conflict or not; rather, it is concerned with exploring teachers' experiences of struggle and negotiation and the strategies that they have used in order to find some degree of personal reconciliation with this issue. The value of the present study is the way in which it gathers together the negotiating strategies that are found in the extant literature (chapter four) and its value as the first qualitative research study that specifically addresses this question with Canadian secondary school instrumental teachers (grades 7 through 12). It is not the intention of this study

to generalize or to provide a definitive list of reconciling and negotiating strategies. It is the intention of this study to respectfully explore and contribute new experiences and interpreted meanings of these experiences to the extant literature, in order to add to the richness and depth of our understanding of a very significant and necessary question for music educators.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this collective case study is to describe how accomplished musicians who become secondary school music teachers negotiate and reconcile their musician identity with their teacher identity.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question of this study is:

How do accomplished musicians who become music teachers negotiate and reconcile their musician identity with a teacher identity?

The following related questions help to expand the depth of the central research question:

If the individual experiences conflict between his musician identity and his teacher identity, how is this conflict experienced?

How does being a teacher affect the salience and the prominence of his musician identity?

What strategies does the individual use in order to reach a compromise between the demands of his musician and teacher identities?

Does the individual feel resolved with the negotiated balance between his musician and teacher identities?

### Significance of the Problem

Here is perhaps the most intractable component of man's logistical problem. An individual's intrinsic resources – his time and energies – are insufficient to allow him to be and do all the things he dreams of being and doing. He must therefore differentially allocate these limited resources among his various aspirations. (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 236)

The teacher who is a musician faces the logistical problem of deciding where and how to allocate her limited resources of time and energy in order to function in an occupation that requires endless time and energy. The musician who is a teacher faces the inevitable reality of scraping together any fragments of leftover time in order to maintain some semblance of his former musical skills. It is difficult to imagine, considering the significance of the musician identity to the individual and the importance of the teacher identity to the teacher's occupational performance, that there is any kind of balance or reconciliatory strategy that does not require some degree of compromise and sacrifice for the individual. The commitment required to be a teacher has been described as "...the double act of choosing and of giving up other choices"

(Huberman, 1989, p. 34). For the music teacher who is an accomplished musician, the act of choosing to teach means having to give up portions of time and energy that, for an entire lifetime, have been routinely allocated and reserved for one's musical development. McCall & Simmons (1966) eloquently reveal a fitting axiom of life and living, "The logistical problem of choice and allocation lends a haunting quality to human life because, in the act of "choosing" we veto a host of other choices and in time discover that we have been imprisoned by our own prior decisions" (p. 234). This study seeks to explore the experiences of the musician who chooses to be a teacher and thereby, by necessity, must choose to give up some musical achievements and opportunities.

The social interactionist perspective provides further insight into why and how being a teacher presents difficulties for a musician. According to social interactionist theory about the self, our concept of self comes primarily through our perceptions of how others perceive us (Cooley, 1902; Gergen, 1971; Mead, 1934; McCall & Simmons, 1966). An individual tends to look to and receive in a more meaningful way the reactions of those one is closer to, or in association with, in everyday life. Social interactionists call these ones the *significant other*, *generalized other*, or *reference group* (Hoffer, 1992, pp. 720-721). These are persons or groups of persons who have the most significant influence on how an individual perceives himself. For a musician, the perception of others, particularly other musicians, is very important because these reactions either validate or invalidate his or her claim to be a musician. Roberts (2004) uses a



social interactionist's perspective to explain why an individual experiences difficulty maintaining a musician identity when he becomes a teacher:

After graduation as a music teacher, you move into a professional life in school where you will find little or no socially constructed support for your "musician-performer" self. There is considerable support for a "teacher self" in a school. While this may not come as a huge surprise, it comes with a big price for music teachers who are still tied to their identity as a performer. An identity is very hard and frustrating to support without the ratification of others. Identities sought but not supported can lead people into considerable personal distress. While the school system will acknowledge your musicianship (in fact it might even demand it to get the job in the first place), it is not equipped in any real sense to support it in the socially constructed ways that you have become used to. (p. 43)

Roberts (1993) points out that validation becomes a "career" for the music student and the future professional musician, because there is no single act that confirms the musician's claim to a musician identity on a "once-and-for-all" basis (p. 205). This is a fundamental understanding in regard to the maintenance of a musician identity: To call oneself a musician is dependent upon a virtual lifetime of displays of successful musical performances that are recognized by significant others in one's life. In other words, the musician identity is almost wholly reliant upon external validity by other people, and most importantly, by other musicians.

There exists an inevitable tension in one's attempts to make compromises between musician and teacher identities; these tensions pose a serious risk to the overall well-being of the person. Literature concerning the self and identity refers to the "psychic despair" that one experiences when one "...attempts to define oneself in terms of what one is not" (Britzman, 1992, p. 36). In her research of pre-service music education students, Prescesky (1997) found that the struggle that students experienced to solidify a professional identity had a profoundly negative impact on their self-confidence and sense of personal worth. Other research identifies feelings of loss, anxiety, and even anger when the fundamental aspects of one's identity are threatened (Nias, 1989b). Gergen (1971) points to the findings of Horney, a noted analyst from the 1950s, and her description of individuals who feel alienated from themselves because they recognize that their actions are detached or inconsistent with the fundamental conceptions they have about themselves. Horney describes this experience as self-alienation and describes it as a "...loss of feeling of self as an organic whole..." (as cited in Gergen, p. 87). Horney also explains that an even more powerful kind of self-alienation exists when an individual's behavior is inconsistent with his aspirations or what he wishes to become.

According to Bannister (1981), an individual that suffers from role-confusion is characterized by indecision as to what roles he or she assumes in the different facets of life and a general uncertainty as to the kind of person that he or she is. Bannister describes the consequences that ensue from an

individual's role-confusion and subsequent failure to develop an identity. These consequences include low self-esteem, personal insecurity, constant self-doubt, and self-questioning. Understandably, many researchers of teacher identity maintain that identity conflicts and role conflicts impede the professional efficacy and development of teachers (Bannister, 1981; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Greene, 1978; L'Roy, 1983; Prescesky, 1997; Woodford, 2002). Bulloughs, Knowles and Crow (1989) claim that, without a firmly established identity, teachers' professional growth is inhibited and this may be manifested by their inability to develop educationally sound approaches for stimulating student learning. Greene claims that when teachers "lack a sense of self" they become apathetic and uninterested in their teaching (p. 26). This confirms L'Roy's assertion that "...good professional role concepts lead to action whereas weak self-concepts produce confusion, disorientation and inaction" (p. 8). A strong sense of professional identity may function as a fundamental source of motivation to sustain and develop one's effectiveness as a teacher. Therefore, the inability to negotiate a satisfactory balance between teacher and musician identities may result in an underdeveloped teacher identity as well as a loss of one's musician identity.

There is a possibility that the quality of student learning may be affected and even suffer when a teacher lacks a fully developed identity as a teacher. A teacher's practice may suffer because the teacher's person is suffering, "...the kind of teacher one is depends on the kind of person one is" (Hamachek, 1999, p. 209). A teacher's self-perceptions are reflected in his or her ability to help

students perceive themselves and develop self-esteem. Hence, teachers with high levels of self-esteem, based on healthy and well-organized self-concepts, are able to be more flexible in their thinking, more enthusiastic about their own learning, and more effective in applying educational practices to the learning of their students (Zehm, 1999). Tusin (1999) explains, "From psychologically whole teachers would come self-actualized teaching and classroom environments conducive to growth of the holistic child" (p. 27). If the maxim is true that identity and practice are a mirror of each other (Sachs, 2001), it is understandable how and why the emotional and psychological stability of the teacher are essential to effective teaching.

Not to develop an identity as a teacher is detrimental to one's professional efficacy and most significantly, to one's students. To chisel away at one's musician identity or personal identity for the benefit or sake of occupational demands signifies a profound loss to the person. A loss to the person of the teacher signifies a loss to what the teacher is able to give to his or her students. In many ways, the problem of balancing musician and teacher identities is a no-win situation. The only solution is to find or negotiate a compromise that allows the individual to be content with a balance of both identities – a balance that supports both identities and contributes to the health and vibrancy of each.

Although this document repeatedly conceptualizes the individual's personal, musician, and teacher identities as being separate from each other, it should be remembered that these identities originate from one individual or self.

What affects one identity or aspect of an identity will invariably have an effect on the other identity or aspect of the identity. Musician and teacher identities are not mutually exclusive of each other: they are, in fact, mutually inclusive of each other. This interrelatedness of the self is the essence of the problem. "Life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the person that we are, of our sense of self" (Goodson and Walker, 1991, p. 144). New life experiences may cause changes to an aspect of the self, and this in turn, creates corresponding changes to other facets of the self. The significance of the problem is the way in which the musician and teacher identities and the associated role performances are affected by the need to compromise in order to accommodate both activities in one's life.

#### Description of the Document

Chapter one introduces the topic as a vehicle for concern and care for the teacher as both a professional and a person. The description of the research problem explains how occupational engulfment for teachers is compounded for individuals who are musicians who become music teachers. A musician needs to maintain his or her performance and technical skills and needs validation from others for this reputation. The time and effort that this requires competes with the heavy demands of a music-teaching career. While extant literature verifies that most music educators feel a conflict between their musician and teacher identities, there is no study to date that specifically examines the coping and negotiating strategies of individuals who experience

this identity conflict. The significance of the problem is that the loss of an individual's musician identity adversely affects the person and an underdeveloped teacher identity adversely affects the individual's professional efficacy.

The second chapter is a review of the literature pertaining to identity conflict of music education students and identity conflict of current music teachers. This literature shows that most music education students and teachers experience a conflict between their musician and teacher identities. This literature also suggests that, over time, teachers find ways to address and mediate this conflict, but often still feel a tension between their musician and teacher identities.

The third chapter presents the author's framework for conceptualizing self as a composite of multiple identities as based upon social psychology theories and social interactionist perspectives of the self. A framework for musician identity relies upon the literature concerning the life-span development of the musician. Teacher identity is conceptualized as an on-going state of "becoming" through "transformation" and "formation" processes to the person. These processes involve the personal selection and amalgamation of life experiences, occupational role expectations, and teaching experiences to form a teacher identity.

The fourth chapter is a compilation of strategies to negotiate between musician and teacher identities. This chapter describes strategies that are identified in extant literature and describes strategies that could be used as

based upon models of teacher life cycles, teacher identity literature, and social psychology literature. Included in this section is a discussion of the ways an individual may be affected if he or she is not able to successfully implement negotiating and reconciling strategies towards conflicting identities.

The fifth chapter describes the methodology applied to the present qualitative study. A multiple case study methodology provides an abundance of rich, thick descriptions to which the author applies hermeneutic tools of interpretation. The author frames her research within the context of her own difficulties with the issue of reconciling musician and teacher identities.

Chapter six is a description of the life experiences of the six participants that have contributed to their self-concepts and identities as musicians. This chapter describes conflict or tension that the participants experience between their musician and teacher identities as well as strategies of reconciliation and negotiation.

The seventh chapter is a summary and discussion of the strategies of reconciling and negotiating that were identified in the participant's responses. This chapter also compares and contrasts findings from this study with the literature that was reviewed in chapter two and the collection of reconciling strategies compiled in chapter four.

The eighth chapter is a summary of the research and findings in this study. This chapter presents factors that have limited the study, it recommends suggestions for further research, and it presents issues that are apparent when this study is placed in a societal context.

## Chapter Two – LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature pertaining to the topic can be divided into music education students, or those studying to be teachers in a pre-service teacher education program, and the literature based on research of those who have graduated from a music teacher service program and are currently practicing teachers.

### Music Education Students

In 1983, L'Roy completed her dissertation, "The Development of Occupational Identity in Undergraduate Music Education Majors." L'Roy sent out surveys to 273 undergraduate music education majors that were enrolled in North Texas State University in Denton, Texas during 1981 and 1982. Forty-three of these students dropped out of the music education program [L'Roy states that 53 dropped out of the music education program, however, the numbers in Table II on page 78 suggest a typographical error]. Of the remaining 230 students, 165 returned their surveys for L'Roy to use for her research data. Her findings are also based on 38 interviews with the volunteers from the same sample.

L'Roy (1983) found that there were several different motivations that students had for enrolling in a music education program. Several individuals wanted to be music teachers because of a successful school music experience or a motivating music teacher. Others decided that teaching music was a satisfactory compromise between a career that secured full-time employment



and being involved with music making. Still others were influenced to go into music education by "...their own realization that they might not be good enough to get into the performance program so they decided to go into music education until they could work their way into being a performance major" (p. 87). The group of students that viewed teaching as a compromise also admitted that they would have preferred to be performance majors in university rather than music education students.

Over 50% of the students that L'Roy (1983) surveyed ranked performing as their first choice of professional activity. Most students, when given a choice as to which label they would choose, preferred to be labeled a "performer" rather than a "music-educator" or "musician-music-education student. The number of students who preferred to be identified as a performer actually increased with each year of attendance in the teacher education program. L'Roy attempted to make an association between preferred label and role concept. The students who preferred the label of "performer" indicated that they viewed the role concepts of "musician-professional performer," "musician-music educator," and "music educator" as being different. Based on these findings, L'Roy concluded that most music education students develop or maintain a strong identity as a performer and do not develop an identity as a teacher during their studies in a university music education program.

L'Roy (1983) suggested that "...the possibility of role conflicts among these students seems likely since many of them will probably teach in the public schools" (p. 156). She expressed concern for the impact that this conflict

could have on music teachers and their professional practice and suggested that the lack of occupational socialization would manifest itself in a lack of drive or motivation towards teaching and predicted that a dichotomy may develop between the group of teachers who develop self-concepts as performers, whose primary goal is to be conductors, and the “general teachers” (p. 2) who teach the subject matter of music, but whose primary goal is to teach students.

Froehlich & L’Roy (1985) applied models of occupational socialization to L’Roy’s 1983 dissertation data in order to determine the levels of occupational identity of music education students. They found that the music students’ self-concept as educators was weak and undefined and, correspondingly, their commitment to occupational self-concepts, norms and values, and to work-specific skills and knowledge was also weak. Froehlich and L’Roy suggested that these individuals were not occupationally socialized and would experience insecurity and frustration in their first teaching positions.

Roberts (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2000, 2004) interviewed 108 students at various Canadian universities over a period of three years. He used the interview data and the data he obtained from participant observation of selected participants as the basis for his doctoral dissertation that he completed in 1990 (1990a) and numerous articles dating from 1990 to the present (1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2000, 2004). Roberts’s participants came from the University of Western Ontario, University of Alberta, and the University of British Columbia but he did not indicate how the participants were selected. He applied sociological theories of social interactionism and labeling to

generate his theories about the construction and maintenance of a musician identity.

Roberts (1993) observed that it was not uncommon to hear students say that they enrolled in the education degree as “back-up” or as a “security net” (p. 190) in the event that their true ambitions to be a professional musician failed. Roberts (1991a) found that when he asked music education students what they study, the vast majority identified themselves with the instrument that they played as opposed to identifying themselves as music education students. The majority of students that he interviewed perceived the completion of the music component of their programs and their entry into the teacher education component as a major threat to their musician identities (Roberts, 1993). Subsequently, he made the following conclusion, “Thus it can be summarized that music education students typically view themselves as either a ‘performer’ on some specific instrument to which there appears to be a strong affiliation as a player or another category of student who views himself as a general ‘musician’” (p. 23). Roberts’ research (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2000, 2004) confirmed L’Roy’s (1983) findings that most music education students develop or maintain strong identities as performers and do not develop identities as teachers during their studies in the music education program at university.

Roberts (1993) predicted that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for music education students to develop and maintain both musician and teacher identities. He explained that once music education students attain “some

measure of identity with the 'musician' role" and have "received even a modicum of social reward for the claim on this identity" they would continue to "...stake their aspirations on one identity" at "...whatever cost to other more suggestively 'realistic' goals" (p. 33).

Roberts's examination of the social world of music education students led to the development of his theory that musician identities, as a social construct, are greatly affected by the structure of the university program and the dynamics of the social environment (1990b). Most music education programs are structured in a way that requires students to complete music related courses in the university's music department or music school. This is particularly true for music education After Degree students who complete a Bachelor of Music degree in the music school before being admitted into the education program (Dust, 1995). Roberts (1990b) claims that the music school has a distinct social structure that awards a higher status to performers and to musicians in the general route than it does to music education students and this ultimately results in a "class society" (p. 63). Subsequently, a music education student spends considerable time and effort trying to disassociate himself from the stigma of being in music education in order to secure a reputation as either a performer or as a serious musician (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2000, 2004).

Status as a performer or as a general musician is gained "...in large measure, if not virtually exclusively, from 'musician' role acts" (1991a, p. 32) and "...many different successful musicking acts" (1993, p. 137). Successful

musical performances provide the music education student with the opportunity to receive legitimation and validation from others. To use performance as a means of legitimization is dependent upon a socially constructed conception about the nature of talent. According to Roberts, music education students reject a concept of talent as a form of potential or as a genetic given. Instead, they believe hard work is the final determinant of success and that "...they, too, have as much 'talent' as the performance majors" (1990b, p. 64, 1993, p. 137). An important feature of Roberts' account is the musician's need for continual validation of his identity as a musician. The need for legitimation, or "...of convincing others of the claim on this identity" (1991a, p. 33) is not systematized or defined by set boundaries and therefore, it is an on-going concern for the musician (1991b).

Prescesky (1997) investigated the personal life histories of four fourth-year music education students to understand how their life experiences shaped their perceptions of themselves as both musicians and educators. The participants were enrolled in the fourth year of a five-year Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education combined degrees program at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. Prescesky taught a full-year Professional Service Seminar to 12 students. Following the assignment of first term grades, Prescesky asked for volunteers to participate in her study. Out of the 12 students, eight volunteered to participate, and Prescesky selected four students to use in her study. Several forms of autobiographical writings from the participants were used as data for Prescesky's study.

Two main findings emerged from Prescesky's (1997) study. First, she determined that the participants' self-images were rooted in their childhood experiences. Second, she noted the dichotomized nature of the participant's self-perceptions. Two of the participants had stronger images of themselves as musicians and two of the participants had stronger images of themselves as educators. The individuals who had stronger images of themselves as musicians felt internal conflict and a sense of incompatibility with their attempts to balance their image of "self-as-musician" with their image of "self-as-educator." Prescesky explains, "The lack of compatibility rested in their belief that teaching, as an awesome, all-consuming task, would prevent them from recovering their authentic voice embodied within their instrument" (p. 165). The individuals who had a stronger image of themselves as teachers or educators did not feel a sense of disunity between their images of "self-as-musician" and "self-as-educator."

Through her analysis of the participants' autobiographical information, Prescesky (1997) determined that the students who had stronger musician self-images also had an affinity for solo musical performances and the students who had stronger educator self-images preferred musical experiences within ensemble situations. Based upon this finding, Prescesky suggested that music education students could be labeled as either "musician-as-performer" or "musician-as-participant." Prescesky provided several explanations as to why the musician self-images would be more dominant in performance-oriented individuals: (a) early positive musical experiences firmly entrenched their

musician self-images, (b) the external recognition of successful performances provided internal rewards of self affirmation, (c) innate ability and affinity for music led to increased personal gratification, and (d) musical accomplishments fulfilled a sense of self-worth for these individuals. Prescesky's research suggests that it is likely that an accomplished musician who becomes a music educator would experience some conflict between his musician and teacher identities. "Becoming a music educator is a complex and often confusing process. If I am to become a music educator, I must possess an image of self-as-musician as well as self-as-educator" (p. 150).

### *Summary*

Most music education students experience conflict in their teacher education programs because they bring to the program a pre-existing and well-established identity as a musician (Cox, 1997; L'Roy, 1983; Froehlich & L'Roy, 1985; Prescesky, 1997; Roberts, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 2004). The literature also suggests that the prevailing motive for entering into a music teacher education program is the desire to study and perform music (L'Roy, 1983; Roberts 1993). According to social interactionist theory about the self, our concept of self is derived primarily through our perception of how others perceive us (Cooley, 1902; Gergen, 1971; Mead, 1934; McCall & Simmons, 1966). The musician identity, in particular, is almost wholly reliant upon external validity by other musicians. Hence, to call oneself a musician is dependent upon a virtual lifetime of displays of successful musical

performances that are recognized by significant others in one's life. As the music education student progresses through his or her program, the opportunities to perform music for others and, therefore, validate his or her musician identity, become more limited. The conflict between wanting to be recognized as a musician through musical performances and needing to spend time and energy on pedagogical training and assignments is a salient and ongoing reality for the music education student and explains why "...the possibility for role conflict seems likely since many of them will probably teach in public schools" (L'Roy, 1983, p. 156).

### Music Teachers

While some researchers have focused on music education students, other researchers have sought to understand how practicing teachers reconcile their musician and teacher identities.

Clinton (1991) investigated the self-perceptions that fine arts teachers have of their roles as artists and teachers in the Oklahoma public schools. He asked a representative from each of the five state fine arts organizations to choose eight schools in the Oklahoma area (out of 32) that "typified quality arts education programs" (p. 62). Clinton pooled all of the names of the teachers from these schools that taught in a particular fine arts area and randomly selected 15 teachers from each group. He had 15 art, 15 drama, and 15 music teachers fill out his questionnaire.



Clinton found that the drama and music teachers were more committed to the role of the educator than the art teachers. Clinton stated that the "...most interesting findings may be that the music teachers as a whole identified more with education than anticipated" (p. 108). Many of the teachers had a part-time performance career in addition to their full-time teaching positions. These teachers indicated that even though a performance career was appealing to them, it was not their desire to pursue a full-time performance career. Many teachers felt they had the "best of both worlds" (p. 107) and perceived their performance and teacher skills as complementing each other. His participants explained that their personal artistic development was important to them primarily because it helped them to be better teachers.

White (1996) interviewed two secondary school music teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador whom he was familiar with as music education colleagues. White explained that the purpose of his research project "was to examine the change in role (the transition) from performer-musician to teacher-musician" (p. 10). He reported that both participants experienced difficulty making the transition from music student [performer-musician] to music educator [teacher-musician] based on their expressed desire and preference to perform rather than to teach. He claimed that the performance orientation of the participants was reflected in their performance approach to classroom teaching and criticized this approach as the antithesis of "aesthetic teaching" (p. 120). White's study contributes to our understanding of the education process and teaching lives of music teachers in Canada.

Wilson (1988) sought out eight individuals who maintained dual careers as both musicians and teachers. She ensured that all eight participants were extremely skilled and accomplished musicians and taught their music classes in such a way that it reflected a similar advanced level of musical ability. Wilson's main research questions were: (a) What is the experience of being both a music educator and a performing musician? (b) How do these educator/performers reconcile their two careers? and (c) What relationships do these participants see between their teaching and their performance of music? Wilson's research confirmed that individuals who teach music in the schools and maintain a performance career often face conflicts in self-identity. Her study is a meaningful contribution of poignant descriptions and thoughtful narratives about musician and teacher conflict.

Wilson's (1988) rich descriptions stem in part from her thorough research methods: she observed the participants teaching, observed their musical performances, and conducted several interviews that resulted in thoughtful and pertinent discussions. Wilson presents meaningful connections between the different types of data in the form of three metathemes. In her first metatheme, Wilson asserts that professional or accomplished musicians face conflicts in self-identity when they become teachers.

It is of interest that careers that can bring so much joy can also have an adverse reaction and induce pain. The constant responsibilities of scheduling, maintaining good health, and practicing to maintain

themselves as teachers and musicians are issues that they must live with. (p. 161)

Wilson's (1998) second metatheme describes how "...music educators/performing musicians' teaching practices are closely related to the practices they use to perfect their art form" (p. 161). She provides examples of the ways in which her participants had found a way to align or mold together their musician life with their teaching life and, thereby, reach a sense of compatibility between being a teacher and being a musician. Wilson includes descriptions of the similarities that the participants perceived between their professional performances and teaching strategies and their expressions of how this gave them a sense of growth and continuity between the two facets of their lives.

Wilson's (1998) third metatheme is an invitation to school administrators. She noted that the school administrators associated with her study viewed the participants solely as teachers and not as musicians. Wilson proposes that recognition from school administrators for one's musician status and accomplishments is necessary to help sustain and fortify the individual in view of the intense demands of teaching and the salient nature of his or her musician identity. Hence, she invites school administrators and other teachers in the schools to view music teachers as "artists-in-residence" (p. 167).

Of all the extant literature on this topic, Wilson's (1988) study has the most similarity to the present study. The purpose of Wilson's study was to explore the overall experiences of a dual career musician-teacher. Although

the present study is concerned with the same experience, it has a more specific focus: the experience of conflict and the strategies that the teacher uses in order to function effectively as both a musician and a teacher. There are several other differences between Wilson's dissertation and the present study. The criteria Wilson established for her participants were more limited: The individuals were required to have at least five years of teaching experience and were required to work concurrently as performing musicians and as full-time teachers. The present study defines "accomplished musician" as someone who holds performance degrees from a university, who has achieved the highest conservatory grades possible on his or her instrument, or someone who currently participates in professional performance experiences. Also, the present study requires that the individual have a minimum of two years of teaching experience. It is interesting to note that Wilson had considerable difficulty in finding six to eight individuals in the New York area who were able to satisfy her criteria. In fact, it was so difficult to find eight such individuals that she found it necessary to expand her search to include elementary school teachers. This inclusion of elementary school teachers represents a significant difference between Wilson's study and the present study. The present study is limited to secondary school teachers (grades 7 through 12).

Mark (1998) conducted a study of 200 German high school music teachers in an article entitled, "The Music Teacher's Dilemma – Musician or Teacher?" Mark does not indicate in his article the criteria for selecting teachers to participate in his study. His study is an analysis of the value and

appropriateness of music education programs in Germany in relation to the professional needs of music educators and the satisfaction of music teachers in their professions. Mark points out that as the name “music teacher” suggests, the education program for a music teacher is an interdisciplinary one. Mark describes the “dilemma of music teacher training” as the “...hybrid character of training programs which represent a more or less successful cross between the developing of musical abilities, pedagogical-didactic experience and musicological knowledge” (p. 4). As such, the situation that music teachers face, as to what degree one is a musician and to what degree one is a teacher, is a dilemma that must also be addressed by the institutions that educate music teachers.

One of the most salient findings in Mark’s study was the identification of the discrepancy that exists between the ideals of the student and the realities of the teacher. Mark (1998) discovered that 60% of the respondents indicated that their primary motive for enrolling in the music education program was to study music (p. 13). His respondents expressed their opinion that the structure of music education programs caters more to performance ideals and provides a greater percentage of music courses than pedagogy courses. However, when these students became teachers they acknowledged that the “...high artistic competence acquired played a minor role in the professional practice – an obvious incongruity between training and practical school requirements” (p. 10). In response to the conditions that music educators face, two of his respondents offered the following advice:

If the music teacher wants to be able to cope with the school requirements, he or she should feel a vocation for teaching rather than for the musician....The musician as teacher is generally too idealistic and this kind of artistic idealism prevents the teacher from fulfilling all of his or her necessary functions in the school, and ultimately leads to personal frustration. (Mark, 1998, pp. 13-14)

The study also identified a common strategy that is used by German high school teachers to maintain their satisfaction as musicians and teachers. Many explained how their contentment and satisfaction with teaching was contingent on having part-time jobs as musicians in order to realize their “musical ambitions” (Mark, 1998, p. 17). The part-time musician jobs provided them with additional income and a “...certain degree of artistic challenge which the main job does not offer.” Mark’s study suggests that it is likely that music teachers will feel discontented if they do not find some form of musical outlet outside of the classroom teaching experience.

Bouij (1998) conducted a longitudinal research project involving interviews and questionnaires by 169 music education students from six Swedish universities and then later by the same respondents when they were working as qualified music teachers. Bouij does not indicate how he selected his participants. He was interested in the changes or adjustments that occur to an individual’s musician identity when he or she makes the transition from being a music education student to being a teacher. Bouij’s data confirmed that individuals experienced identity conflicts as they progressed from student to

teacher roles. The most common response from participants related to how the "...individual experiences an inadequate ability to sustain the role-identity as a performer built during the teacher training period. This results in a situation where he has to become only a teacher" (p. 27).

The literature prior to 1998 presents a dichotomized view of the way that teachers feel about themselves in terms of being either a musician or a teacher (L'Roy, 1983; Prescesky, 1997; Roberts 1990b; 1991b). Bouij's (1998) findings challenge this dichotomization and suggest that there are many variations in the level of commitment that individuals can have to their role identities as teachers and, therefore, there are great variations in the degree of conflict that they may experience. Bouij theorized that "there are different ways to be a teacher" (p. 29) and there are many different ways to view oneself as a musician.

Bouij (1998) created a conceptual model that describes the changes that occur to one's role identity when he or she becomes a teacher and the infinite variety of teacher and musician role identities that are possible. According to Bouij's model, each individual has a role-identity structure that is made up of many different role identities. Role-identities arrange themselves in a hierarchical structure based on the saliency of the role. Bouij suggests that an individual struggles to legitimize the most important role-identities and can "let go" (p. 25) of minor role-identities in order to keep more salient role identities. Bouij also attempts to categorize role identities by situating them in a model of role-identities that has a horizontal and a vertical axis. The horizontal axis

represents the individual's choice between a musician or teacher orientation towards his or her teaching. The vertical axis represents the individual's perception of how he relates to and identifies himself with music. The top of the axis represents an individual who uses music to reach out to others and the bottom of the axis represents an individual who has a more insular or self-oriented connection with music. These variables share some similarity with Presecky's (1997) categorization of musicians: musician-performers as more interested in solo activities and musician-participants as more interested in group activities. Bouij's model suggests that the conflict between a musician identity and a teacher identity is related to one's fundamental philosophy about music in relation to life and the act of living.

Cox (1999) studied the "realities of the working lives" (p. 37) of a group of secondary school music teachers. The realization that the biggest staff turnover and the greatest number of vacancies were occurring in the subject area of music in the secondary schools in the United Kingdom was one of Cox's motivations for conducting the study. Cox conducted semi-structured interviews with ten experienced secondary school music teachers who also had experience as a "Supervising Teacher" of student teachers in association with the University of Reading.

The majority had been teaching between 10 and 25 years and were heads of department. The schools were all state-run, and represented a mixture of mixed and single sex, selective and comprehensive schools.



All were located in urban areas within the relatively affluent Home Counties of southern England. (p. 38)

Cox found that the teachers in his study did not have a desire to be professional musicians. Many of these teachers described the music making that occurs in the school with their students as being more meaningful to them than pursuing their own musical goals. For this reason, Cox concluded that the music teachers in his study had a “single-minded commitment to the institution” and did not exhibit a “separation between the institutional and personal subject interests” (p. 41). However, many of these individuals, who had been teaching for one or two decades, still carried with them a fundamental struggle between their own development as musicians and their role as teachers. The following comments exemplify the tension and the frustration that these individuals felt:

It's not liked at school...it's like I'm very sorry but I have to play my violin...it's ridiculous I am apologizing for my profession.

Education is an all-consuming, at times unrewarding, profession. You have to delicately balance your time, and make extreme sacrifices in order to sometimes progress your own ability. (p. 41)

These comments caused Cox to conclude that a music teachers' level of commitment to music and teacher are tested throughout his or her career.

Graham Welch from the London Institute of Education, David Hargreaves from the University of Surrey Roehampton, along with Ross Purves and Dr. Nigel Marshall created the Teacher Identities in Music Education (TIME) research project (Purves, 2002; Roehampton University, website, June

2004). The United Kingdom Government Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded the project in 2002. One of the central purposes of the project was to investigate how the attitudes and identities of prospective secondary school music teachers develop during the transition from music student or musician through postgraduate teacher education and into their first teaching assignment. Similar to Cox's (1999) study, the impetus for this project was the growing shortage of music education students and music teachers in the United Kingdom. The TIME project was designed to determine whether conflicts between an individual's perceptions of one's self as a musician and as a teacher are related to the problem of teacher recruitment. The most salient finding of this research project to date is that the music education students' perceptions of what skills they needed to teach music changed when they started teaching. These individuals came to realize that effective communication and interpersonal skills were more useful to them than musical performance skills.

Bernard (2004) conducted a study of elementary general music teachers' expressions of their identities as musician teachers. Bernard had six participants that she interviewed and observed teaching in their music classes for a period of 12 weeks. She asked music supervisors from the school districts throughout the eastern and central Massachusetts area to provide a list of elementary school general music teachers who were also active, professional musicians. There were no other criteria for the population sample. Bernard contacted six people on the list who had the greatest number of

recommendations. Bernard's (2004a) most salient finding was "music making" was central to the way that the participants thought of themselves and constructed their identities as musicians and teachers. She explains how her participants "...all spoke of music as deeply meaningful and intensely personal" (p. 43) and they "...all grounded their discussions of what music means to them in their experiences of performing music" (p. 40).

### *Summary*

The musician and teacher identity literature clearly establishes that most teachers experience conflict or tension between their musician and teacher identities (Bouij, 1998; Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Mark, 1998; Roehampton University website, June 2004; White, 1996; Wilson, 1998). These studies also suggest that this issue is cross-cultural. There is great diversity in the way music teachers experience this tension or conflict. For many, the reality of teaching is different from what they had expected. Many found that teaching music was not as musically gratifying as they thought it was going to be (Mark, 1998; Roehampton University, website, June 2004). The literature also makes it apparent that teaching experiences have a profound and changing effect on the individual. Some literature suggests that the more experienced a teacher is the more likely he or she will develop strategies to begin to resolve identity conflict and, subsequently, that conflict diminishes in intensity for the individual (Bernard, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Kerchner, 2002; Mark, 1998; Wilson, 1998). Most studies indicate that even after individuals

implement reconciling strategies in their lives, they still experience some degree of tension (Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Mark, 1998; Wilson, 1998). The present study turns its attention to those individuals who have found some form of reconciliation to this conflict and attempts to identify the strategies that they have implemented in their lives.

## Chapter Three - IDENTITY FRAMEWORKS

### Self and Identity

Terms such as 'self-concept,' 'identity,' 'self-esteem,' 'the ideal self' have multiplied in educational writings, they are, like the notion of the 'self' itself, hypothetical constructs which do not refer to anything tangible or directly observable. Any choice of explanatory system for them is therefore to some extent arbitrary. (Nias, 1989b, p. 161)

Thus far, this study has identified three facets of the self: (a) the personal identity of an individual, also described as the core of the person, the person, or the person of the teacher; (b) the musician identity; and (c) the teacher identity. The following chapter will explain how these "hypothetical constructs" are rooted in or have been developed from social psychological and social interactionist theories of the self and identity, studies pertaining to the life span development of musicians, and literature that describes the process of teacher identity formation.

No one theory of the self and identity has been able to sufficiently incorporate and explain all facets of humanness: therefore, no one theory can make the claim that it is the definitive model. The strength of a theory related to the self and identity is its ability to describe a particular facet of the individual in relation to the topic that is being discussed. The theoretical frameworks that are being used and have been developed for this study are conceptual guides to focus the study with the intent of gaining insight into one situationally specific

aspect of the self. The researcher acknowledges that there are many conceptual frameworks that one could use to study this topic and each would yield valuable insights.

In this research study, the self is conceptualized as a singular entity. The self is the all-encompassing and encapsulating being of the person. This study draws on Erikson's definition of the self as the totality of the person, body, and mind together (Graafsma, 1994; Rangell, 1994) and McCall and Simmon's (1966) definition of the self as the actual person. The self is both the process and the product of the complex and dynamic relationship between the individual's reflexivity, her behavior, and her interactions with others (Gergen, 1971; Grotevant, 1994). The self is the sum and the essence of the person, incorporating all internal structures and processes and the ways in which these facets are made manifest by behavior (Grotevant, Bosma, de Levita & Graafsma, 1994).

The self is made up of multiple identities, which, in turn, are made up of macro-amalgamations of self-concepts (Gergen, 1971). Identities are psychological constructs that categorize self-concepts and provide a sense of continuity and organization to the self (Grotevant, 1994; McCall & Simmons, 1966). A self-concept is a person's idealized view or a mental representation of himself (McCall & Simmons). Self-concepts, as mental images of the self, can include particularized views of the self, such as self-image, self-esteem, and images of an ideal self (Gergen). "Self-concept refers to the perceptions, interpretations and evaluations that an individual has about the self, and his or

her talents and abilities” (Feldhusen, as cited in Burland & Davidson, 2002, p. 133).

Self-concepts are formed through the individual's process of reflexivity. Mead (1934) describes reflexivity as the individual's internal mental mechanism that processes both the external influences of the other and the personal aspects of the individual. Reflexivity of the self creates, organizes, and refines concepts of the self and it acts as a feedback mechanism and a regulator of the individual's behavior. Reflexivity is a fundamental process of the self that serves several essential functions. Reflexivity enables an individual to attach meanings to the reactions that others have towards one's self and to one's behavior. Reflexivity informs the self of newly created meanings that in turn, enables the individual to respond to these meanings through appropriate behavior. Reflexivity is the basis of Cooley's (1902) concept of the *looking-glass self*. Cooley directs attention to the powerful emotional influence that interaction with others has upon one's developing sense of self. Looking-glass self refers to the sense of self that one gains by imagining what others are thinking about you. Reflexivity is also responsible for processing societal role expectations, reactions of significant others, perceived judgments of significant others, past and present experiences, and future expectations.

The mental sorting and internal conversation of the self results in a structural product: the organization of self-concepts. The syntheses of similar and consistent self-concepts amalgamate to create identities. Identities are in a constant state of formation because the factors they consist of, namely, self-

concepts and the self-reflexive reactions to others, are also in a constant state of reaction, formation, and adaptation. These factors affect the *salience* of the identity: the degree of stability and constancy of the identity and the degree to which the individual is able to maintain the identity (McCall & Simmons, 1966).

Although an identity is a personal construct, it is formed by means of an interactional process between the individual and the social world. The inherent constraints and limitations from this interaction require a process of *negotiation*. McCall and Simmons (1966) explain negotiation as a “continual” process of “legitimation” (p. 94) and validation of an individual’s role-identity. The behavior associated with particular role-identities is called *role performance*. An individual’s role performance, or role-related behavior, is legitimated through *role support*: expressed confirmation to the individual from others in the social world. (McCall & Simmons). If an identity has been threatened by a lack of role support for a particular role performance the individual experiences negative emotional responses and a sense of uncertainty about his or her identity (Stets, 2003).

The conceptualization of identity that is used in this research also relies upon Marsh and Shavelson’s (1985) model that describes identities as multiple, multifaceted, and organized in a hierarchical structure. The multiple identity hierarchy is a fluid structure that responds to the regulating and processing by the individual’s reflexive consciousness. The individual’s reflexivity negotiates the continuous tension that exists between identities that are stable and significant with identities that are less stable and less significant (Burke, 2003;



Gergen, 1971; McCall & Simmons, 1966). McCall and Simmons suggest that multiple identities can experience conflict with each other: "...often a greater or lesser degree of conflict, even incompatibility, among the separate role-identities of a single individual" (p. 76). Identities are organized and situated in one's identity hierarchy according to their *prominence*. The prominence of an identity depends on the degree to which it receives support from others for the identity, the degree to which the individual is committed to the identity, and the amount of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that the individual receives from the identity. Hence, the stability or conflict associated with identities occurs at two levels: the stability or instability of the identity itself [salience], and the stability or instability of the identity as it exists in a hierarchical relationship with other identities [prominence] (Stets, 2003). It is the nature of this conflict and the individual's internal and behavioral reactions to this conflict that are the focus of the present study.

### Musician Identity

Because no standard or recognized model of musician identity exists, the present study creates a conceptualization of musician identity based on the framework of self-concept and identity formation outlined in this chapter and the large corpus of literature pertaining to the life-span development of musicians. This model relies heavily upon Gergen's (1971) concept of identity construction as both a process and a structure.

The talented individuals demonstrated in compelling fashion that the process of unusually successful learning is not all of one kind; rather, it must be understood in relation to the amount of experience the learner has with some subject matter, the meaning of the subject matter for the learner, and the purposes the learning might serve. (Ericsson, Tesch-Romer & Krampe, 1990, p. 157)

The musician's interpretation of his or her life-time of music-related experiences becomes the basis for one's personal meanings and one's musician self-concepts. An individual's musician self-concepts coalesce into a structure, a musician identity, after which self-reflexivity affects the salience and hierarchical placement of this identity in relation to the individual's other identities.

#### *Process of Self-Concept Formation - Music Experiences and Interactions*

Gergen (1971) outlines five facets of reflexivity that contribute to the formation of one's specialized conceptions of self: (a) labeling one's dominant behavior patterns, (b) accepting appraisals received from others, (c) making social comparisons of one's self in relation to others, (d) selectively choosing information from the environment and from one's memory that confirms one's major aspirations, and (e) engaging in role playing (p. 64). These facets of reflexivity, either directly or indirectly, require interaction with other people. Interactions and the ensuing experiences provide the individual with feedback to reflect upon, which in turn, is interpreted and internalized as personal

meanings. This model of self-concept formation has seminal roots in Mead's (1934) concept of the self as being created by internal interpreted meanings acquired from social interaction. A fundamental aspect of the musician identity is the dependency and need for experiences and interactions with other people.

The corpus of literature concerning the life development of musicians challenges the long-held assumption that musical talent is largely the product of innate ability (Sosniak, 1990). Studies of accomplished professional musicians reveal that, "For every successful child there is a route towards competence: in none of the individuals we studied have musical accomplishments emerged from nowhere, and in every case there is a pattern involving continuity and non-arbitrary progression" (Howe & Sloboda, 1991, p. 51). Sosniak describes being a musician as a "...process of growing into a person of extraordinary talent" (p. 162). This process of growth and development requires a great deal of resolute focus, the cultivation of specific aptitudes and attitudes, on-going musical exertion, and the deliberate and methodical development of musical skills over the entire life-span of the individual. The development of the person's talent is so intense and strenuous that it may extract a "heavy toll from the emotional life of the individual" (Babikian, 1985, p. 146).

Sosniak (1990) divides the development of the musician into three distinct phases. In the first phase, the individual is exposed to many activities related to music and each musical activity requires constant support and reinforcement. The learning during this stage is essentially informal and this allows the student to explore and develop interest in music in a playful and fun

way. The goal of this stage is to introduce the student to music and motivate the individual to continue to study music. At this point of development for the musician, the praise and encouragement of parents and teachers are essential to the student's motivation to continue his or her studies. In Sosniak's second phase of musician development, the learning becomes more serious and the student is expected to increase his or her practice time in order to develop the technical skills necessary to successfully negotiate more demanding and advanced repertoire. The student develops a genuine respect for his or her teacher and the student's parents continue to play a key role in providing emotional support. The increase in required practice time and seriousness about music forces the student to sacrifice other activities in his or her life. The third phase of development for the musician is the most difficult phase to achieve and sustain. In this stage, the individual is required to essentially devote himself full time to music in order to master the mature and complex details and nuances of the music and progress to a professional level of playing.

Sloboda's (1990) model confirms that the development of a musician is a methodical and deliberate process. Sloboda outlines six conditions that he determines are necessary for an individual to sustain his or her growth in music: (a) casual and frequent exposure to the musical forms of the culture from an early age, (b) opportunity to explore a musical medium freely over an extended period of time, (c) opportunity to experience intense positive emotional or aesthetic states in response to music at an early age, (d) absence

of threat or anxiety arising from involvement in music, (e) availability of resources to facilitate extended engagement with music (including time, economic support, social support), and f) intrinsic motivation for musical activity. Sloboda, Davidson, Howe and Moore (1996) suggest several specific factors that are necessary to support the development of a musician: (a) parental support and constant sympathetic peer group with shared interests, (b) many consecutive years of formal music instruction, (c) on-going social reinforcement from a music teacher, and (d) thousands of hours of practice that eventually lead to the development of intrinsic motivation.

Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993) were able to identify the most significant factor that explained why professional musicians play better than amateur or novice musicians. Over the life-span of the individual, professional musicians had practiced more than amateur musicians. Exposure to music is not sufficient to cause an individual's musical skills to increase. Methodical and thoughtful practice is the primary way to attain accomplished or expert levels of musical performance. This finding is verified by other studies that confirm that the most important variable that determines acquired skill is the cumulative amount of practice (Ericsson, Tesch-Romer & Krampe, 1990). By the time a "good musician" is 18 years old, he has practiced approximately 5,300 hours, and correspondingly, the "best musician" (Ericsson et al., 1990, p. 124) has practiced an average of approximately 7,400 hours. The thousands of hours of practicing music become the individual's dominant and normative behavior. Hence, the label that is naturally applied to this behavior is that of

musician. Understandably, practicing music becomes the most fundamental basis of the musician's self-concepts and, for the individual, practicing is an integral part of what it means to be a musician.

The age at which the individual begins to learn music also affects the ability and development of the musician. Ericsson et al. (1993) explain, "We have shown that expert performance is acquired slowly over a long time as a result of practice and that the highest levels of performance and achievement appear to require at least around ten years of intense prior preparation" (p. 366). Sosniak (1990) found that accomplished pianists had studied and practiced for an average of 17 years before they achieved public recognition. The majority of professional and accomplished musicians begin formal training and a regular regime of practicing very early in their lives and, subsequently, are able to attain significantly higher levels of performance when they are older (Ericsson et al., 1993; Ericsson et al., 1990).

The "...interdependent and self-sustaining system of mutual encouragement and support that was created for the individuals by parents, teachers, and other adults with whom the individuals had sustained, personal contact" (Sosniak, 1990, p. 159) is another factor that contributes significantly to the development of the musician and to the formation of his or her musician self-concepts. Several studies have shown that environmental factors are more influential on the growth of the musician than genetic factors (Kemp, 2000). The network of people that value and support the efforts and abilities of the musician are vital to his or her sustenance and musical progress. Howe and

Sloboda (1991) found that only 3 of the 42 expert musicians they interviewed did not need parental encouragement to reach significant levels of success in music. Burland and Davidson (2002) determined that "...the influence of others, experiences with other people (teachers, parents and peers) and the music education establishments clearly shape the musician and his or her self-concept in an ongoing manner" (p. 136). Musician development is not an autonomous process; rather, it parallels human development in its need for sustenance, support, and stimulation at pivotal points of maturity.

These models and studies demonstrate that development as a musician is a complex process that requires an extensive period of time and relies upon the dedication of the individual and a committed support network of caring and skilled teachers and parents. The formation of a musician is not a fortuitous event - it is a deliberate and arduous process of development that requires much technical and emotional nurturing by significant others and a tremendous amount of sustained effort by the individual.

Based on this research, an accomplished musician, or one who has attained high levels of recognition and is able to function as a professional musician, is likely an individual who started music instruction early in her life, has spent thousands of hours practicing on her instrument, and has had and continues to have support and encouragement from a network of people that value and recognize his or her musical success. This explains why the development of a musician is called a process of growth (Sosniak, 1990). Each practice session, each music lesson, each recital performance, each feeling of

joy, frustration, and failure contributes to the individual's collection of personal meanings about himself as a musician. In turn, these meanings become musician self-concepts and are a fundamental part of the person. For a musician, these concepts are woven into the very fabric of who she perceives herself to be and how she presents herself to the world. Often a musician cannot envision life without music because music is who he is - the process of becoming and being a musician becomes the dominant structure of his life.

### *Structure of Identity Formation*

Ericsson et al. (1990) describe the third phase of musical development as the time when music comes to have great personal value to the individual and, therefore, the motivation to learn music becomes largely intrinsic. According to Sosniak's (1990) model of musical development, the third phase constitutes the most difficult and most uncertain time in the musician's life, "It requires a commitment of unprecedented proportion; virtually all of one's time, emotional energy and other resources had to be invested in field specific activity" (p. 156). This phase of musical development is so intensely personal and powerful that it not only catapults the musician to an exceptional level of musical skill and ability, it also produces significant and fundamental changes to the way the individual understands herself and interacts with others. Sosniak explains,

These were transformations of the individual, of the substance of what was being learned, and of the manner in which individuals engaged with



teachers and field-specific content. Students progressively adopted different views of who they were, of what their field of expertise was about, and of how the field fitted into their lives. (p. 157)

The final stage or phase of becoming a musician results in a finished structure or product: the development into a musician with a well-established musician identity.

“The training of the performing artist is a most demanding one. It is one of the few professions where training starts early in life, that is latency age, and stays with the individual throughout his professional life” (Babikian, 1985, p. 139). Musical training and progress is a life-long commitment to practicing, studying with master teachers, and public performances. Ericsson et al. (1990) explain how motivation in the later years of development is a salient issue because practicing is not a “...natural and inevitable consequence of early exposure and interest in the domain” (p. 128). This explains why the literature pertaining to musician life-span development repeatedly confirms that a high level of motivation is the primary factor that determines whether or not an individual is able to sustain his or her interest and intensity in music and progress to an expert level of performance (Burland & Davidson, 2002; Davidson, 2002; Prescesky, 1997; Sloboda, 1990).

*Salience, prominence, and motivation.*

Individuals who have a high level of motivation to continue a life as a musician have progressed past the point of self-concept formation. These

individuals have amalgamated the many self-concepts they have developed from a lifetime of music-related experiences and interactions into a musician identity. The nature of and organization of one's musician self-concepts also affects the identity's salience and its hierarchical relationship with other identities. The more salient the musician identity is and the higher it ranks in relation to other identities in the individual's identity hierarchy the more motivation the musician will have to continue in music.

Gergen (1971) identifies and describes several factors that affect the salience and prominence of one's identity structure.

1. Multiple self-concepts are needed to provide a firm basis for an identity. Individuals carry many different ideas about their relationship with music. For example, many musicians view music as being a vehicle to personal potential and development (Kingsbury, 1988; Persson, 2000). The research of Burland and Davidson (2002) confirms that the most salient musician self-concepts in the identities of musicians were the concepts associated with receiving recognition from others for participating in musician-role acts.

2. Self-concepts require self-consistency in order to coalesce into a musician identity. Identities that contain inconsistent self-concepts result in discrepancies in the way one views the self from one situation to the next. Inconsistent self-concepts can cause one to feel fragmented or disconnected as a person (Gergen, 1971). Accomplished musicians, who are extremely focused on musician activities, have self-concepts that are highly consistent

with one another. “Professional performers or composers are likely to be so highly involved that they see most aspects of their lives in relation to music” (Hargreaves, Miell & Macdonald, 2002, p. 12). Kemp (2000) explains, “For these people, life may appear to offer one principal thing – recognition as a gifted performer – and that may lie at the end of a long precarious period of single-minded effort into which everything is invested” (p. 107).

3. The functional value of music to the musician is related to the degree of gratification that he or she receives from music. For many musicians, the challenge, the sense of accomplishment, and the sense of goal achievement are important sources of gratification. Kemp (2000) found that the greatest source of personal fulfillment came from the public recognition that the musician receives from performances.

4. Self-concepts are valued for the frequency with which they are used. The issue of skill maintenance is a critical and on-going issue for a musician: a musician must practice regularly in order to maintain his or her skills and in order to prepare for performances. Hence, musicians are constantly using, reinforcing, and solidifying the concepts they have developed about themselves as musicians.

5. The individual uses musician self-concepts to evaluate one’s self and uses these evaluations as a source of self-esteem. A concept that is common among many musicians is that of being special and different (Kingsbury, 1988; Nagel, 1988). Musical achievement and competence provide the musician with social acceptance and an increased sense of self-worth and

self-esteem (Roberts, 1993). The individual's musician identity is so closely connected to his sense of self-worth that he may only feel accepting of himself through successful musical achievements and demonstrations (Babikian, 1985; Kemp, 2000).

6. Self-concepts are judged according to the positive or negative emotional meanings that they have upon the individual. In the same way that competent musical performances increase the individual's sense of self-worth and self-esteem, poor musical performances can decrease the individual's sense of personal worth. The desire to avoid negative emotional meanings creates a powerful incentive to practice and prepare for public performances. Positive emotional meanings create experiences of joy and accomplishment (Greenberg, 1970). These positive emotional meanings are a source of motivation for the musician to continue studying and practicing music. "Students built a reservoir of good feeling about their talent fields and their abilities, which helped them learn the patience and persistence, that apparently are prerequisites of unusually successful achievement" (Sosniak, 1990, p. 162).

7. The amount of training that the individual has in music also affects the salience of the identity. As discussed in the previous section, the training process of the musician is formidable and life-long (Babikian, 1985).

Application of the literature pertaining to musician life-development to Gergen's (1971) model of identity structure suggests that an accomplished musician's identity will be extremely salient and that this identity will be positioned prominently in relation to his or her other identities. Because of the

identity's increased salience and prominence, it becomes a source of emotional and psychological stability, which, in turn, becomes a powerful force of motivation to continue to maintain and nurture the identity. Hence, the musician will be highly motivated to continue the activities and practices that confirm his identity and life involvement as a musician.

*Legitimation and validation.*

Self-concepts are personally constructed and idealized mental conceptions of one's self and are subject to perceptual and interpretive inaccuracies. Hence, "One of man's most distinctive motives is the compelling and perpetual drive to acquire support for his idealized conceptions of himself" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 75). Seeking support and legitimation from others is a way for the individual to validate the accuracy of his or her self-concepts. Self-doubt is also caused by our perception that the degree or amount of support that we receive from others rarely matches what we expect to receive. The discrepancy between the reactions of others and our self-expectations creates a "...tension between the fostered reality of one's identity and discrepant impressions garnered from the external world" (p. 74). The quest to seek recognition for our self-concepts and identities is a human need and an on-going challenge that varies in intensity depending upon the nature of the self-concepts and the nature of the individual.

Despite the importance of the musician identity to the musician, it is by nature, fragile and requires much support and validation to be maintained.

Stone (as cited in Roberts, 1993) explains:

One's identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces. It is in the coincidence of placements and announcements that identity becomes a meaning of the self. (p. 137)

Roberts (1993) explains how being a musician and being labeled as such may be more socially complicated than being labeled a murderer. In the case of a murderer, "...a single act of murder can result in a once-and-for-all successful societal labeling" (p. 137). This is in contrast to a musician where "...past performances are an uncertain indicator of future capabilities" because role support from significant others is "unstable and decays as a function of time" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 74). Hence, the musician feels the need to constantly maintain and prove his reputation as a musician. Lamont (2002) explains that the "...conventional defining feature of a musician centers on performance skills" (p. 45). The musician seeks approval of others by regular studying, practicing, and demonstrating these skills through public performance (Roberts, 1993). Attaining and maintaining the label of "musician" by others is a fundamental aspect of being a musician.

### *Summary*

Gergen's (1971) theory of identity formation describes how life experiences form the basis of one's musician self-concepts, how these musician self-concepts coalesce into a musician identity, and how the structure of this identity and its relationship with other identities creates intrinsic motivation to maintain the identity. The individual also relies upon the approval and validation of others to support his musician self-concepts and musician identity. A musician is willing to work very hard and make immense and innumerable sacrifices in his life in order to satisfy the fierce need and desire to nourish and sustain his musician identity. Being a musician is more than what he does with his life, it constitutes who he is and therefore, is related to his well-being, his joy, and his sustenance as a person.

### Teacher Identity

#### *"Becoming"*

Although educational scholars describe teacher identity in many different ways, the literature finds agreement in its conceptualization of teacher identity as being a process of amalgamating diverse and even contradictory elements that culminate into a coherent self-image (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Britzman, 1991; Knowles, 1992; Prescesky, 1997; Sachs, 2001). Writers focus on different elements of this diversity, but share a goal of finding a place of resolution between the occupation and the person. The goal is to create a

workable teacher identity that supports the teacher's life and history with a sense of compatibility and consistency.

There is a corpus of educational literature that describes the socialization of a teacher as a profound process of formulation or of "becoming" (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Bullough & Knowles, 1991; Hamachek, 1999; McLean, 1999; Sachs, 2001; Tusin, 1999). The notion of "becoming" implies a progression of growth that lacks a prescriptive formula and a definitive end point. According to this literature, learning to be a teacher is more profound and complex than adopting or agreeing to a set of established values, knowledge, and skills and refutes the idea of making a teacher by "adding on" (McLean, p. 59) certain technical skills and bits of knowledge. Britzman (1991) suggests, "...learning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images" (p. 10). Instead, "becoming" is "intensely personal" (Goodson as cited in Prescesky, 1997, p. 69), it is the application and integration of the whole person of the teacher. "Becoming" a teacher requires a complex intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamic between the full cognitive, emotional, and physical facilities of the individual (McLean).

The seminal roots of the conceptualization of teacher identity as a process of "becoming" are found in the writings of Britzman (1991) who asserts that becoming a teacher results in a "formation and transformation" to the person when "...one's past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension..."



as one analyzes and scrutinizes what "...one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 10).

### *"Formation"*

Britzman's model acknowledges the importance of one's life experiences to the formation of the teacher. According to Britzman, the individual's life history is not an obstacle or a hindrance; rather, this history functions as both the context and the content of the process of becoming a teacher. Britzman suggests that the individual's life experiences and the meanings that the individual has constructed from these experiences represent the genesis of becoming a teacher and of formulating a teacher identity.

With this dialogic understanding, teaching can be reconceptualized as a struggle for voice and discursive practices amid a cacophony of past and present voices, lived experiences, and available practices. (Britzman, 1991, p. 8).

The model of teacher identity that is used for the present study combines Britzman's model of teacher identity as "formation and transformation" with the self-identity framework described in the first section of this chapter. The individual who undertakes the process of development to become a teacher faces the complex task of creating a new identity for himself as a teacher. He does this by engaging in a reflexive dialogue and a negotiation between his personal self-concepts and the plethora of new occupationally related concepts

(Knowles, 1992). This dialogue and negotiation results in the selective amalgamation of these concepts into a teacher identity.

*Occupational self-concepts.*

Occupational self-concepts include culturally prescribed attributes and expectations of a teacher and role expectations for a teacher. Knowles (1992) determined that previous teaching experiences were highly influential to the individual's concepts about the occupational role. Previous teaching experiences also provide a mental framework about the occupation that the individual relies upon to create occupational self-concepts. Knowles also identified the profound influence and support from positive teacher role models. A strong teacher role model provides the individual with concepts about teaching to reflect upon and compare, which in turn, he incorporates into his teacher identity.

*Personal self-concepts.*

Lortie (1975) explains, "Socialization into teaching is largely self-socialization; one's personal predispositions are not only relevant but, in fact, stand at the core of becoming a teacher" (p. 79). A plethora of literature confirms that a teacher and his or her teacher identity are greatly affected by previous career and personal life experiences (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Beijaard et al. 2000; Britzman, 1991, 1992; Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Knowles, 1992; McLean, 1999; Prescesky, 1997;

Smith, 2001). The individual attaches meanings to these life experiences and they become the basis for one's personal self-concepts. The meanings that an individual attaches to life experiences are influenced and affected by the environmental context, personal dispositions, perceptions, attitudes, values, guiding images, and beliefs that are unique to each individual (Butt et al., 1992; Knowles, 1992; Nias, 1989b; Prescesky, 1997). Experiences of interaction with other people, one's reference groups, and significant others also affect the composition of one's personal self-concepts (Smith, 2001).

Knowles (1992) classifies and describes the experiences that have a significant influence on the development of an individual's personal self-concepts.

Personality, socialization skills, self-confidence, habitual ways of dealing with situations, work habits and orientation to work and responsibility were important arenas of experience that surface, particularly in their coping strategies, and many of these have their origins in patterns of family interactions and demands. (p. 129)

Knowles determined that a significant influence on the individual's self-concepts is the many experiences of childhood. Childhood experiences may include travel, experiences with other cultures, work and life experiences, relationships with children, and reading were also integral to the formation of one's personal self-concepts.

Whereas the musician identity is made of self-concepts that are essentially a by-product of a lifetime of music related experiences, the teacher

identity differs in its personally constructed and inimitable nature. The individual selects the personal self-concepts and the occupational self-concepts to be used in the identity. Part of the challenge for the individual is to select a balance that allows for a certain measure of conformity to the occupational attitudes and beliefs of the teaching profession and helps to satisfy the internal pressure for consistency by preserving some degree of the integrity and sameness of the individual's personal identity. In this way, a teacher identity is "...not ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action" (Dewey, 1916, p. 408). Other writers concur with the conceptualization of the personalized and selective nature of the teacher identity. Maxine Greene (as cited in McLean, 1999) suggests, "Becoming a teacher is a process of choosing yourself - making deeply personal choices about who you will be as a teacher" (p. 60).

#### *"Transformation"*

Britzman (1991) clarifies why "becoming a teacher" is a transformative process, "The tensions among what has preceded, what is confronted, and what one desires shape the contradictory realities of learning to teach (Britzman, 1991, p. 8). The transformation to the individual is a result of the tension that ensues from the interaction between one's self-selected teaching identity and the "realities" of teaching. Teaching requires emotional, physical, and intellectual involvement and intensity with other human beings. Hence, the experiences of teaching create highly charged and unpredictable situations that

bombard the individual with new meanings about teaching, about caring, about being human, about learning, about society, about social justice, about living, about fairness – teaching challenges almost every pre-existing self-concept of the individual. These new meanings garnered from experiences are involved in a complex dialogue with one's pre-existing concepts about teaching and the self. This dialogue changes the teacher, hence, it can be said that the dialogical processes of becoming a teacher are the foundation for the dialectical process of the teacher identity: teachers are shaped by their work as well as shape their work (Britzman, 1991).

The amalgamation of occupational self-concepts and personal self-concepts in the context of teaching creates a multifaceted and complex situation. Hence, the “formation” and “transformation” process of “becoming” a teacher and being a teacher challenges and makes fundamental changes to the individual's established sense of self (Britzman, 1991). A teacher identity is a place where the individual finds balance, compromise, and adaptability with the requirements of teaching and the personal self of the teacher. A teacher identity is not a static entity: The formation of a teacher identity is a dynamic process of bringing diverse and often competing facets of life into a coherent image of what it means for one's self to be a teacher. Hence, coherence of the self is the ultimate and most difficult goal for the person and the teacher to achieve. How teachers cope and reconcile this dilemma of needing to change as a person to satisfy occupational demands and yet struggling to maintain a clear sense of connection with the original person is the focus of this study.

## **Chapter Four – STRATEGIES OF NEGOTIATION AND RECONCILIATION**

The musician who becomes a teacher faces many challenges in relation to the self: the challenge of synthesis, sameness, difference, and continuity (Nagel, 1988). The individual faces the challenge of creating a teacher identity by synthesizing personal self-concepts with concepts derived from new teaching experiences. In response to the newly formed teacher identity, the individual embraces and accepts the changes to her personal and musician identities and yet attempts to preserve the salience and the prominence of her musician identity in relation to other identities. Despite these alterations to the person, the individual struggles to keep a sense of personal continuity: "...all of us seem to have to struggle in some way to relate what we have become to what we are and what we are to what we are seeking to become" (Bannister & Fransella, 1986, p. 137).

Continuity is a fundamental need of the self. The well-being of the individual is dependent upon a thread of continuity that weaves back and forth between the self and others. Continuity is needed between the self-concepts that make up individual identities and a degree of continuity or constancy is needed between the self-concepts of different identities. Continuity is needed between one's self-concepts, one's behavior, and the perceived reactions of others. Festinger (1957) explains that a lack of continuity creates "cognitive dissonance" (p. 3) and this dissonance is intolerable for human beings. Hence,

individuals are "...highly motivated to develop strategies or change situations in order to return to a level of self-consistency" (Nias, 1989b, p. 162).

Understanding specific strategies that music educators use to maintain their "self-consistency" is not only important for the well-being of the person, "self-consistency" may also be related to his or her ability to sustain one's self as a music educator.

This chapter identifies and describes strategies to negotiate between musician and teacher identities. This chapter describes strategies that individuals have implemented in their lives, describes strategies that could be used, and analyzes how individuals are affected when they have not successfully reconciled the struggle between musician and teacher identities. The information in this chapter is drawn from models of teacher life cycles, the small corpus of strategies found in the related literature, and models of self and identity in social psychology literature.

### Life Cycle of the Teacher

According to McCall and Simmons' (1966) model of self and identity, an identity can be supported and sustained by extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards come primarily through the validation and acceptance from significant others, generalized others, and reference groups. Intrinsic rewards are internal and self-generated factors such as self-support, commitment, and personal investment. McCall and Simmons suggest that the prominence of an identity can be increased through the practice of skills, maturation, education,

or shifts in opportunity structure. The passage of time and the natural maturation of the individual results in a situation where intrinsic rewards have a greater influence on the shaping and prioritizing of the individual's identities than do extrinsic rewards. Hence, the individual has a greater influence over her own identity structure than the outside world does. Herein, is a fundamental premise in the discussion of identity salience and prominence: The natural progression or cycle of life can affect the content of and the relationship between one's identities.

The life cycle of the teacher is a crucial contextual frame in which to situate a discussion of musician and teacher identity strategies. Negotiating and reconciling strategies are affected by the age of the individual, the number of years that he or she has been teaching, and the nature and relationship of teaching to his or her personal life. Sikes's (1985) model of the life cycle of teachers illustrates how the natural ebbs and flows of personal and occupational life bring about self-directed changes that either affect or are affected by the teacher's identity structure.

Sikes's (1985) conceptualization of the life cycle of the teacher is based on a study of 48 teachers ranging in age from 25 to 70. Based upon approximate age ranges, Sikes created phases to illustrate the life cycle of a teacher. Teachers in the first phase of this cycle range in age from 21 to 29, in phase two from 28 and 33, in phase three the teachers range in age between 30 and 40, and in phase four the teachers are between 40 and 55. The final phase is not discussed in this study.



Sikes (1985) suggests that most teachers in the first life cycle have a special fondness for the primary subject that they teach. The subject provides the individual with a sense of security to handle the uncertainty and inexperience associated with the first years of teaching. The subject also endows the individual with a specialist identity that grants him a temporary and instant credibility in the school culture that he can rely on until he has proven his ability as a teacher. Although Sikes found that it was more common for teachers in the first phase to use his or her subject as a coping mechanism, she also suggests how "...teachers of all ages and lengths of experience may use the subject as a personal defense" (p. 35).

In the second phase of the life cycle of the teacher (Sikes, 1985), the increase in personal responsibilities and commitments causes the individual to have a heightened sense of seriousness and urgency for his occupation and an increased need for occupational security. Sikes suggests that teachers in this phase often become more interested in pedagogy and less interested in their subject area. As the individual increases his commitment to teaching, "It gets more difficult to maintain an identity as a specialist, particularly in the world outside school, and 'teacher' offers an alternative. Perhaps not as prestigious or exclusive an identity but in many respects, a more secure one" (p. 47).

Sikes (1985) suggests that in the third life cycle phase many teachers are at peak performance in terms of teaching and personal experiences. The individual has acquired several years of teaching experience and enjoys a relatively high level of physical and intellectual ability. Despite this, Sikes

speaks of this period as a crossroads in the teacher's life. The teacher will either maintain his high level of commitment to teaching or decide that the returns from teaching are not worth the effort and sacrifice and, subsequently, cut back on his teaching workload. In an effort to increase his personal and professional satisfaction, the teacher may also begin to diversify his levels of personal and occupational commitment and establish an alternative career.

The fourth phase of the teacher's life has the potential to be a very traumatic time for the individual. Sikes (1985) points to evidence that suggests that between the ages of approximately 37 and 45 individuals begin to reappraise whether or not the "...work of establishing occupational career, family and identity begun in the twenties and thirties has been successful" (p. 52). During this phase of retrospection, the teacher is likely to reexamine the accomplishments in her life. This evaluation may result in the teacher feeling satisfied with the occupational rewards of teaching, or it may cause the individual to search for new ways to fulfill the aspirations associated with her ideal self.

According to Huberman's (1989) teacher life cycle, a teacher's preoccupation with the self in the early stages of her career is really a reaction to self-doubts about ability and to the difficulties associated with teaching. Huberman contends that this preoccupation with self must be replaced with a "...commitment to the professional role of teaching" (p. 33). He contends that the transition to what he calls the "Stabilization Stage" is necessary for personal and occupational health.

These models suggest that during the occupational life of the teacher his or her commitment level swings back and forth like a pendulum. He vacillates between occupational and non-occupational involvements until he finds a level of psychological, emotional, and physical commitment towards teaching that satisfies the degree of balance that he needs. Both Sikes (1985) and Huberman (1989) suggest that a teacher begins his or her career with strong interests outside of teaching and gradually moves to a position of increased commitment to teaching and less commitment to outside interests.

For the accomplished musician who is a teacher, Sikes's second phase may be the time period that determines whether or not the individual will be able to maintain his identity as a musician during his teaching career. If the individual swings too far in the direction of teacher commitment and for an extended period of time, his musical skills may be significantly impeded or lost and he may not be able to readily renew his former involvement in music. While other teachers may be able to indulge in a decision making time concerning their level of commitment to teaching, phase three may not provide these same choices to the musician.

It would appear, therefore, that a key strategy for the music teacher is to make fundamental decisions at the beginning of his career concerning the level of commitment he intends to have towards teaching and musical activities. The teacher would benefit from an understanding of the natural ebb and flow of occupational commitment as described in this study and could make conscious and deliberate decisions about the kind of balance that he desires to have in his

life. Phase two of Sikes' model may be a crucial time for the musician who is a teacher: It may be the time when the implementation of negotiating and reconciling strategies between one's musician and teacher identities is absolutely crucial if the individual wants to maintain his participation in music and his identity as a musician.

### Negotiating and Reconciling Strategies

"The individual must do his best to cope with the logistical problem by allocating his limited resources among alternative opportunities in a way that seems balanced and profitable" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 244). The coping strategies that have been identified from teacher identity and social psychology literature have been categorized in the following way: (1) needs met outside of teaching, (2) methods of coping, (3) teaching as musical artistry, (4) preoccupation with the musical competence of students, and (5) dichotomization and categorization of the self.

#### *#1 - Needs Met Outside of Teaching*

My interviewees did not see themselves simply as teachers. They also regarded themselves as people with intellectual interests and capacities. Unfortunately, although they looked for appropriate referential support within their schools, they tended to find it outside them. (Nias, 1985, p. 112)

An individual may maintain concurrent careers as a musician and as a teacher, in order to accommodate both his musician and teacher identities. For this individual, teaching is only one part of his or her occupational life, and, in fact, much personal satisfaction is achieved outside of the practice of teaching (Bennet, 1985). Woods and Jeffrey (2002) speak of this strategy as a realignment of personal and occupational expenditure. They explain how this individual ostensibly meets the requirements of the “assigned” (p. 100) social role of teaching, but reserves and secretly cultivates what he or she considers to be the more important aspects of the personal self for his or her private life outside of the teacher role. An individual is able to seek and gain support for a role performance of a non-teaching identity from people outside of the teaching profession, and in so doing, deliberately manipulates the identity prominence and salience of his identities (Setterlund & Niedenthal, 1993). For the musician who is a teacher, involvement in music may be conceptualized and rationalized as the “alternative career,” hence, this strategy may provide the needed balance and satisfaction between occupational commitment as a teacher and personal sustenance as a musician.

Our “basic need for self regard” (Gergen, 1971, p. 67) is a very powerful reflexive mechanism that can solidify a particular identity, but it can also be a source of divisiveness to an identity. The basic need for recognition explains why an individual would reduce the importance of an identity that was not being recognized by others and would turn to and engage a different identity that he or she perceives to be more likely to be supported by others (McCall &

Simmons, 1966). Park (as cited in McCall & Simmons) explains that humans are actors and are in a constant state of playing life roles either consciously or unconsciously like a script in order to gain recognition from others. Failure to garner recognition for highly desired and personally meaningful idealized conceptions of self is a depressing and heartbreaking experience for the individual. The basic need for recognition is so strong that an individual may intentionally or unintentionally conceive of himself in a different way and conform to a particular model of conduct or role with the goal of gaining recognition for this role. He consciously and purposely alters his self-concepts in order to gain approval of others. Park describes the difficulties that the individual may encounter:

The consequence of this, however, is that we inevitably lead a dual existence. We have a private and a public life. In seeking to live up to the role which we have assumed, and which society has imposed upon us, we find ourselves in a constant conflict with ourselves. (p. 56)

## *#2 – Methods of Coping*

In their study of the life development of musicians, Burland and Davidson (2002) determined that the period of transition from early expertise as a young musician to excellence in adulthood is a difficult and tumultuous time. This transition period results in either a successful shift to an adult level of performing excellence or in a crisis and complete cessation of music-related activities. Burland and Davidson suggest three factors that determine whether

the individual will pass through this period successfully. The three factors are equally important and have an interdependent relationship. Hence, Burland and Davidson suggest that there is a greater likelihood that the individual will not experience a successful transition to a level of musical excellence if one of the factors is missing. These factors are as follows: (a) music must be the main determinant of the individual's self-concept, (b) the individual must have a repertoire of positive experiences with others and within institutions, and (c) the individual must have methods of coping with new situations and obstacles.

Burland and Davidson (2000) describe the interrelatedness of these elements:

The centrality of music to self-concept contributes to the intrinsic motivation of the musician; experience allows the musician to develop the necessary tools to persevere with difficult periods, and equally, the development of methods for coping help the individual to adapt to new experiences and challenges. (p. 134)

Given that these three factors are needed in order for the individual to progress to a level of musical excellence, it is reasonable that the individual would require these same interrelated factors in order to maintain his particular level of musicianship and in turn, his musician identity. It appears that the collection of musician self-concepts and experiences are the foundation upon which the musician functions and the "methods of coping" act as a buttress or a defense to combat the constraints and challenges to the individual's ability to be a musician.

Burland and Davidson (2002) provide limited discussion of what they mean by methods of coping.

For the purposes of the current study, 'methods of coping' refers to either physical measures taken by the musician, such as changing instruments, or a more internal response, whereby the individual uses the surrounding environment in a positive way. (p. 130)

They provide five examples of "methods of coping" from the participants that they interviewed: (a) changing one's first study instrument to increase success and opportunities, (b) developing positive ways to reflect on music experiences, (c) learning to deal with disappointments associated with being a musician, (d) recognizing the need for a balanced lifestyle in order to approach music from different perspectives, and (e) concentrating on developing personal interests and different skills. With the exception of the first example, the remaining methods of coping are vague descriptions of personal reflection. Burland and Davidson seem to suggest that coping strategies are highly varied and represent individualistic responses to the experiences in one's life. Their examples also suggest that the most important "coping" strategies are related to self-understanding and to an individual's ability to adapt to the changes encountered in new life situations.

### *#3 - Teaching as Musical Artistry*

Wilson's (1998) doctoral dissertation explores the experiences of individuals who have dual careers as musicians and teachers. One of the three



fundamental themes she synthesized from the responses of her participants was that these individuals experience musical satisfaction by incorporating music into their classroom practice. She explains how the participants brought their unique form of musical expertise into the classroom.

They have made their place of work palatable. They have practiced true acculturation by changing enough to have not changed at all....Many comment that their lives contain the best of both worlds, and this has become true for them because they have molded two lives into one. (p. 161)

Wilson (1988) provides detailed descriptions of the pragmatic ways that her participants were able to use teaching as a vehicle for musical artistry. She provides an anecdotal account of Ernesto who made it a practice to sit at the piano at the start of each music class and play a piece from his current repertoire. He expressed his pride in his students' ability to correctly identify composers and music periods and he felt that they were able to do this because he made it a regular practice to perform for his music classes. Ernesto also prepared several of his students to perform with a professional opera company. Wilson suggests that these activities enabled Ernesto to use teaching as a means to satisfy his musical artistry. Wilson describes her participant, Aida, who involved some of her students in one of her professional musical performances and in this way, combined her teaching and musician worlds. Radames created a musical theatre course in his school that paralleled a job he previously had as the director of a musical theatre. He found that

teaching and directing the productions that were generated in his course made his teaching life replicate his professional life as a musician.

An individual may support and validate his musician self-concepts by conceptualizing and treating each class as a musical performance and thereby, use teaching as an artistic outlet. The teacher may deliberately teach aspects of music and musical performance that resemble his or her area of musical specialization and thereby help to reconcile the difficulties of being both a musician and a teacher.

#### *#4 - Preoccupation with the Musical Competence of Students*

L'Roy (1983) describes a report that was made in 1971 by the National Association for Music Educators (MENC):

The report stated that the ego-satisfaction of the music student in college is often gained largely through personal performance. In contrast, it recommended that ego-satisfaction of the music educator should be gained largely through the provision of opportunities for his or her students to express themselves musically. (p. 5)

Gaining musical or ego satisfaction through the musical accomplishments of one's students is the fourth strategy related to reconciling conflicting identities. The successful accomplishments of one's students may be a substitute for successful musical performances by the teacher. The community may rationalize that the students' musical successes are possible because the teacher is an excellent and skilled musician. In this way, student successes are

a manifestation of the teacher's musical ability and verification of his musician identity.

#### *# 5 - Dichotomization and Categorization of the Self*

A teacher may also negotiate and reconcile the conflict between musician and teacher identities by creating a dichotomized conception of the self. There are several theories and labels that illustrate this strategy. For example, an individual may conceptualize his teacher identity as his social self, a situational self, a role, or an institutional self, and conceptualize his musician identity as his personal self, his substantial self, or as his impulsive self. Ball (as cited in Nias, 1989b) describes the substantial self as the inner core that is highly resistant to change and the situational self as a part of the individual that adopts different guises in various situations as a way of coping with contradictory situations. Application of these labels could reflect the individual's desire to maintain a deep and meaningful connection to a musician identity despite the daily constraints from the pragmatic demands of teaching.

Other individuals may choose to downplay the significance of teaching in their lives in comparison to their musician identities by describing it as nothing more than an occupational role. Britzman (1992) explains how "...role speaks to function whereas identity voices investments and commitments" (p. 29). The individual who attaches an "identity" status to his musician self-concepts and a "role" status to his teacher self-concepts may be suggesting that the behavior manifestations of the "role" are simply perfunctory and functional. In this way,

he attempts to psychologically separate and secure a higher status for his musician identity. Maxine Greene (1978) describes these individuals as "...teachers lacking a sense of self [and] are the kind that sit back and affirm they are defined, indeed identified by their roles" (p. 29).

L'Roy (1983) describes the labels that pre-service music education students apply to themselves in order to reconcile the changes that occur to their musician identities as they become more involved with education courses and student teaching experiences. These students refuse to label themselves as teachers, and instead, describe themselves as a "musician," "professional performer," "musician-professional performer," and "musician-music educator." These mental categorizations of one's self represent the individual's attempts to find a place of mutual functioning and compromise between his or her musician and teacher identities.

#### Unsuccessful Negotiation and Reconciliation of Identities

"One of man's most distinctive motives is the compelling and perpetual drive to acquire support for his idealized conceptions of himself" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 75). This section seeks to understand why an individual may not be able to find a negotiated balance between her musician and teacher identities and explores the impact that this may have on the individual as a teacher and as a musician.

Radley's (as described in Bannister, 1981) psychological model of change describes how a musician who becomes a teacher may unintentionally

lose his musician identity. According to Radley's model, human change occurs in three stages. In the first stage, the individual is able to envisage a particular goal of what he would like to be. In the second stage, the individual enacts the role of the image that he has envisioned. The person's behavior is purposefully consistent with the role even though he may not believe that he is actually this person. Radley explains how the third stage of change occurs when an individual enacts the role in a "...committed and vigorous way for long enough, then, at some point, we become what we are enacting and it is much more true to say that we are that person than we are our former selves" (p. 259).

Although Radley's model was intended to explain self-chosen change, it may also explain how an individual's teacher identity could unintentionally become more prominent than one's musician identity. An individual may accept a teaching position and find that the occupational responsibilities of the teacher role become overwhelming. Even though he does not think of himself as a teacher and his primary desire is to be engaged in music related activities, he recognizes the pragmatic need to spend time in teacher related activities in order to be successful. The individual becomes preoccupied, perhaps even overwhelmed with the demands and pressures of teaching and one day faces the realization that his teaching self-concepts have become more salient and prominent than his musician self-concepts. The teacher has "become" the part that he was pretending to be and now has a sense of disconnection with a fundamental part of his former self, namely, his musician identity.

Radley's model may also provide an explanation as to why some musicians have not been able to maintain careers as both musicians and teachers. The new teacher's engagement in teacher role-acts may decrease his involvement in musician activities and in turn, decrease the validation and acceptance that the individual receives from others for his musician identity. The teacher may begin to feel alienated from his musician identity and this alienation may affect his self-esteem and self-worth. The individual's reaction to the lack of support from others is to aggressively seek out recognition from others (Gergen, 1971). In order to gain support he turns to role-performances that he knows are guaranteed to provide him with recognition and support.

The teacher is surrounded by many people that are more than willing to recognize and validate his role as a teacher if he performs teacher role acts. In this new role-performance as a teacher the individual finds himself in a large network of social support where he readily gains recognition and approval from others. Increased experiences in this role combined with the individual's increased sense of saliency about the role create a plethora of teaching self-concepts that soon coalesce into an identity. Eventually his teacher identity becomes more salient and prominent in his identity hierarchy than his musician identity. One day the individual realizes that he thinks of himself and others think of him more as a teacher than as a musician. McCall and Simmons (1966) explain, "...after years of such compromise, the elements he has been forced to settle for tend to become actually the dominant features of his role-identities" (p. 217). More than this, he realizes that the goals and achievements

that he has spent his whole life working for have eroded away and are largely lost.

McCall and Simmons (1966) suggest that there are various ways that an individual may react to and deal with discrepant support and validation for a particular identity: (a) withdrawing from a particular identity: (b) switching to the enactment of another identity that is more likely to be successful (the model that was presented above), (c) rationalizing the discrepancy by pointing to extenuating and unanticipated circumstances, (d) blaming someone else for the discrepancy, (e) disavowing any personal attachment to the identity, and (f) rejection or deprecation of an audience that withholds role-support. These reactions are the result of reflexive mechanisms that attempt to rationalize and compensate for the discrepancy between the individual's ideal images of one's self as a musician and the reality of one's self as a teacher. These reactions also attempt to ease the anguish the individual feels when the reactions of others acknowledge the teacher but do not acknowledge the musician.

An individual "...often handles such a failure by simply learning to live with it" (McCall & Simmons, 1966, p. 101). This does not mean, however, that the individual is not psychologically or emotionally affected by his or her identity loss, McCall and Simmons suggest that the individual's concept of living and teaching may be fundamentally affected by his or her loss of identity.

Individuals who have experienced identity loss may become more cautious with commitment to new life situations in an effort to minimize further changes to their identity structure. McCall & Simmons also describe how an individual's

overall sense of self-efficacy may be affected by the loss to one's identity. An individual's loss of identity may cause him to feel a generalized sense of self-derogation and unworthiness.

The loss of one's identity may cause one to feel a sense of personal fragmentation and disconnection. Fragmentation of the person of the teacher may manifest itself in one's teaching practices.

There is growing evidence that teacher's attitudes, actions, and responses are influenced by their unconscious as well as their conscious selves, by the parts of themselves which they have rejected or 'split off' as well as by those which they accept. (Nias, 1989b, p. 165)

Feeling disconnected about one's life may manifest itself in the degree of commitment that the teacher is willing or able to give to his teaching position. For example, Woods (as cited in Ball & Goodson, 1985) describes how the degree of commitment that a teacher has can be categorized in three ways: vocational, professional, and career continuance. A teacher with vocational commitment envisages teaching primarily as caring for the students and encouraging their intellectual development. A teacher with professional commitment is much more likely to see himself as a subject area specialist. This individual views himself as an academic who teaches a subject and teaching the subject gives him a great deal of personal satisfaction. An individual with career continuance pursues more substantial commitments and identity reinforcement outside of teaching than he or she does with teaching. Nias (1985) describes fragmented teachers as individuals who either have a



subject area focus or are more committed to caring for pupils and supporting their social, emotional, and moral development (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). In contrast to these models, a well-rounded commitment to teaching would include a thoughtful balance of subject area interest, concern for student success and growth, and the development of outside interests that contribute to the teacher's sense of constancy and personal vibrancy.

Whether an individual has found reconciliatory strategies between her musician and teacher identities or not, the words of McCall and Simmons (1966) resonate a sad maxim of life: "...this change also involves an irony, because the very fact that we commit ourselves less wholly means that we cannot succeed so completely in realizing our ideal images" (p. 102). There is no strategy or series of strategies that can completely alleviate the loss that a musician perceives and feels in regards to his musician identity when he becomes a teacher. Hence, for most music teachers, the reconciliation of identities is a compromise and not a manifestation of the individual's ideal self. This compromise is the way in which the individual balances his limited resources of time and energy in such a way that the balance is nothing short of livable.

## Chapter Five – METHODOLOGY

If we are to understand social life, what motivates people, what their interests are, what links them to and distinguishes them from others, what their cherished values and beliefs are, why they act as they do, and how they perceive themselves and others, we need to put ourselves in their position and look out at the world with them. Their reality may not be our reality, or what we think theirs is. (Woods, 1996, p. 38)

### Theoretical Frameworks

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explain that because all research is interpretive it requires guidance by a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Research runs the risk of being an “...aimless, unsystematic piling up of accounts” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 33) without the application of a paradigm to provide coherence to the structure and analysis of the research. A paradigm is a basic belief system that guides the researcher through all the processes of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constructivist paradigm is used as the philosophical foundation for this study.

The constructivist paradigm provides a conceptual frame of reference that answers the following questions: What is the nature of reality and, therefore, what can be known about it? What is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known? An individual's reality is a

collection of unique and personally interpreted conceptualizations of who one is and what one is surrounded by. Hence, an individual is capable of multiple conceptualizations about his or her reality that are relative, subjective, and socially and experientially based. Therefore, an individual's reality is not something that can be known by a researcher, it can only be reconstructed in cooperation with the individual. The researcher is a "passionate participant" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115) who engages in an interchange with the participant in order to reconstruct his or her reality. The researcher gathers rich descriptions from the participant and conscientiously applies heuristic tools of interpretation in order to understand the meaning of his or her experiences. Interpretive tools would include the context of the individual's life history, the meaning of his or her language, and clarification and refinement of the individual's reality through dialectical processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

### *Qualitative Research*

#### *Purpose.*

The term *qualitative research* refers to various forms of inquiry that attempt to extract and describe the qualities and essence of human experiences. Qualitative research methods are used to understand how individuals make sense of their world by the personal meanings they construct from their life experiences. A study that relies upon a qualitative research methodology stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate and

value-laden relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the way in which the individual experiences the constraints of the everyday social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research is able to show how the significance of human experience is related to the meanings that one creates and while these meanings are a fundamental part of the person, they are also infinite, subtle, and mercurial. Qualitative research describes how personal meaning is embedded in the life context of the participant. Any change to the individual's life context affects his or her reality and subsequently, changes the individual's constructs of meanings. The flexibility and openness of qualitative research honors this quality of life – the uniqueness and changeability of our humanness.

### *History.*

The history of qualitative research is the story of its shedding of positivistic practices and language and its evolvement to a postmodernist perspective. In the traditional period of the early 1900s, researchers provided “objective” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 7) colonizing accounts of field experiences that denied the voice of the participants as foreign and strange. The end of the Second World War heralded the application of new interpretive theories such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, and critical theory. In the 1970s, the boundaries between the social sciences and humanities became blurred as researchers used critical interpretive theory to frame their research. By the mid-1980s there was a significant departure from the

functional, positivist approaches to research. Researchers struggled with the question of how to locate themselves and the subject in the text and how to reconcile objective evaluation with subjective expressions. The postmodern perspective of the 1990s has helped researchers appreciate that the personal meaning of another is obstructed by the interpreter's and the subject's inability to separate experiences from issues of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. An analysis of the history and the development of qualitative research demonstrates how research methodologies have progressed significantly from a neutral, objective, and positivist perspective.

*Method.*

Qualitative researchers may use the participant's natural setting as a source of data. Qualitative research uses quotations, anecdotes, and rich details to illustrate and describe the researcher's interpretations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process of discovery as opposed to outcomes and products. Vidich and Bensman (as cited in Peshkin, 1993) explain, "...at best [the researcher]...can feel that he has advanced his problem along an infinite path...there is no final accumulation and no final solution" (p. 28). Qualitative research draws upon and utilizes the approaches, methods, and techniques from many other disciplines to contribute to the comprehensiveness of the researcher's interpretive abilities.

### *Strengths.*

Bruner (as cited in Peshkin, 1993) explains that qualitative research seeks a “humanistic understanding of other cultures in all their richness, complexity and ambiguity” (p. 28). Research questions that are conceived in a spirit of care and genuineness have the power to probe and understand a more fundamental level of human existence – the why of human existence.

### *Weaknesses.*

The researcher, as the primary instrument for data collection, has the opportunity to strengthen the effectiveness of a research study. However, the researcher can also be a source of failure or weakness in a research study. In many ways, the researcher is the object of study that he or she is attempting to study: a human being that is fraught with complexities, biases, contradictions, and uncertainty. These human traits have the potential to hinder the quality of the research. Unanticipated dissonance, such as personality or philosophical conflicts may impede a comprehensive interchange between the participant and the researcher and ultimately, hinder the quality of the study. The quality of research may suffer from the researcher’s lack of interviewing or interpreting skills. Data interpretation and analysis is also affected if the researcher has insincere motives and biases. While the humanness of the researcher brings with it the potential for great insight, this humanness can thwart the integrity and effectiveness of the qualitative research study.

*Risks.*

Qualitative research that is hindered by human bias or the personal agenda of the researcher will result in erroneous conclusions and runs the risk of causing emotional, mental, or professional harm to the participants involved.

Merriam (1998) refers to another potential risk to participants:

...what people think they're doing, what they say they are doing, what they appear to others to be doing, and what in fact they are doing, may be sources of considerable discrepancy...research which threatens to reveal these discrepancies threatens to create dissonance, both personal and political. (p. 43)

It is possible that participation in a research study could cause an individual to understand the realities of his or her life in a way that may be psychologically or emotionally disturbing. Erroneous conclusions also have the potential to harm readers of the research study.

*Role of the researcher.*

The researcher's role is complex as both a participant in and a facilitator of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher is a participant by seeking out, confronting, and admitting to any pre-conceived opinions and prejudices that he or she possesses about the research question, the participant, or the data. The task of the researcher is to add to understanding and not to pass judgment (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The researcher is a facilitator of the research in the sense that he or she collects, reviews,

summarizes, and interprets the responses of the participants. This task demands sensitivity to non-verbal information or to anomalous cues, it requires a comprehensive knowledge of the entire context of the research setting, and it requires diligence to process and clarify the information accurately (Merriam, 1998).

A *bricolage* is a “pieced-together close-knit set of practices” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2) that may provide increased understanding of a problem. The solution is a result of the *bricoleur’s* practice of adapting different tools, methodologies, and techniques to the problem. In this way, “the multiple methodologies of qualitative research may be viewed as a *bricolage* and the researcher as the *bricoleur*” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 2). The *bricoleur* understands that the choice of research practices depends on the questions that are asked, and that, in turn, the questions depend on the context. To this end, these decisions are based upon pragmatic, strategic, informed, and self-reflexive processes. The *bricoleur* is capable of diverse tasks such as interviewing, observing, interpreting, intensive self-reflection, and introspection. The individual is knowledgeable about interpretive paradigms and understands “that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 3).



### *Interpretive Inquiry*

#### *Purpose.*

The purpose of the study under consideration is to understand how individuals experience and react to changes to their musician identities when they become teachers. Kant (as cited in Bresler, 1992) suggests that despite the richness of human experience, it is, in itself, not useful unless it has been subjected to interpretive meaning making. Interpretation is the vehicle by which experience is transformed into understanding and thereby, becomes something of value to the individual (Merriam, 1998). Heidegger (as cited in Smith, EDSE 600) suggests that the use of interpretation to make sense of human experience is an inherent ability and a necessity for functioning effectively and appropriately in the world. However, our ability to interpret does not presuppose its simplicity. Gadamer (as cited in Smith, 1993) points out that "...understanding is not a matter of accurately depicting a meaning that exists prior to and independent of the study – understanding must be conceived as a part of the process of the coming into being of meaning" (p. 195). Interpreting the meaning of one's experiences is not a descriptive process; rather, it is a creative process. Interpretation is the product of a dialogical and nurtured encounter between the inquirer and the object of interpretation.

#### *Process.*

The interpretive journey begins with a self-awareness of how one's own experiences have created a personal connection and meaning to the topic of

inquiry. The inclusion of “I” in the interpretation places a significant responsibility upon the researcher to explicitly and implicitly acknowledge and account for the subjectivity of one’s self. At every phase of the inquiry, the researcher must understand how personal interests, values, and prejudices affect one’s vision of the world, and, most importantly, one’s interpretation of the data. Gadamer (as cited in Smith, 1993) describes the power of the individual’s life context, “...the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directness of our whole ability to experience” (p. 195). Hence, a complete understanding of the meanings of one’s self and the “other” requires an understanding and acknowledgement of where one is situated in relation to life (Smith, 1993).

Interpretations are also created through dialogical interaction between the interpreter and the participant. This dialogue is located “in between” (Smith, EDSE 600, p. 2) the inquirer and the subject and represents a place where meanings are generated and shaped. The conversation between the inquirer and the participant creates a fusion of *horizons* for both individuals. One’s horizon is a figurative lens that illustrates the perceptual limitedness of an individual. An individual’s horizon can be limited by one’s historicity, or it can expand or change in nature as a result of contact with another person’s horizon (Ellis, 1998a). The dialogical interaction between the interpreter and the subject takes place through the medium of language. Language is deeply entrenched in tradition, community, and history. The degree of linguistic

commonality between the researcher and the participant is an important determinant of the quality and significance of the dialogue that takes place.

## Research Frameworks

### *Qualitative Research Approach*

This study relies upon the perspectives and stories of the participants in order to learn how they experience conflict or reconciliation with their musician and teacher identities and what meanings they attach to these experiences. The responses of the participants are embedded in a thick labyrinth of interrelated experiences, interpretations, and emotions that are shaped and influenced by the life context of the individual. The personal experiences of the researcher are the genesis and the impetus for the development of the research question. The researcher has a personal connection to the topic and an understanding of the complexity of the question. It is the author's inability to negotiate and reconcile her own conflicting identities that has caused her to search for possibilities in the experiences of others. This study is concerned with searching and exploring human experiences of identity conflict and resolution and therefore, a qualitative research approach with a multiple case study methodology are appropriate research frameworks.

### *Multiple Case Study Methodology*

Case study research is characterized by rich, thick descriptions of the experiences and context of the individual. Descriptions in case study research

are concrete, vivid, may include sensory detail, and help to "...elucidate the upper and lower boundaries of experience" (Merriam, 1998, p. 33). The clarity and depth of the description of the experiences and context of the individual enable the researcher to more accurately identify and construct experiential meanings. Application of a multiple case study approach increases the number of descriptions of the phenomenon and allows for cross-case analysis, and, therefore, may facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Merriam (1998), the single most defining characteristic of case study research is the way in which it delimits the object of study or the case. In this study, a case is not the individual teacher, nor is it the issue of identity transformation. The case or the unit of analysis is the individual who has performed both musician and teacher roles and is bounded by the context of his or her life. The number of cases is finite because there is a limit to the number of people who qualify to be involved in the study.

The defining criterion that Merriam (1998) outlines for case study methodologies further illustrates the usefulness and suitability of a case study approach to the present study. Case studies are particularistic in that they "...concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems (p. 29). The present study analyzes how a specific group of accomplished musicians who have become teachers have experienced or continue to experience identity conflict and resolution.

Merriam (1998) describes how case study methodologies are characterized by holistic descriptions and interpretations of the subject. Much

experiential meaning is derived from the relationship of experiences to the events and people in the individual's life. Yin (as cited in Merriam, 1998) believes that the case study design "...is particularly suited to situations in which it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context" (p. 28).

Merriam (1998) suggests that the focus in case study research is on process rather than outcomes, on context rather than a specific variable, and in discovery rather than confirmation. The strength of case study research is its heuristic capabilities: its ability to discover and probe new meaning and illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon. The goal of this research is to recreate with the participants their experiences of identity conflict as well as draw out the ways in which they have been successful and unsuccessful in finding a negotiated balance between these two identities.

### *Participants*

Those who teach or have taught music in secondary schools, or grades 7 through 12, were used in this study. Teachers were required to have a minimum of two years of teaching experience to meet the guidelines for participation in this study. An accomplished musician was defined as an individual who is a member of the Musicians' Union, has completed a Bachelor of Music Degree, or has achieved the highest level of conservatory grades on his or her particular instrument. Six participants were used as sources of data for this study. Selected participants were not restricted to a particular school

district or geographic area. The researcher was familiar with all of the participants used in the study as music education colleagues.

Prospective participants were contacted either by phone or through e-mail to ascertain their willingness to participate in the research. At the time of this initial contact, the prospective participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the requirements for participation in the study. The individuals that consented to participate were sent an information package that contained the following: (a) a more detailed description of the purpose and justification for the study, (b) a consent letter, and (c) a copy of the questionnaire form. The consent letter reiterated the purpose of the research and the extent of involvement required from the participant. After a careful reading of the information in the package, the participant had the opportunity to opt out of the study.

#### *Research Site*

A specific research site was not determined for this study. Interviews took place in a location mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the participant. The researcher ensured that the location of the interview was a place where the participant felt comfortable and at ease, as well as a site where there were minimal disruptions.

### *Dialogical Exchange*

Understanding a participant's reality is dependent on an interactional exchange between the researcher and the participant. This study relied upon interviews to understand the participants' experiences of identity conflict and resolution. The social interactionist perspective of the "I" and "me" were explored in the interviews.

If we are to understand the 'I,' we must explore people's innermost feelings, their impulses and passions, their hunches and risk-taking, the things they would like to do but cannot, what prompts them to act in certain ways, and what gives them pleasure and what causes pain.

(Woods, 1996, p. 47)

The interview questions were probing, comprehensive, and thoughtful of the personalities of the individual teachers. The questions were asked in such a way as to respectfully generate the most meaningful and sincere responses possible. The interviews were semi-structured with a number of pre-determined questions and topics to allow for parallel responses from the participants. The questions were structured to allow for a sufficient amount of latitude in order to allow the participants to digress and elaborate on topics or expressions of personal importance. A pilot study was conducted to test the usefulness and effectiveness of the interview questions. The researcher made several modifications to the questions based upon the responses from the pilot study.

Participants were asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire. The questionnaire fulfilled several important functions: (a) it supplied the researcher

with contextual information about the participant, (b) it stimulated the thinking of the participants on the topic of identity conflict and resolution, and (c) it enabled the researcher to use the information to individualize the interview questions.

A tape recording device was used to record the interviews and transcripts of the interviews were made and sent to the participants by the researcher. Taping the interviews was necessary in order to provide the researcher with the freedom to carry out a depth of discussion that would not have been possible had she been preoccupied with detailed note taking. Also, the researcher felt that full engagement with the participants was necessary and respectful considering the personal nature of the topic.

### *Interpretive Process*

Each participants' experiences were organized into the following categories: (a) life context information of how the individual came to be a musician and a teacher, (b) expressions that reveal how the individual experienced conflict between their musician and teacher identities, (c) strategies to deal with conflict between musician and teacher identities, and (d) expressions of resolution or tension concern the participant's current relationship between musician and teacher identities. After the responses were categorized in this way, the researcher re-read the transcripts and noted recurring words, metaphors, idiomatic words or phrases that the participant used, places where the individual changed the topic or avoided the question, recurring statements, inconsistencies in thought, or points of consistency



throughout the interview. The transcript was read again in order to gain a more holistic sense of the participant's responses. This researcher also noted the similarities and differences between the participants.

### *Evaluative Process*

This study is not concerned with creating generalizations or hypotheses from the participants' responses. The primary objective of this research is to increase understanding of how a group of individuals experience identity conflict and how they find some degree of resolution. The criterion that the researcher uses to ensure that the interpretations of the participants' experiences are as meaningful and accurate as possible are described as follows: "Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience?" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32) The present study uses a similar evaluative process: The researcher returned repeatedly to the data in order to re-evaluate whether her re-telling of the experiences and her derived meanings were accurately aligned to what the participants said.

Packer and Addison (1989) suggest that a "good interpretation" (p. 290) is one that answers the initial concern that prompted the inquiry. Heidegger (as cited in Packer & Addison, 1989) asserts, "It remains a matter of interpretation whether our interpretive concern has been answered adequately" (p. 279).

There is no one method, technique, or procedure that ensures a universally

acceptable interpretation of the phenomenon under study. Instead, the quality of the interpretation can be determined by asking whether or not the understandings are plausible, if they fit with other known material, or if they have the power to change practice. Perhaps more importantly, the researcher is able to check the worthiness of his or her understandings by the rigor of self-analysis: Have the researcher's understandings been transformed? Have the participants' understandings been transformed? Have new possibilities opened up for the researcher or for others involved in the study? (Ellis, 1998b)

### *Limitations and Delimitations*

Because the research is concerned with self-knowing and self-understanding, observation and the collection of documents is beyond the scope of this study. Issues of gender are not of interest to this study. This study is reliant upon the truthfulness, the knowingness, and the openness of its participants. The study is limited to what the participants are willing to share and what they are able to share in regards to experiences and self-understanding. The study is limited in complete candor and objectivity because of the researcher's professional relationship with the participants as a music education colleague. The author was limited in the amount of contextual background she could provide about the working lives of the participants in order to preserve their anonymity

### *Ethics*

The information package that prospective participants received contained a comprehensive consent letter that clearly indicated that their participation was voluntary and that their consent was a personal decision. The prospective participants were given a two-week time frame to read the information pertaining to the purpose of the study and to make a decision as to whether or not to participate. The consent form clearly outlined the rights of the individual to opt out of the study at any time. Participants were reminded at the first interview of their right to opt out of the study at any time and made aware that were they to do so, all interview responses would be destroyed and not included in the study. Participants were also reminded at the first interview that their anonymity and the confidentiality of the data were of great moral and ethical concern to the researcher and that data would not be discussed with any individuals other than the researcher's supervisor. The data is secured in a private place in the researcher's home. Real names of the participants were not used in either the draft copies or the final copies of the thesis.

The issues of quality and credibility are both personal and professional issues to the researcher. The researcher feels very strongly that as an educator and as a student academic at the University of Alberta issues of integrity and respectability are paramount in regard to conducting research that is accurate, meaningful, and ethical. Being permitted to "see" inside the experiences of another individual is a tremendous privilege and brings with it

the responsibility to be absolutely truthful in transcribing, interpreting, and analyzing the shared meanings of the participants.

## **Chapter Six – EXPERIENCES AND INTERPRETATIONS**

The [ ] symbol represents the name of the principal instrument that the participant plays. Instrument names have been omitted to avoid the identification of the participants.

Five of the six participants are, or have been, high school music teachers (grades 10 through 12). One of the participants teaches music to junior high school students (grades 7 through 9). All of the participants, except for one, teach in the city of Edmonton. One participant teaches in a rural community outside of Edmonton. The average number of years that the participants have taught school music is 15 years. There are two participants who have taught school music for less than 10 years and four participants have over 15 years of school teaching experience. All of the participants, except for one, have a minimum of one graduate level degree. All of the participants are reputable and successful music teachers: their school music programs are known for having high standards and producing excellent musical results, their music groups perform in a variety of venues, and the musical environment is vibrant and enriched.

### **Scott**

Scott endured four years of guitar lessons that he “couldn’t stand” in order to please his dad who wanted him and his brother to be rock musicians.

His experience with the guitar did not dampen his desire to try a band instrument. In grade seven band class he was handed a [ ] and instantly liked playing it. He explained, "I think I picked the right instrument for me. I never had a problem or struggled with it. It came pretty easy." He described how his teacher made the band class "fun" and how band was a good way to make new friends.

Grade 11 was a critical year for Scott because music became more meaningful to him. The band room was where he found positive role models, friends, identity, a variety of musical activities to participate in, and a place of refuge from a temporarily unsettled home life. "High school was when I really got into it. I understood. I really enjoyed it more in high school, the whole music thing.... For us it was just being in band, band was our identity." When I asked Scott if he took private [ ] lessons during this time he explained that he did receive three lessons as a Christmas gift in grade 11, but for the most part, he relied on the direction from his band teachers and "...always kind of searched out on my own."

By the end of grade 12, music had become a very important part of Scott's life. Near the end of this year he was given a very prestigious music award as the outstanding [ ]ist at a national music festival. This award made Scott realize that he wanted to "...do something with music as a career" in order to keep music in his life. Scott had decided in grade three that he wanted to be a teacher. He kept this a secret because "...of course you can't say that when you are a guy in grade three." Deciding to become a music teacher was

an obvious decision to keep music in his life and combine his determination to play music with his desire to teach.

Scott uses the phrase “connection to music” many times in his interview and I believe this phrase has a number of different meanings to Scott. He speaks of his “connection to music” as a “passion” for music, his ability to identify with the “humanity” and “soul” in music, and the ability to “evoke the human element through music.” When I commented to Scott that it was “interesting that you felt a musician identity starting in grade 11” he replied, “Absolutely, starting to connect with those people.” A significant part of Scott’s musician identity relies on self-concepts related to the perceptions, validations, and “credibility” from others. Hence, Scott’s “connection with music” is also related to the commonality he shares with others and the recognition he receives from people around him. Scott also speaks of his need to maintain a “connection to the music at that [advanced] level.” Scott’s relationship to music is deep and multi-faceted: it includes an affective element, a sense of commonality to others and acceptance from others, and the personal pride from achieving a high level of technical and musical proficiency.

Scott was fortunate to be in viable and enriched band programs starting at age 12. These programs introduced him to the world of music, motivated him to continue learning and be involved with music, guided his innate talent, and helped him to forge a “connection to music.” Scott succinctly and poignantly describes how he felt about music and his instrument as a youth and young adult, “I was super keen.” By the time Scott entered a music teacher

education program in university he had a strong affinity for music, an intense motivation to learn music, and an abundance of natural musical ability.

Scott described how he perceives his musician and teacher identities at the present time, "They are so closely tied together, music teacher and musician, that to separate them for me would be incredibly difficult." This statement reflects Scott's 19-year journey to reach a place where his identities are well developed and he feels a level of mutuality between being a teacher and being a musician. His resolution is the result of many years of hard work and the application of numerous strategies. One does not sense from his interview responses that he has struggled with the issue of prominence between his musician and teacher identities and therefore, he is truthful in saying that they "are closely tied together." He has, however, experienced conflict in regard to his struggle to fully develop each identity: in other words, he has struggled to attain a sufficient number of self-concepts associated with each identity and to fully develop the salience of both his musician and his teacher identities. The following section follows Scott's journey through university and his early teaching experiences and in so doing, describes the way in which he experienced conflict between his musician and teacher identities and describes the strategies he has used and continues to use to reconcile these identities.



*Experiences of Conflict*

Scott is honest and humble about his playing ability at the time he commenced a music teacher education program in university, "I think I had a lot of potential." Scott's life as a child and adolescent did not correspond with the literature concerning the typical life-span development of a musician (chapter four). He did not begin private lessons at age five and he did not complete thousands of hours of practicing before the age of 12. Scott did not enter the music teacher education program in university or begin his teaching career with a well-grounded and fully validated musician identity. He did not have a sufficient number of experiences and self-concepts related to studying music, performing, and practicing in order to create and sustain a firmly established identity of himself as a musician.

Scott makes many comments in his interview that reveal his strong need for the validation of others. For example, when I asked Scott if he thinks he is better at being a musician or being a teacher he quickly replied, "Depends on who you ask?" This is the other aspect, perhaps an equally important aspect, of his musician identity that was under-developed at the time he entered a teacher education program: He did not have a sufficient collection of self-concepts based on the recognition and validation from others for his skills and abilities as a musician. Therefore, Scott's conflict during his university program and in his early years of teaching was also related to his need to develop and establish his musician identity by receiving recognition from others that confirmed he was an excellent musician.

Several years later, when Scott's musician identity was more firmly established, Scott was able to turn his attention to his teacher identity. Each year Scott acquired more and more teaching experiences and these experiences created teaching self-concepts that supported and reaffirmed his teacher identity. He acknowledged that he felt and continues to feel a lack of recognition and support from others for his teaching abilities. "I keep misrepresenting myself that I am not a serious teacher and I am more of a musician." His uncertainty and the salience of this issue to him is well illustrated by the following comments:

Q: Which identity is more important to you?

S: Teacher is more important because it is the one that I am not readily accepted into. Everybody accepts me as a musician. Not everybody accepts me as a teacher....I don't know. It is tough...just like I think I am misrepresented in people's eyes, maybe I am not.

Even though Scott is surrounded by many manifestations of his excellence as a teacher, including a recent Province of Alberta teaching award, he does not allow himself this validation from others. Using the ideas of Mead (1936) and McCall and Simmons (1966), that validation from another person is the individual's perceived acceptance and support from others, it is of interest how Scott allows himself to exist in this dichotomy of both self-assuredness and self-doubt about himself as a teacher. Hence, Scott's current conflict is his concern and need for recognition as a teacher. "I keep misrepresenting myself that I am not a serious teacher and I am more of a musician....Not everybody

accepts me as a teacher....I am not happy with where I am as an educator in other people's eyes.”

### *Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation*

Scott has a remarkable ability to separate, prioritize, and balance his identities and most importantly, to be resolved or reconciled in the manner in which he is able to do this. When I asked him how he felt in his first year of teaching when he did not have as much time to practice, he pointedly described how he coped:

I never panicked about it, I remember that I gigged in that first year but I don't remember it being a priority for me. I wasn't ready to give up music but it just wasn't [pause] it was so overwhelming, just so much happening, I just had to. I just did it.”

Scott's ability to isolate and focus on a particular identity that is in need of most support and to work diligently to develop self-concepts associated with this identity is fundamental to his success both as a musician and as a teacher. This skill, of being able to separate or isolate an individual identity and to concentrate on its salience, is Scott's most dominant and effective strategy and is the main reason why he has been able to be both a successful teacher and a successful musician.

Scott relied upon these skills as early as his second year in his music teacher education program at university. He felt that because his program did not offer private music lessons in each year of the program he was not able to

“...get the full music training to be a teacher.” Scott knew that he needed and wanted more musical learning and experiences to fortify his musician identity. He described how he “...begged them [program administrators] to let me take more lessons.” Scott was given special consideration and was provided with an additional year of lessons and then paid for his lessons in the remaining years of his program. Despite having a full course load in his music teacher education program, Scott was able to balance his time in order to diligently study and practice his instrument.

Scott developed a philosophy in university that helped him to prioritize his identities and ensure that he sufficiently developed the salience of his musician identity. Scott believed and openly communicated with others in his university teacher education program his opinion that “...the only successful music teachers are musicians on some level.”

I was looking at these music ed students and saying, you know nothing, you are terrible musicians....I had firmly established my opinion about what would make a successful teacher. Others might have believed this as well but I, for some reason, I wore it like a badge.

Scott still believes in the truth of this statement, but in his early university days he used this philosophy to set himself apart psychologically, socially, and physically from other music education students.

I was a total outcast in my undergrad years. Everybody thought I was a music student. People were shocked to find out that I was an education student ....”

His mantra that a successful teacher must be an excellent musician became a self-fulfilling prophecy and, in this way, it was a strategy that Scott used to develop his musician identity. The public declaration of his philosophy encouraged a separation between his musician and teacher identities, it justified the extra time he needed to spend on his musician skills, and made it necessary for him to prove to others that he was an excellent musician. Scott instinctively knew that in order to develop a salient musician identity he needed more musical experiences in the form of music lessons and ensemble playing and he needed recognition and verification from others that he was a competent musician. It seemed apparent in his interview that Scott focused almost exclusively on his musician identity in his university program. There are several indications that Scott was successful in developing a strong musician identity: He admitted that he “work[ed] very hard,” and at some point before he graduated from his education degree he was hired to play professionally in a local ensemble with a very well-known and reputable director.

The turning point for Scott in terms of feeling validated for his musician identity and being reconciled with the salience of his musician identity was an incident that occurred when he was being interviewed and hired for his first teaching position. During his interview, Scott mentioned the name of the ensemble and the name of the conductor that he had played with on occasion.

I had no clue how big Jim Long was. I went into the interview and the woman said, “You are a musician?” and I said, “Yah, I play with Jim

Long and just kind of threw the name out and for her, that was it. That was the reason I got the job and all the credibility I needed to get the job.

He explains that the entire class of music education colleagues was interviewed for the job and he was the one who was offered the position. A year later when he signed his contract, the same woman who had interviewed him explained that she hired him because he was a musician. This was very important to Scott because it provided him with legitimation as a musician and it validated his philosophy that he made public to his student colleagues that music teachers must be musicians. "I felt totally vindicated for about how I felt education was and for about how I felt you should be involved with music." This external validation allowed Scott the freedom to start focusing on the development of his teacher identity.

After several years of teaching Scott felt frustrated with both his teaching and his professional playing. His penchant for self-understanding enabled him to realize that his frustration was related to an insufficient knowledge about his instrument and about music.

I used to get frustrated at work. I realized I got frustrated because I just couldn't answer the questions. I didn't have enough information and knowledge. I had all the work in Edmonton as a jazz [ ]ist. I was working a ton but it was unsatisfying. I was kind of a sham. I wasn't really doing it, I just took the gigs, but I didn't know [pause] I knew that I wasn't happy with myself as a musician but I didn't know what to do about it on my own. I did study privately at that time with Mr. Green, a [

] player. I was looking for the knowledge....so it was at that time I thought I have to do a masters degree in music. I don't know enough about music and it is frustrating. I guess it was at that point when I really started to understand that I was a musician and I wasn't good enough for what I wanted to be.

This passage highlights several of Scott's reconciling and negotiating strategies: Scott's self-understanding and his ability to separate and address the needs of his individual identities. This passage also suggests that Scott's musician and teacher identities were starting to work together. Being a teacher made apparent the limitations of his musical skills and knowledge and helped to inform his understanding of what being a musician meant to him. From this, he started to understand what he needed to be the kind of musician, teacher, and music teacher that he wanted to be.

One may surmise from his interview responses that after he came back from completing his masters degree Scott felt very self-assured about the salience and development of his identity as a musician. He explained that after completing his masters he felt confident in his self-sufficiency as a musician, "I know what I need to do to get them to go to that next spot." Near the end of the interview, when Scott reflected on how he currently feels about his musician identity, he explained, "I know I am a musician, I totally know that people call me a musician....My identity is closely linked to being a musician for sure....Everybody accepts me as a musician." Currently, Scott has a rich array of musician self-concepts. These concepts are self-generated and concepts he

has processed from the reactions of others – both firmly confirm his identity as a musician. One of the most poignant verifications of his strong musician identity is his response to my question, “If the school concert does not go well, does it affect the musician side of you?” He replied,

No. There is ego involved. I want to do a great job, but, even as a musician if I don't have a good performance it doesn't eat me up.

Because it is one moment in time, it is not who I am. If that one performance was my only musical experience of all time I think it would.

But there are so many musical performances - past, present and future that I can't be bothered.

Despite the heavy demands of teaching, Scott is able to maintain the salience of his musician identity. Scott speaks of maintaining his musician skills as a process of regulating and prioritizing. Scott still works very hard, and on a daily basis, on his musician skills. Practicing and professional playing engagements are fundamental to Scott's skill retention, musical development, and maintenance of his musician self-concepts. Scott deliberately engages in an on-going and internal “dialogue” that monitors and regulates his practice schedule and takes note of the regularity of his participation in professional gigs.

That dialogue is always running through my mind on some level. That is partly habit, desire, I guess ego. I want to keep that up. I have worked hard to become a musician so I don't want to let it go. I guess



competitiveness is in there. I want to keep the skill level high, there are a lot of reasons.

Scott's pragmatic understanding of himself is an effective tool in the regulation and maintenance of his musician identity.

I definitely still have moments like that, where if I don't [pause] I get uncomfortable if I am not doing enough of my thing. I sound like they are totally combined but I still have to pay attention to both sides. I am still aware that if I'm not working, if I don't have a gig for two months then I am not paying attention to that and how come I am not working? I need a gig.

Scott understands that in order to maintain his musical skill level he must balance the need to practice with teaching responsibilities. Besides his conscientiousness towards daily practice and securing regular gigs for himself, Scott admits to working very hard and even sacrificing other personal aspects of his life in order to maintain both roles at a level of excellence. "It is such a hard job and if you are not prepared to give up a lot of yourself, it becomes painful."

Another strategy that Scott uses in order to find a compromise between his musician and teacher identities is a realistic honesty about the pragmatic difficulties of being a full-time musician and the benefits of being a teacher. Interestingly, he views the financial security of school teaching as a source of freedom because it enables him to have the financial resources to engage in his musical pursuits.

I can indulge my musical self now, as a teacher I can indulge myself musically any way I want because I have security and stability.

Whereas, if I was a full-time professional musician I don't think I would have that freedom.... Full time professional musician, it is not for me. I have done that in the summers, I have toured with bands in the summers and I can't stand it. It is fun for the first week and then it is not fun anymore, for me. I like going to new places and playing in the bands I like doing all that. I can indulge my musical self now, as a teacher I can indulge myself musically any way I want because I have security and stability. Whereas, if I was a full-time professional musician I don't think I would have that freedom.

Scott expressed his desire that both his musician and teacher identities be equally developed and recognized by others. He speaks of "credibility" in reference to both his musician and teacher identities. Scott's response to finding mutuality between these two identities and reconciling them is to fully develop each identity and find the aspects of commonality and compatibility that allows for the partial amalgamation of the two identities.

Interestingly, as Scott moved chronologically through his life experiences he was able to speak of his musician and teacher identities as being increasingly amalgamated, "They are so closely tied together, music teacher and musician for me that to separate them for me would be incredibly difficult." His personal philosophy that an excellent music teacher must be an excellent musician forced him to become an excellent musician. After he achieved a

level of ability and public recognition that he was satisfied with, he was able to conceptualize and achieve a degree of amalgamation between his teacher and musician identities – an amalgamation that does not pose a threat to the salience of either identity. Scott ensures that he is an excellent musician and in this way, his success as a musician feeds his success as a teacher and conversely, his success as a teacher verifies his success as an excellent musician. In the end, Scott is an effective and successful music teacher.

Q: Why do you feel you need a gig?

S: Because it feeds a certain aspect of the teacher side of me. I need to have that connection, a connection to the music at that level, for credibility, it keeps me fresh, it keeps me energized. The more music I make the more excited about being a teacher I am.

The following dialogue further illustrates the amalgamation between being a teacher and a musician,

Q: What activities do you engage in that make you feel like a musician?

S: I think, well, when I work with kids and we talk about music and advanced concepts and theory, I do score analysis; so I feel it almost every day. I am involved in music at a deeper level; I feel like a musician...I think that talking about eight bars of music with a class of 30 kids means you are a musician.

Being active as a musician makes Scott more invigorated about his teaching and teaching reinforces Scott's concepts about himself as a musician.

Scott uses his competence and talent on his instrument and his strong knowledge of music as part of his teacher persona. He explained how he integrates Scott the musician and Scott the teacher in order to make an enriching experience for his students.

I think I am the enriching activity; I am the musician that the kids get to work with. 90% of the kids I teach cue into that right away. Okay, this guy is different than my other music teacher. I play [ ] on the first day and in every class, whether they understand or not they all can recognize that here is a guy that can play the [ ] better than anyone in my class or than my old band teacher.

Scott's lack of conflict with the prominence of his musician and teacher identities may be related to the kinds of "connections" he has with being a musician and being a teacher. His "connection" to music has been discussed in an earlier part of this section. Interestingly, Scott does not use the word "connection" directly in regards to teaching, but he does speak about teaching with the same kind of concern, care, and personalness as he does with being a musician. Teaching to Scott is a way to "communicate" and "help" young people and provides him with a great deal of personal satisfaction. Music is a vehicle that allows Scott to reach deeply into their personal worlds and affect their lives and this too, propels his desire to be a teacher. Scott proudly announced that he has never contemplated quitting teaching and described himself as "...way more successful as a teacher than I am as a musician." On the other hand, he declared "I know I am a musician, I totally know that people

call me a musician....” He speaks of the connection he has made between music and teaching and how they feed each other. Scott’s life is a web of connections between a well-defined sense of himself as a musician and a healthy, balanced, and proud perspective of himself as a teacher. There are integral webs that he uses to join together these two main facets of his being and there are places where he strategically and decisively keeps them separate. This is a web that Scott has worked very hard to create and it intricately supports who he is and how he reaches out and breeds success in the world.

#### Patrick

Patrick had a very enriched musical upbringing. He started music lessons on an instrument when he was six years old. He took lessons with a teacher that he had a great deal of respect and admiration for. He studied and practiced this instrument for 11 years, until he was 17 years old. He even completed a grade seven-conservatory exam on this instrument. His teacher would encourage him to play in the Youth Orchestra, and for several years she would schedule an audition time for him. Each year he would play his orchestra audition and be accepted into the orchestra but would not attend the first rehearsal. It would have been difficult for Patrick to participate in this ensemble because he never told anyone that he played this instrument. In fact, he admitted, “That is my secret, no one knows that.” Interestingly, when I

asked him if he thought of himself as a musician in association with playing and studying this instrument for 11 years, he said no.

In grade seven he started playing the [ ] in the band program. His parents even bought him a brand new [ ] with the expectation that he take band through to grade 12. When I asked Patrick if he loved playing his [ ], he promptly replied, "Absolutely." In junior high school he had a demanding, but nurturing band teacher that pushed him to excel and provided him with extra performance opportunities for which she would use her personal time to coach him. In high school he received a year and a half of private [ ] lessons with a reputable player. He was sent to numerous summer music camps during these formative years. In fact, it was while attending a jazz camp in the summer before grade ten that he "got turned onto jazz." He had supportive parents and he relished in the presence of nurturing, caring, and skilled teachers. In many ways, Patrick's life mirrors the musical environment and experiences described in the research concerning the life-span development of accomplished musicians.

In high school, Patrick thrived on his reputation and identity as a musician. He described how performing on a stage was an enjoyable and a "very comfortable" activity for him to participate in. Patrick reluctantly admitted that in high school he was "kind of better than everybody else" but also suggested that his music lessons on his first instrument provided him with the "discipline" and "knowledge" to progress quickly on the [ ]. One of his dominant musician self-concepts is that of having a degree of innate talent: "I

had talent to get me through so I kind of rode that out.” While involvement in music was a natural and comfortable activity because of his natural abilities, it was also augmented by parental support, exposure to excellent teachers, and numerous musical opportunities.

A critical incident occurred for Patrick in the summer just after he graduated from high school. Patrick attended a jazz camp and had the privilege of receiving private lessons and being directed in a jazz ensemble by a musician named Mr. Martin. At one lunch hour faculty concert Mr. Martin needed to borrow Patrick’s [ ]. Patrick was stunned and in awe of the sound that this man was able to produce on his instrument. He explained, “...he played it like I had never heard it played in my life.” He promptly bought a record of a group that Mr. Martin played for and he described how it was “...just the greatest thing I have ever heard in my life.” Patrick now had a musical hero that he aspired to emulate and musical goals that he strove to achieve.

Patrick was one course short of completing a Bachelor Degree in Jazz Studies and was working at various jobs that included private teaching, teaching beginning band clinics, working in a music store, and playing with a local band. Without prompting he made a humble admission about his musical progress to this point.

I wasn’t that great either. I wasn’t a good student. I rode this whole talent thing in high school and at Mountain University. I rode that some more and I should have worked a lot harder than I did....The practicing, the discipline, and the willingness to do assignments. I wasn’t the best

student at Mountain University you know....Practiced, but it was never serious. I didn't know how to do things, I didn't know how to pinpoint things, I just floated.

I asked Patrick if he thought of himself as a musician at this time in his life and he replied, "Not too sure."

One day Patrick and his friend (also a music teacher) were driving in the car and his friend asked him if he had ever considered becoming a school music teacher? Patrick's curt reply was, "No, because those who can't play teach." In Patrick's words, "I swear he [his friend] almost swerved off the road." His friend was flabbergasted at his response and adamantly pointed out that many of Patrick's musical heroes, who he revered for their outstanding musical abilities, were also music teachers. His response to his friend was, "Oh, it can be done." This was a very significant moment because Patrick had not realized that he knew many excellent musicians and performers who were also teachers.

This conversation did not completely settle the issue for Patrick, but it did open up a sense of possibility. Even though Patrick had plans to enroll in an Education After Degree program, he still had reservations about becoming a teacher, "I needed to figure out if I wanted to be a musician full time. I had to make this decision. Do I want to be a musician, do I want to be [pause] you know." Patrick still had a dichotomized view of what it meant to be a musician and to be a teacher. He felt that in order to be a teacher he had to forfeit any hopes of being a musician. Patrick may have felt this way because he had



been involved with excellent band programs and had insight into the level of involvement required of an effective music teacher. Patrick defined a musician as an individual who works full-time as a performer and this may also be why he felt he could not be a musician and a teacher at the same time.

From this time, when he decided to enter an Education After Degree program until he graduated, he participated in various professional musician jobs. He tells a story filled with many vivid details of his first cruise ship “gig.” He describes being on pier 25 on Manhattan Island playing stickball with the “dock guys” and trying to keep an eye on his belongings while he waited to board the cruise ship. After he boards the boat he has a half hour to find his room, unpack, and to be ready to play on stage. He sits down two minutes before the performance starts and the conductor throws his music down in front of him and Patrick realizes that the music is written for a different instrument than what he was told to bring. Patrick is forced to transpose the music on the spot. In his own words,

I have to be a musician. I had never practiced that before. I sound terrible, and the guy says you sound terrible. Get a [ ]! I told him that I was told to only bring a [ ]. We are leaving the New York harbor. I panic, I go outside and we are heading out of the harbor, I see the New York skyline and the twin towers for the first time, and it is beautiful. We are off to Bermuda. Next day I go outside and I am in the middle of the Atlantic ocean. I get the music and start practicing in a little electrical room, top floor, three feet by three feet and it is hot.

Patrick enjoyed this time when he played seven nights a week, but he felt resolved that he did not want to be a full-time performer for the rest of his life. Patrick's abundant musical experiences and his observation that many of his music education colleagues "couldn't really play" contributed to his philosophy that "...if you are going to be a music education teacher you better be able to play your instrument. I feel very adamant about it. I can't elaborate because to me it is very black and white. It is that simple." His cruise ship experiences reaffirmed his decision to become a teacher but he remained determined to maintain himself as a competent and active musician.

Patrick was a successful music teacher for several years. He took over a vibrant and demanding program from another music teacher and he was able to maintain and enrich the program. After several years Patrick took a leave from the school in order to complete graduate work in music at an American university.

### *Experiences of Conflict*

The conflict that Patrick experienced between his musician and teacher identities manifested itself in the form of uncertainty and concern as to whether or not an individual can fulfill the dual roles of teacher and musician and his uncertainty as to how this can be accomplished.

Q: When you came back [from the cruise ship engagement] were you worried that the music education program would hurt the musician side of you?

P: Yes, I was worried. I made a conscious effort for it not to take away. I made the conscious effort to not, to not be allowed [pause]. How do I say this? I made a concerted effort to always play....

I believe that Patrick used his uncertainty as a guard to keep himself sensitive and aware of the issue and cognizant of aspects of teaching that would have the potential to inhibit or erode his musical skills and his musician identity.

Patrick admitted that he found it hard to balance the requirements and responsibilities of being both a musician and being a teacher. He explained that in his first year of teaching he felt panicked concerning his ability to achieve this balance, "I panicked. Then, I just [pause] couldn't [pause] there were moments I couldn't keep up with everything...." Patrick had anticipated conflict between the demands of being a teacher and a musician and he was able to identify his experiences with this conflict early in his teaching experiences. Patrick also recognized the unending nature of the workload associated with teaching and this realization allowed him to be resigned with a fundamental mental construct – not being able to accomplish all of his teaching tasks in order to be the kind of musician that he wanted to be.

Patrick also experienced conflict in the form of musical dissatisfaction. After one year of teaching Patrick came to the realization that he was not satisfied with his level of musicianship and proficiency on his instrument and that he wanted to pursue graduate level studies. "I had just had enough....Whenever I played I wasn't satisfied, there was something missing and I didn't know how to fix it....There was another level I was looking for."

Patrick admitted that his dissatisfaction was in part because of his desire to learn more about his instrument and to be a better musician. He was also adamant in pointing out that teaching was not musically satisfying for him and therefore, was not a substitute for his personal musical stimulation and growth.

### *Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation*

At the beginning of Patrick's teaching experiences he was largely uncertain as to how he was going to maintain himself as a musician. However, he was not uncertain about the significance of this issue to him. His awareness and thought about the issue of preserving his musician identity became a very important strategy: Patrick had a knowingness that maintaining himself as a musician required a deliberate resolve and the application of purposeful strategies. It seems apparent in Patrick's interview that his fierce desire to prove that he could be a teacher and maintain himself as a musician was not only an effective strategy, it also became a fundamental part of his musician and teacher identities.

It was very important to Patrick to keep his musician and teacher identities distinct and separate. His conceptualization of the separateness of his identities and his firm resolve to maintain his musician identity are illustrated in the following comment: "I made a concerted effort to always play the [ ] and identify myself as a musician first and then a teacher." When I asked Patrick how he felt his teacher colleagues viewed him, his response was, "...maybe more as a musician who went into teaching." Patrick's description of how he

views himself, how he portrays himself to his classes, and his perception of how others view him points to the nature of the hierarchy that he created between his identities, namely, his musician identity being more important than his teacher identity. His willingness to make this public to his students also suggests the personal significance of this issue to Patrick.

When I asked Patrick if he enjoys teaching? He said, "Yah, I do. I get to perform. I get to perform in front of kids every day, music and personality." Patrick had very positive teaching experiences at his school and there were many indications that he was an effective teacher. My question to Patrick was asked with the intent of exploring his teacher self-concepts that comprise his teacher identity. His reaction and responses suggest that his predominant concern was the way in which teaching related to or preserved his musician self-concepts. His inability or unwillingness to discuss his teacher self-concepts exemplifies more than a separation of his musician and teacher identities, it also suggests a resistance to acknowledging or developing his teacher identity.

Patrick described how he felt about himself when he first stood up in front of his music classes as a teacher, "I was a musician teaching a class." I asked Patrick if this conception of himself changed with increased teaching experiences and without hesitation, he replied, "No. I always had my [ ] there. I could always demonstrate what I wanted them to do. It never made sense to me to tell them how to play a crescendo. There was no point unless I would demonstrate it and could play it." Musical modeling is an effective teaching tool that Patrick uses because he is an excellent teacher. However, the way in

which Patrick spoke of musical modeling in response to a question concerning his musician identity suggests that Patrick also uses musical modeling to reinforce his musician identity.

There are other passages that suggest Patrick relies upon his musician identity to replace the need for his teacher identity.

I was a musician who knew more than they did and I was to teach them about music. I told them I was a musician. I remember having that sense of pride. I am a musician and I know what I am doing.

Patrick adhered to a strict and intense practice schedule in the year he spent preparing for his audition tape for graduate school. He described how his increased practicing affected his teaching, "And then I got more excited about teaching and teaching became easier. I knew more. I could recognize things in a score. When I was more creative in practicing I became more creative in my teaching." Even in this passage where Patrick begins to speak about teaching in a more affective way, it is noteworthy how he finds his excitement through musical demonstrations and accomplishments. Most references or conceptions about himself as a teacher are made via his musician self-concepts and musician identity and in this way, he resists the development of his teacher identity.

Patrick explained that one of the reasons he made sure to participate in public musical performances every four to six weeks was "...to be able to tell my students that I was performing as well." Even though he acknowledges that his students would not be able to hear him play in his professional

performances he still feels it is important that he could tell them that he was a professional performer. It is important to Patrick that his students perceive him as a musician and in this way, the reinforcement from this reference group serves to support his musician identity.

The underdeveloped nature of his teacher identity is also evident in his inability to define what teaching success is. Although he aptly expressed, "I felt and feel confident that I was good at it" he was unable to articulate how this success was manifest in his students. He suggested that one's teaching awards or even the percentage of students that remain in band from year to year might be indications of a successful year. Patrick discussed the awards his bands have won and the high retention rates of his students the year before he left teaching. Finally, Patrick simply admitted, "I don't know how you define success. I don't know." Patrick had many "nurturing" music teachers and numerous positive musical learning experiences in his youth, adolescence, and even as an adult. Patrick resists acknowledging this understanding into his definition of teacher success because it may cause him to feel increased pressure and responsibility towards his teaching role.

Another strategy that Patrick uses to keep his musician and teacher identities separate is to maintain the high degree of salience of his musician identity and maintain the prominence of his musician identity in relation to his teacher identity. Patrick has created a strong metaphor that reveals how he conceptualizes the hierarchical relationship between his musician and teacher identities. In this metaphor he likens musicians to martyrs when they blame life

circumstances for their lack of practice or for the inferior quality of a performance instead of purposefully maneuvering life situations to make time for practicing and performing. Patrick is adamant that musicians should not live or present themselves in such a way that suggests they lack autonomy of their lives and therefore, are less respectable than people in other professions. The use of this metaphor is a strategy that Patrick uses to rationalize the way in which he prioritizes his time as a teacher: it justifies the prominent placement of Patrick's musician identity and his conception of the malleable nature of teaching.

Patrick was able to maintain the salience and prominence of his musician identity because he made practicing his instrument a priority in his daily schedule. He described his effort to practice regularly as "concerted." Patrick also ensured that he had regular professional musical performances to play in. The most revealing and powerful passage of the interview was when Patrick described how he dealt with the steady pressures of teaching in relation to his practice schedule.

Q: How did you balance all the demands of teaching with the demands of being a musician?

P: I panicked. Then, I just [pause] couldn't [pause] there were moments I couldn't keep up with everything and then I realized that, well, I guess I didn't get it done. Okay, I didn't call a parent back the next day, oh my goodness, how irresponsible to close that door of communication. Then I thought, so what, I'll just call tomorrow. And now I am going to play the



[ ] for an hour. Then it evolved into [pause] then there came a point in the first year, later in the evening when I would just stop planning and stop working on school stuff and I would just practice. Because [pause] you know, what is the point of me teaching music if I can't play?

I asked Patrick how he was able to close the door on all the unfinished business of teaching in order to practice. The following passage illustrates the way in which Patrick rationalizes and justifies the way he prioritizes his time. The creation and adherence to these mental constructs is a fundamental strategy that Patrick uses to reconcile his musician and teacher identities.

I have a responsibility to myself to keep playing because a) this is what got me here and b) I have a responsibility to my students because I am telling them how to do all this stuff, so I better be able to do it. To show them that you can play your scales in different ways, in broken thirds, triads, diatonic sevenths, reverse directions. I never got to all that stuff but I was trying to give them ideas of how if any of them ever wanted to continue on this is how to make them more exciting.

When I asked Patrick for clarification as to whether he was speaking of a sense of responsibility to himself or to his students he explained, "Oh yah, I was certainly satisfying myself the musician through practicing. The side effect was yah, I was fulfilling this responsibility to the students." Patrick was able to maintain his sense of priority to his musician identity and simply did not allow the excessive workload of teaching to impede or diminish what he needed to do to be able to maintain himself as a viable musician.

An important negotiating strategy for Patrick was incorporating music into his teaching by frequently demonstrating the musical concepts and skills that he wanted them to emulate. "I always had my [ ] there. I could always demonstrate what I wanted them to do." Playing for the students also helped to reaffirm his musician identity. His confidence, self-assuredness, and pride about himself as a musician are other strategies that were effective in helping Patrick to keep his musician identity salient and prominent. When I asked Patrick again later in the interview how he viewed himself when he was in front of the class without hesitation he said, "Musician, total musician."

Patrick expressed a great deal of uncertainty about his next teaching assignment. He understands that his new teaching position may be even more demanding and he worries about his ability to maintain his practice and playing schedule. Patrick suspects that the strategies he used in his previous teaching assignment to negotiate between his musician and teacher identities are going to be challenged in his new teaching position. With resignation, Patrick admitted, "School is going to have to be a priority, something is going to suffer."

Self-concepts are the product of reflexive processes that are applied to life experiences. The application of reflexive processes, or the internal conversation of the individual, is either enriched or limited by our life experiences. Life experiences are fundamental to how we view ourselves and subsequently, to what we are. The formation of a teacher identity is a conscious decision to facilitate the internal conversation concerning the experiences of teaching and to coalesce into a teacher identity, and finally, to

allow this conversation to transform you. Teaching was not difficult for Patrick, he was very successful in his teaching assignment, and he enjoyed it. However, Patrick's teacher identity was limited by his limited teaching experiences. It was also limited by his determination to not allow the internal conversation of reflexivity to fully develop his teacher self-concepts and a strong teacher identity. It was a tacit admittance that he denied this internal conversation when he said, "School is going to have to be a priority...." At this point in Patrick's life, his orientation to this issue is not how much of a musician a teacher should be, but rather, how much of a teacher a musician should be in order to ensure that he can maintain his musical skill level and concept of himself as a musician. Patrick anticipates that future teaching experiences may question his present negotiating strategies and that teaching may yet transform the nature and structure of his identities.

### Philip

"What do I have to do to do this?" This is a question that Philip has asked himself many times in regard to his musician and teacher career paths. Philip has had a life absolutely filled with music. He has also been a teacher for his entire adult life and, consequently, has strong perceptions of himself as a teacher. You could not remove the musician from Philip, nor could you remove the teacher. The relationship he has forged between being a musician and being a teacher is complex: it is a compatible relationship, and yet it is competitive, it is a symbiotic relationship that is fraught with an underlying

tension. At times being a teacher provides Philip with what he needs to be an excellent musician and at times teaching restricts what he wants to do as a musician. Being a musician helps Philip be an excellent teacher but at the same time, being a musician requires Philip to carefully prioritize his teaching responsibilities.

Philip comes from a long “lineage” of family who has participated in or is currently associated with music. As far back as he can remember his mother and father were involved with music and as he described, “...we just experienced that [music] all the time.” He has been told that he attended his first opera when he was in a basinet. Philip started piano lessons when he was six years old and when he was ten he started to study and play a wind instrument for which he always had private lessons with a reputable teacher. He started playing in the Youth Orchestra when he was 12 years old. Philip “grew up around music” and subsequently, it became a natural and inevitable pursuit in his life. Although he was never forced, Philip explained, “I don’t think there was ever a choice to go into music.”

A strong motivating factor for Philip in regards to music was his band experience that began in junior high school and continued throughout high school and university. Band was “...social, it was exciting, and it was a sense of identity.” Participation in the band provided Patrick with many fond memories of performances and introduced him to “a close group of friends” that have continued to be lifelong friendships. His experiences in the band program provided Philip with opportunities to excel and shine and he gained social

prestige from his identity as a musician. He was recognized as the top musician in the school district in grade 12. Philip explained that it was a very gratifying time because “You [band students or Philip?] were regarded highly for what you did.”

At 15, Philip started playing his [ ] professionally and he continued to play throughout university. He assumed that a career in music was possible because there were so many live performance opportunities available to musicians at this time. After completing a university degree in music, Philip continued to be active as a performer, a private [ ] teacher, and as an instructor for school clinics. Philip’s aspirations to be a free-lance studio player and to own a recording studio were derailed by the economic situation that resulted in the cutbacks of many live musical performance opportunities. As Philip described, “The reality set in....” Philip faced another reality in regards to being a full-time musician – the reality of the difficulty of that kind of life. He explained how he traveled with one particular band for a period of four months and although it was a positive experience, it left him asking, “Okay, do I want to do this the rest of my life?” Philip was not deterred from making a living as a musician, in fact, he was determined to “...do whatever I need to do to survive in the industry.” Philip began to broaden his concept of what it meant to be a musician. He included teaching in his conceptualization of a musician. Subsequently, “...the teaching thing it was a little bit of a response to what was going on in the industry.” Philip decided that teaching “...would be cool, it would be a good thing to do, pick this up. I could play at night, I could play

every night, as I was doing, and I could still do my education degree part time.” Philip enrolled in an Education After Degree program and finished it three years later.

It was around this time that Philip was asked to be the musical director of an adult community band and his concept of being a musician and being a teacher grew to include conducting. Philip was also hired to teach a music class at the local college. Philip had a good friend that was a school music teacher and this allowed him the opportunity to help out in his friend’s classroom and to see first hand what the nature and the quantity of the workload was for a school music teacher.

Philip was able to compare these working conditions to the working conditions of teachers at the college level. He also discovered that he gained more satisfaction from the more mature students that he was teaching in the adult band and at the college. Most importantly, Philip realized that “...it was a reasonable balance between being able to be an active performer in my own way and being involved in the teaching aspect....Yah, I wanted to teach but teach at the post-secondary level.”

Philip decided that he wanted to teach music at the college level and again he asked himself, “What do I need to do to do that?” In an attempt to be competitive for a position that was scheduled to open up at the college, Philip left for a year to complete a masters degree in music in the United States. When he came back to Edmonton he felt that because of his studies and his experiences in his program he had “good” skills as a player, as a conductor,

and as a teacher. Unfortunately, the college position was cut and, to Philip's thinking, there were no other jobs that required or satisfied his "skill set." Although he was offered a job at a prestigious American university as the director of bands, he decided to stay in Edmonton and accepted a job as a music administrator for a Provincial arts association. Philip continued to conduct adult bands, teach privately, and to play professionally. Several years later, a high school teaching position was vacated and Philip was offered the position. He taught for seven years as a high school music teacher until a full-time position became available at the college and he was hired for this position.

At the time of the interview Philip had completed one year of teaching at the college and therefore, had been away from public school teaching for one year. His responses have a unique level of candor and openness. I believe his year separated from teaching school music provided him with a heightened sense of objectivity and perspective, and allowed him a unique freeness to discuss how he felt about his teaching experiences in relation to his musician identity.

### *Experiences of Conflict*

Philip experienced conflict trying to balance the demands of teaching with the need to practice and perform as a musician. He explained, "I felt that my musical skills had suffered because there isn't time. I didn't have time to practice." Philip also admitted that what compounded the problem of time deficiency were the responsibilities he had as a husband and as a father.

For me, I had the balance – the teaching thing going and the home. In there I kept trying to keep my professional role alive and it was hard, it was very, very hard. I felt at times that I was letting myself down.

Philip also experienced conflict in the form of pressure to choose between having a successful music program and using that time to maintain his musical skills as a player. “I was a dedicated teacher, I wanted to make sure that the program was good. I was enjoying it and was excited about the growth and the connection.” Looking back at the difficulties of teaching and maintaining one’s self as a musician, Philip concluded, “...if you want your program to go far you have to be prepared to give it, and be prepared for the time that it requires of you.” Philip’s teaching experiences confirmed what he already knew and had anticipated: an excellent music program requires personal sacrifices from the non-teaching aspects of one’s life. Philip’s conflict speaks to the heart of this issue: The more musically and educationally enriching the teacher makes the music program for his or her students, the less time the teacher has to engage in musical enrichment. At the end of his seven years of teaching school, Philip described his pressing need “...to get back on top of my game.” Philip had sacrificed his personal musical development in order to provide an excellent music program for his students and this was his dilemma and conflict.



### *Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation*

Philip found several ways to mentally rationalize and reconcile the conflict he experienced between being a teacher and being a musician. Philip expressed the sentiment that instead of experiencing a decrease in his confidence as a musician, in fact, he felt that his experiences of teaching school increased his self-confidence as a musician.

I think my experiences of teaching have allowed me to accept what I am as a musician. I am happy with what I am doing. I realize that there are things as a musician that I want to do better, but I am not unhappy with what I am doing. I have accepted my skill set.

Philip believes that teaching has made him appreciate the special set of abilities and talents that each individual brings to a profession or to a discipline. Subsequently, teaching has given Philip a greater sense of satisfaction, contentment, and self-acceptance with the skills that he has and contributes to the music community.

I don't dwell on the things that I don't do. I will never be Frank Jones, nor do I want to be. I'll never be Pat Zerp, nor do I want to be. I am Philip and I do things differently and they will not do what I do.

I believe Philip is proud of his ability to be a successful teacher and recognizes the special nature of these skills. However, his reasoning may also be a rationalization strategy that helps him to justify his inability to participate more fully in professional musical engagements or in practicing.

Philip stated firmly that he would do “whatever [I need] to do to survive in the industry.” This is a variation of his life-directing question, “What do I have to do to do this?” His conception of music as an industry allowed Philip to be reconciled with his engagement in other music-related activities besides performing.

Philip created a well thought out and clever metaphor in order to rationalize his need to engage in other non-performing aspects of music.

Q: Did you see teaching as something separate from being a musician?

P: No, not at all. Because so many musicians out there were teaching, it was a natural thing. The career of music and one of those spokes in the wheel is education. One for me was conducting, one was performing, one was administering. All these spokes that make up the career and I never really separated them. I tended to not look at it that way....Whatever the case may be, music is bigger, not just teaching in a subject area....I see teaching music as a natural part of being a musician and whether that being teaching at post-secondary, private teaching or teaching in a secondary school. I don't see those as separated.

Philip's metaphor situates teaching as a part of music because music is not just about performing - “music is bigger.” Using this mental construct, teaching experiences would actually contribute to Philip's overall development and growth as a musician and his musician identity.

Although this metaphor is a dominant construct for Philip that organizes his self-concepts, he seemed to contradict himself in another portion of the interview when he said,

It is kind of funny because I never associated my time in public schools as a musician thing. I was a teacher, a director-conductor teacher, and a director. I am not like a lot of other teachers. I demonstrated occasionally....I was a teacher, not a performer-player.

I believe that the contradiction between this statement and his metaphor about music being a wheel and performing is just one spoke in that wheel, speaks to the complexity of this issue for Philip. It appears that he relied on different rationalizations depending on the nature of the threats to his musician identity. No doubt there are times when his view of teaching as an expression of his musical skills is a sufficient rationalization to ease the dissonance felt from a lack of practice and reduced number of performances, however, at other times, when he feels particularly frustrated by the neglect of his musician skills, he relies upon a rationalization that emphasizes his excellent teaching skills. He explained that the students don't need to hear a player, "...that is not what the students need" because they need a teacher.

Philip's most poignant rationalization is illustrated as follows:

A person who is going to be a soloing musician who is dedicated to their specific style or genre of music must be willing to put almost everything aside in life. I am not prepared to do that. If you want to be the greatest you have to perform the world, then you have to be prepared to do that.

If you want to be principal violin in the New York Phil then you're best not having anybody else around you and you must be dedicated to that. If you want to be the best global conductor then you must be dedicated to that and you can't let any things get in your way. Once you get there I think you can start doing other things. To me there is more to life than that.

This is a regretful realization that the vast majority of musicians eventually and inevitably are forced to make. Philip admitted that he came to terms with this reality about 20 years ago when he would listen to somebody else play a solo and he would ask, "I can't do that and how do I do this and what do I have to do to do this?....I realized that in order for me to get to that I would have to dedicate my entire life to doing that....I wasn't willing to dedicate myself to that kind of life or that kind of commitment to life." Philip's reasoning is sound and his language seems very decided, however, the reality of making this decision is that you live a part of your life being less than what you want to be and less than what you could be. Philip's rationalizations are defensive strategies that he uses to help psychologically reconcile the conflict between his identities. For the most part, they are successful for Philip.

Contrary to what his series of rationalizations presuppose, Philip's dominant strategy to deal with the conflict between his musician and teacher identities is not to do or be less as a musician - his dominant strategy is to do more. Philip worked very hard to maintain and bolster his musician self-concepts through professional playing and conducting engagements while he

was teaching school. Although Philip acknowledged that his playing skills suffered somewhat from the heavy workload of teaching, the effect this had on his musician self-concepts was counter-balanced by his other musician acts.

Outside of the school that is fairly obvious. Anytime a gig came up: playing a wedding or symphonies, jobbing, playing a convention, whether it be a symphony or [ ] band – you put on your musician hat. You say, okay, I am back in the music world. In school, I guess it was the performance side of things. It is ultimately getting to that moment where you are performing where you feel like you are at that level again.

Philip is very candid about his reaction to the threat to his musician identity when he taught school music,

So you can feel like “Oh yah, I am still an active person” what we do is take on more. Which is not a good thing. We take on more. Okay, there is a gig coming up, great, how can I work this out? I go to my principal, can I have this afternoon off because you want to keep yourself active in the industry. Whether for your own ego or you want people to still consider you as part of that community - I don't know what the answer is. It is probably all of those. But you take whatever you can on, because it makes you feel like you are more of a professional musician. Yah, I had less time to practice, less time to prepare. I used to be able to study the score and make sure it was right and choose materials. So I couldn't practice as much, okay, I'll take this gig because if I take this gig it will force me to buy some time somewhere to get me

back up for this gig. You know, it's not a good idea. I don't miss the hours. I don't miss trying to teach and trying to be a performer so taking on more stuff all the time because I can do some of the things I wanted to do because it becomes part of your job. In there, I kept trying to keep my professional role alive and it was hard, it was very, very hard. I felt at times that I was letting myself down. I tended to move more to the conducting thing, which I consider to be a professional musician – I think it is part of it. I tried to do what I could there. I did [Green Wind Ensemble] and I continue to play with the [Burlington Symphony]. I think if I had continued doing what I was doing in the public schools I would be the next person with heart attack problems.

This is a stunning passage. Philip's candor, in regards to his strategy to take on more performances in order to fortify his musician identity, makes his contributions exceedingly rich and valuable. I will always be grateful to Philip for saying what I believe many music teachers are not willing to say. It is my hope that this honest insight into one individual's experiences and the meanings he creates from these experiences will facilitate personal understanding for others and the courage to be realistic about the difficulties of negotiating and balancing something so precious, a musician identity, with something so worthy, a teacher identity.

On one level, Philip had a sense of reconciliation with his musician and teacher identities because during the years he taught school music he was able to maintain and foster each identity. However, Philip admitted that he would

not have been able to maintain for many more years the physical demands of keeping both identities vibrant. He explained that now, as a college teacher, his schedule is more conducive to maintaining both identities because the job includes expectations for performance, and in this way, it represents a more “reasonable balance.” He admitted that he misses the connection with the students that he had in the public school, but he says,

I don’t miss the hours. I don’t miss trying to teach and trying to be a performer so taking on more stuff all the time because I can do some of the things I wanted to do because it becomes part of your job.”

Teaching at the college level allows Philip more time to balance the demands of teaching with the demands of being a musician. Philip’s strategy, to teach college level students, has been realized and has in his one year proven to be effective.

When I asked Philip if he liked teaching he responded, “Absolutely, I loved it. I have always loved it.” He readily spoke of the satisfaction he gains from passing information along, helping students understand a new concept, helping students feel excited about music, and the connection that teaching gives him to other people. Teaching has always been and continues to be, an expression of his natural ability and a gratifying activity for Philip. Philip developed very strong self-concepts about himself as a teacher and these concepts coalesced into a strong teacher identity.

As suggested in the opening paragraph of this section, you could not remove either the musician or the teacher from Philip. Philip’s teacher identity

has had a formative effect on what he is as a person. He believes teaching has helped him to be more outgoing, relate to people better, and increase his self-confidence. He also believes that these qualities have helped him to be a better musician. However, teaching has also robbed Philip of time that he would have used to advance his musician skills. Being a musician gave Philip a sense of prestige in the school, and his excellent skills certainly contributed to his success as a teacher. Philip will always feel a tension between fulfilling his needs as a musician and fulfilling his responsibilities as a teacher. It is particularly challenging for Philip because he demands so much from himself and he does both so well. Philip will never stop asking the question that propels him to further accomplishments, "What do I need to do to do that?" – his drive is the source of his success and conflict.

### Mike

Before I had a chance to explain the structure of the interview and ask my first question Mike quickly volunteered the following information about himself:

Your one question I think it is important: How do you think others view you and how do you view yourself? I always view myself as a teacher first and player second. My primary love is teaching. There is no way that you can do an adequate job without trying to be a player as well.

The kids are looking to you to be a model and if you are not able to give it to them you are doing them a disservice. Consequently, I play a lot.

When I teach I am always modeling tone quality, style, and dynamics.



There is no better way to introduce or to understand Mike than to hear his sincere, pragmatic, and down-to-earth voice. In only five sentences he was able to simply, succinctly, and accurately encapsulate the relationship between his musician and teacher identities. He possesses what most people desperately strive to achieve – self-understanding. Self-understanding that is genuinely grounded in the reality of who one is and where one comes from is a rare and complex kind of knowing. Self-understanding may have elements of self-deceit caused by one's ego or from tainted perception. Mike has very little, or perhaps none of these elements of self-deceit. His words, simply stated, reflect a truthful kind of knowing about himself and the world that is outstanding and rare.

After Mike's voluntary summary of himself, there was little more to share about his musician and teacher identities and their relationship with each other. For the remainder of his interview he elaborated on the relationship between his identities by describing his journey to be a musician and a teacher. Mike takes great pride in retelling this journey: He provides very vivid details and often explains the significance of these details. Mike's journey is a reminder of the significance of the connectedness we have between the places and the people in our personal life journeys and our indebtedness to these connections for self-understanding.

Mike grew up in a rural community in Alberta. When he was in grade six a band teacher was hired and band was being offered at his school for the first time. Mike explained that his Dad forced him and his brother to take advantage

of this opportunity to learn music. His father “loved music, he had a passion for it, but couldn’t play.” Mike’s mother was an accomplished pianist. Mike had not decided which instrument he wanted to play the night he went to his Aunt’s house and was introduced to the [ ]. He “put the mouthpiece in the receiver and started making sounds and thought that was pretty nice....So I decided there and then that I was going to play the [ ] and be a [ ] player.” His brother was also learning how to play the trombone in the new school band. Mike, along with his mother and his brother, would spend time playing music together. Mike admitted that his musician identity was formed in these early years because they were known as the boys who played the [ ] and the trombone.

The support and encouragement that Mike received from his family to learn music was augmented by many significant musical experiences in the band program. His first band trip was in grade eight, “I had never been to Edmonton before.” Even though this trip was over 30 years ago, Mike provided vivid details of the trip: he remembered the name of the festival that they participated in, names of the adjudicators, and names of some of the star players in the other bands that he heard. Mike explained that it was “...that trip to Edmonton in grade eight was the year I decided to become a band teacher.” He remembers his band teacher walking to the back of the bus and talking to the students. Mike asked his teacher what it was like being a band teacher.

He said that it’s not great money but it is the best thing there is. Of course we were enjoying it so much and getting so much intrinsic value

from the program. From there on I was sold, that was the pivotal point for me. Yup, grade eight.

Mike also remembered hearing one of the high school bands perform at this particular festival in grade eight and he described his reaction to hearing them play. "We heard that band, and they blew our socks off they were so impressive." His band "learned and grew together" and returned to the festival three years later and not only won in their category, they also won at the regional festival in March of that year. They continued their winning streak at the next festival and subsequently won a competing spot at the national festival in Vancouver. In Mike's words, "everyone went wild." Mike boarded the plane, excited about being on a plane for the first time, confident in his playing ability, extremely proud of his band's accomplishments, and ready to show the nation exactly what three years of hard work and determination could do. This was a very significant experience for Mike: It left an indelible impression in his mind concerning the value of hard work, it exemplified the power of the team effort of a band, and it impressed upon him the motivating power and pedagogical value of festivals.

Music continues to be a very important and essential part of Mike's life. He has a well-developed identity as a musician that is comprised of a plethora of musician self-concepts. These self-concepts are based upon his lifetime of significant musical experiences. Mike explained, "I just love to play and I love the sound of the [ ] and it gives me so much satisfaction to play it." Mike described the satisfaction and enjoyment from reaching musical goals and

overcoming hurdles as an intrinsic value that playing his [ ] gives him. Mike described his "...need to play every day" because "if I don't play for a while it feels like a part of me is missing." Music is a fundamental part of Mike's life. From a relatively young age his musician identity has been extremely salient to him and it continues to be a cornerstone of who Mike is.

Mike completed two years at a regional college as a "stepping stone" to the University of Alberta. He used this time and opportunity to get himself ready academically for university and to play in the college ensembles. He assumed that his playing level was going to be challenged at the larger institution and it was. "At the U of A I got my eyes opened really quickly and saw how good the players were." Mike's response to this challenge was to work "really, really, really hard." Mike worked hard in an intelligent and humble way and this was made evident by the way in which he reveled in the instruction of his teachers: he soaked up their instruction and savored it. Mike had one [ ] teacher who would, on a weekly basis, make pages of itemized lists of musical elements for Mike to work on. Mike described his reaction, "I would run out, oh, man this is so great, and I would come back and have almost all of them done. So my playing just climbed and climbed, and climbed." Mike spoke of another individual that he studied with as an "...awesome teacher....a great motivator, he is just a great guy." Mike also described the teaching philosophy of another teacher that he has taken lessons with in recent years, "If you want to do it, of course you can do it. Put your nose to the grindstone and do it." Mike's teachers shaped him musically, they reinforced his character,

and they helped to shape his teacher self-concepts. Having known Mike for several years and having watched him teach, the descriptions that he provided of his former teachers could very well describe himself.

Even though Mike had a strong identity as a musician he did not and does not experience conflict between his musician identity and his teacher identity. When I asked Mike how he thought of himself after he finished his Bachelor of Music degree, he replied, "When I went in, my goal was to be a teacher, a band teacher." Mike never vacillated in his desire to be a band teacher and he never wavered in his purpose for developing his skills on the [ ]. Mike's resolution with who he is as a musician and his pride in being a teacher are his predominant strategies to maintain the reconciled relationship between his identities. This as well as other strategies will be explored in the following section.

### *Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation*

In university, Mike had come to terms with his abilities and limitations in comparison with others and true to his nature, he settled the issue with practical reasoning and a firm resolution.

Q: Did your feelings about yourself as a strong player make you change your mind about going into education?

M: No (quick response). No. I could see the writing on the wall. I was in there with Doug Smith, an incredible [ ] player. He was the best. He, myself, Pat Morow, the band director in Queensland in Calgary, and

Brad Markim. We are all in the same year, Doug and I were in fourth year together. David came in the Bachelor of Music. I was with good players, I could see that guys like Doug and David had what it took and I mean, I wasn't about to [pause] I didn't have what it took, I could see that. David was born with a little bit extra, so was Doug and they just had what it took to be a great [ ] player. So I wasn't [pause] my main [pause] I had done so much, I could see my heart wasn't into it as much as the teaching thing. I really wanted to be a good player, but that is where it stopped. I had my goals set. Do a Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Education and jump into teaching. I didn't want to do a masters, that wasn't in the cards. Besides I worked so hard on the Bachelor of Music to get where I was going. I came out okay, I was an average [ ] player. Too many people use the term loosely. I don't see myself as a professional [ ] player. I view myself as a band director who plays the [ ]. If I was a professional [ ] player that would be how I would be making my living. I am not. I wouldn't be able to.

Mike uses his honest perception of himself in relation to others as a strategy to secure the relationship between his musician and teacher identities. His ability to be resolved with this understanding appears to stem from the way in which he adheres very closely to his original goal to be a school band teacher.

Mike admitted that when he first started teaching he had to adjust to the absence of performance goals that were common in university and the significant reduction in practice time. He did find a way to overcome these

challenges to his musician identity, “What you do then is change your focus and you have different goals.” Mike is pragmatic and down to earth, he works very hard and he is an intelligent person. These qualities affect the way he relates to and approaches the world. Hence, his ability to adjust his focus and develop a sincere commitment to a different facet of his goals is rooted in his character and personality.

Mike’s concept of himself and his effectiveness as a teacher are intricately connected to his ability to play his instrument. Mike is conscientious about making time to practice and to play in performing ensembles. Practicing and playing are fundamental activities that support Mike’s concept of himself as a musician and as a music teacher. He has a realistic and regimented daily practicing schedule that he incorporates into his workday and faithfully adheres to.

From 4:00 to 5:30 I mark papers, make phone calls, kids who need help, call parents or meet with parents until 5:30 and then from 5:30 to 6:00 that is when I practice. I go home at 6:00.

Mike has a workable and reasonable practicing schedule despite his many teaching responsibilities. I asked Mike how often he is able to follow his practice schedule.

Ninety percent of the time. There are very few weeks [pause] I play my [ ] every day. There is not a day when I don’t touch it. I am talking about my individual practice, proper warm up, playing through an etude or a solo once. That will take me between 20 to 30 minutes. I do a

reduced warm up, so I take a little bit of each of these elements that are going to keep my chops going so when I play in front of people at a concert I don't embarrass myself.

Even though Mike feels that his musician identity is secondary to his teacher identity, his musician identity is extremely salient to him, subsequently, he makes it a priority to maintain and nurture his skills and engage in ensemble playing to use these skills.

I have always viewed myself as teacher first and player second. I want to always try to play the best I can play. I played in the [ ] band for 10 or 11 years. I have also played in the [ ] quintet for 10 years prior, a couple of quartets, a quintet prior to that, and another quintet prior to that. I always try to keep up with my personal playing. I try to practice 20 to 30 minutes every day.

In order to maintain his playing level and to maximize the benefits of his limited practice time Mike uses the valuable information that he has received and internalized from his teachers.

I will reduce my fundamentals down to 15-20 minutes and leave 10 minutes for solo work. You just have to realize that I am not going to be a player anymore but I am going to keep it up still so I won't embarrass myself when I go or are called upon to play. I think I have struck up a fairly decent balance with 30 minutes a day of playing.

Although being a skilled instrumental player and musician feeds himself as a person because "for me, I need to play," he is quick to point out the



benefits to his students and clarify that his primary reason for being a good player is to help him play well for his students and subsequently, to be a good music teacher. Several times in his interview Mike described his dominant teaching technique: to provide a good model of sound for his students. He also defined a good teaching year as one in which his bands are able to meet certain tonal and technical goals. Mike's concept of teaching and of himself as a teacher are intricately connected with music: For Mike, teaching is very much about playing and being a musician. He explained, "they meld so closely together...because there isn't a day when I am not playing along with the kids." Mike uses many other teaching techniques besides modeling, but modeling is his dominant and self-defining pedagogical tool.

Q: Which identity is more important to you Mike, your musician or your teacher identity?

M: I think probably for me, they [pause] for me they meld so closely together. Because there isn't a day when I am not playing along with the kids. I am teaching and playing all at the same time they all roll into one. If I had to pinpoint any one thing I guess I would say the teaching, but how I teach is mainly through my horn. I probably play with [pause] 75% of the day I am playing along with the students. So, yah, I guess, it is hard, if you wanted an answer, I guess teaching is first, and the playing is second but the playing, in my view, has to happen as I teach.

Mike is resolute, practical, honest, and thoughtful. These are the lenses through which Mike perceives and conceives of himself and the world. His

straightforwardness and grounding in reality are aspects of his character that enable him to structure his identities so that they complement each other instead of compete with each other. When Mike described his first two years of teaching I was astounded at his description of his skill, knowledge, confidence, the results he achieved from his students, and his work ethic. When I asked him why it was he seemed so knowing and successful beyond his years of life and teaching experiences, Mike explained the following:

You work hard in whatever you do. The situation I grew up in was a little bit different; Mom and Dad were not wealthy people. We had to work pretty hard to carry water in. In the wintertime we had a wood stove. In the winter we lived on the main floor that had a kitchen, living room and mom and dad's bedroom. Brother and I had to crash on the couch. In the wintertime we had the oil heater going in the living room and the wood stove in the kitchen, we burned coal in the wintertime. In the morning we could see our breath. That is how cold it was inside. When you have to get up, you have cows and pigs. Actually, Dad was pretty good, he said, your studies come first. So he always did the chores in the morning but in the evening we helped him. He insisted we always do our homework. He insisted that we always try to do our best, always pushing to make sure that you have a better life for yourself than I have. Education is pretty important. Hard work.

Mike did explain so much.

## Anthony

Q: What was more rewarding for you at this time, playing music or teaching?

A: I am not sure that I am going to be able to make these distinctions throughout. I have never had to choose. I have never had to say I like this better....I don't think I was ever conscious of there must be one or the other, it always felt like a part of a whole.

In genuine response to Anthony's description of a first-time teaching experience with new instrumentalists and as an effort to facilitate conversation about Anthony's teacher self-concepts I asked the following question:

Q: You must be a natural teacher?

A: No, I don't think that is true. Regardless, I don't know what that means.

My third attempt to explore Anthony's understanding of himself as a musician and as a teacher was again, not successful.

Q: When you were in front of these students were you Anthony the musician or Anthony the teacher?

A: I was definitely a music teacher. That was my role.

The following passage represents my fourth and final attempt.

Q: Did those experiences make you feel like more of a musician?

A: Ummmm, I don't ever remember wearing different hats like that. I have a hard time making that distinction. I don't think musicians and

teachers are at any way at odds with each other. If you are a player it doesn't mean you are a teacher and it doesn't mean you couldn't be a teacher. If you are a teacher it doesn't mean you can't be a musician. You don't sort of wear one hat or the other you are always wearing both. That is what it seems like to me. I certainly understand that I was getting more and more musical and being more thorough as a musician. I was starting to be [pause] shifting over from just being a [ ] to understanding music and I always felt that made me a better player because the more I could hook into 'I know why I am doing what I am doing' instead of 'I just heard this'...

Anthony's interview was a detailed description of events and people in his life who have led him to where he is today as a music teacher. He would not discuss himself as a teacher or as a musician. "I just don't see [pause] I don't compartmentalize my life like that, I can't." Anthony provided only a handful of statements where he inadvertently discusses either an aspect of being a teacher or being a musician. There are too few of these statements to make any interpretations about the nature of his self-concepts or to attempt to generate meaning in regards to the relationship between his identities.

Anthony made it clear that he does not have a conflict with his musician and teacher identities because he is not able to speak of himself from these different perspectives. Subsequently, there was no discussion concerning strategies of reconciliation between identities: "I can play just as much as any other musician in town and not have the encumbrance of making \$20,000 a

year....I was working five nights a week while teaching all day. It is quite possible to do.”

Five minutes before the interview was over, while an element of fatigue was setting in, Anthony said, “Now there are three things to try to juggle, teaching life, performance life, and personal life. That gets tricky some times.” We both pretended that he didn’t say it. He then proceeded to provide me with more names of people and bands that he has played with and I just nodded.

### Keith

Keith was privileged to have a very strong, structured, supportive, and musically enriched background. In his humble and candid way, I think Keith would agree with this assessment. His father was a “very good” trumpet player and was active in various bands around the province. His mother was an accomplished musician and a “phenomenal teacher.” She taught him the [ ] until he was 16 years old, at which time, he completed the highest possible grade level on his instrument. He described her as a “great teacher,” “inspirational, tons of energy and enthusiasm and passion,” “a great role model,” and a “wonderful lady.” Except for the references to gender, all of these expressions would also describe Keith. It seems apparent from his interview that many key aspects about Keith, such as his musician and teacher self-concepts, his philosophy and pedagogical approach to teaching music, and

his love of performance and competition are strongly rooted in his experiences of musical development that he had in his childhood and adolescence.

It was less than one minute into the interview and Keith was talking about an “outstanding” [ ] professor he had at the University of Alberta when he diverged into a comment related to sports. “He [the professor] was amazing. He was a real positive influence. It was tough for me because I was playing university [sport] at the same time. Double major in music and phys. ed, singing in the choir, studying [a second study instrument].” After another minute, I asked Keith how much he would practice his [ ] when he was in his teen years, and he replied, “Not enough. An hour or hour and a half. Again it was tough because I was an athlete as well. I played triple A hockey, badminton, basketball, and I played on the volleyball team.” It was at this point that I realized that his participation in athletics was as significant to him as his participation in music. Subsequently, I anticipated that any conflict that Keith would have experienced between being a musician and being a teacher may be more complex because of the salience of his identity as an athlete. His need to explain his involvement in both sports and music was not a new experience for Keith. He has had an entire lifetime of convincing others that both music and sports are important to him, of proving his ability in both activities, and of balancing and reconciling his musician identity with his identity as an athlete.

Keith explained that he thought of himself as a musician when he was approximately eight or nine years old. He said that he worked very hard at his

music, but also admitted that music came easily, it was “a gift.” Part of what made him think of himself as a musician at such a young age was competing in many Kiwanis music festivals. He explained, “I did quite well, first or second in my classes. Yah, I enjoyed that. I enjoyed the competitive aspect and winning things and scholarships and that. At a young age I felt like I was a musician.” Competitions were a very important part of Keith’s musical development because they provided a great deal of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for him to want to continue in music, “...always working towards the goal and wanting to win.”

Through his adolescence, Keith found practicing “...tough because it was so demanding.” He joined the band program in junior high school and played the trumpet (not his principal instrument). It was a mixed blessing for Keith because although he loved it, the musical inefficiencies of his band teacher motivated him to consider education.

I hung in there until grade 11 when I couldn’t handle him anymore. I was really fed up and quit. I was principal trumpet in the jazz band and wind ensemble and I just couldn’t handle him anymore. It was too bad. I really missed that. I really loved that. I did my Drama 30 instead, which was lots of fun. In some shape or form he is a little bit responsible for me becoming a teacher because I felt really ripped off as a musician and as a student. I thought we were getting ripped off in my music education. I thought, “Wow, we need good music teachers out there. Maybe I should think about being a music teacher.”

Keith's love for music, his well-developed skills and knowledge in music, the excellent teacher role models he had through his mother and other athletic coaches, and his natural affinity towards the humanistic aspects of teaching were some of the factors that led him to choose the path of education. He admittedly panicked when it came time to choose a focus within education, but he found the solution, "I just love them both, so I said let's do both and that's what I did." Consequently, Keith's life has three main aspects to it, "...it has been my whole life – it has been my identity as a musician, athlete, and a teacher. That is who I am."

Keith won an athletic scholarship to the college that he attended after high school. The effectiveness of his life strategies to balance both music and athletics was evident when he was admitted into the program as an accomplished musician and as a star athlete. He obviously maintained a high level of performance in both disciplines because he passed the musical performance requirements for the music education program and received a university athletic scholarship. Keith enrolled in the Faculty of Education with a double major in music and physical education in order to accommodate both activities in his life.

### *Experiences of Conflict*

Keith does not experience conflict between his identity as a musician and his identity as a teacher and his interview responses suggest that he has never felt this way. The reasons for this are explored in the section entitled,



“Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation.” Keith identified two areas that are or have been a source of tension to him in regards to the relationship between his musician and athlete identities. First, Keith has experienced discord with deciding whether music or sports should be more important in his life and with the lack of time to do more in both disciplines. Second, he feels a struggle with the need to gain recognition and validation for both identities.

When I asked Keith if he felt a conflict in regards to deciding how to allocate his time to music and to athletics as he was growing up, his reply was a very adamant “Yes!” Keith confessed, “All my life has been a struggle with which way should I really go. My sports or my music?” In his words, this conflict required “unbelievable balance.” When I asked Keith if teaching upset the balance of these identities so that one identity became more important than the other, he replied, “It is a great question, but all of those are right there, musician, athlete, teacher....” Keith speaks regretfully that he does not have time to compose more music or to play in a band. In a discussion about daily practice Keith admitted, “I haven’t kept up with it [technique] for sure.” Despite these comments about wanting to do more music related activities and being realistic about his level of practice since he became a school teacher, he does not experience a struggle or a conflict with knowing who he is as a musician and what he is capable of doing.

Keith does not express concern in regard to feeling supported by others for his teacher identity. He does however, struggle in regards to feeling equally recognized and validated for both his musician and his athletic identities.

Interestingly, both music and sports are reliant upon the demonstration of skills in order to convince others of one's abilities and validity. The need for continual validation for both his musician and his athletic identities is a strain and a source of conflict for Keith.

When I was at Spiritwood College KD Lang was there. I would walk into the classroom with my sweats and everybody else was a musician or a wannabee. It was quite interesting and they would look at me quite a bit differently. I was perceived as an athlete until I sat down and played. Neat, struggling through that. In university I had one music friend in university and the rest were athletes.

At another place in the interview Keith spoke again about his conflict with the discrepant perceptions of others towards his two most salient identities.

My athlete friends respected me as a musician, they understood that. My musician friends were actually more the opposite, they were more like, "you are supposed to be a musician and only be a musician." I still feel that today. "Oh, you are kind of an athlete too, you are supposed to be one of us and you are supposed to be only a musician or a music teacher."

Keith's strategies to negotiate between his identity as a musician and his identity as an athlete successfully address the two sources of conflict that he experiences: the struggle to maintain the needed balance between these two

identities and his need to receive equal recognition and validation from others for these identities.

### *Strategies of Negotiation and Reconciliation*

Keith was successful and continues to be successful at participating in both music and athletics because of the balancing and prioritizing strategies and the remarkable worth ethic that he learned as a child and as an adolescent. In his youth, his parents expected him to practice at strictly scheduled times after school and, in doing this, they taught him the principles and value of prioritizing and balancing his time. “Music always came first when I was growing up – imposed by my mom and dad. First practice and then sports, practice at a certain time of the day for an hour.” Keith was not resentful that his parents made him practice before he was allowed to play sports, in fact, he understands that he learned valuable lessons about balancing time and working hard for something that is important to you. Keith explained, “I wasn’t really against what they wanted, it [sports] was just for me. I was content that I was doing well in my music and then sports was second.” When Keith became a teacher, he relied upon these prioritizing and balancing skills in order to maintain himself as both an athlete and as a musician. After several years at his high school, his music program grew so large that he could no longer provide adequate support to both his program and his coaching endeavors. Similar to his youth, he put his music first and athletics second. He

now teaches only one physical education class and has discontinued coaching the teams.

The work ethic that Keith developed as a child and as an adolescent is a strategy that he has applied in order to be an effective music teacher, physical education teacher, musician, and athlete.

Yes, I continued to play and still continue to play [sport]. Yes, time was pressing and it was hard to balance everything. Absolutely....That was insane I look back on that and say how did I do it. I was practicing volleyball for three hours a day and my [music] program and jazz band. Man, it was crazy. Absolutely long hours. I wouldn't leave the school until 6:30, five or six tournaments in each year, bingos in the summer, took the kids to Hawaii, we went to BC every year for volleyball tournaments. Crazy, crazy stuff. .

Keith probably did not realize as a child and adolescent that the schedule his parents enforced and the work ethic that they expected would be the backbone of his ability to channel and manage his "gifts" and be so successful as a musician, as an athlete, and as a teacher.

Although Keith described music and athletics as equal loves, he admitted that if he had to choose one, he would choose music because it is "my soul" and athletics is "a passion." Music is highly salient to Keith and this element of connection is a strategy that he uses to maintain his identity as a musician.

Keith's affinity and affection for music manifests itself in his need and desire to play music every day. "A day doesn't go by when I don't feel like I am a musician because I am still playing." Keith's definition of what a musician is exemplifies his strategy of loving music and playing music on a daily basis.

Q: How would you define a musician?

K: There is an amateur musician, a professional musician and a wannabee musician. Wow, that is a tough question. I think somebody who has reached a certain level of performance and has committed to it for life. It doesn't mean they have to be professional. They enjoy it and they play it and they continue to play. It doesn't have to be, oh, careful of that one. Most musicians have been given a gift and it is a natural gift and they have discovered it. Somebody who can play at a certain level as a musician. It doesn't matter what instrument but they have to be at a certain level to be considered a true musician.

Q: How high of a level?

K: Um [pause] I don't know, maybe whether they have only gone to five or six or seven level. They might [pause] it is their own perception if they consider themselves a musician is the most important thing. If they carry on with their music that is the most important. Can't have done their grade 5 piano and then quit, that doesn't classify as a musician. You've stumped me, I don't know..I would have to think. Somebody that continues to play music and loves their music and does it for the rest of her life, regardless of [pause] it is a tough question.

Keith is describing his need for the internal gratification and self-assurance that he is a musician by engaging in the acts of playing music every day.

His approach to music, where he enjoys music and plays music for the love of it and for its self-satisfaction, is a strategy that he uses to negotiate the three dominant facets in his life of music, athletics, and teaching. Keith has a variety of performance outlets: he plays for weddings, he plays the [ ] for himself on a daily basis, he plays in a teachers' rock band, he plays at his school music concerts, he plays in public with his sister, he writes music, he conducts his bands, and he models music for his students. Keith participates in many different kinds of performance avenues and they help to maintain his well-developed musician self-concepts and his identity as a musician.

All my life has been a struggle with which way should I really go. My sports or my music? Somehow in teaching I am able to balance both. Still to this day I teach music and phys.ed.

This comment reminds us of Keith's words, "I just love them both, so I said let's do both and that's what I did." Teaching is not an obstacle to Keith's ability to develop and maintain his musician identity, in fact, his teaching assignments have facilitated his participation and guaranteed his validation for both his athletic and musical pursuits. Hence, the salience and prominence of his musician identity and his athlete identity are strengthened by his teacher role.

Keith's first teaching assignment was in an elementary/junior high school and he taught at this school for four years. He explained why he looked to secure a high school position for himself, "I really enjoyed the junior high

experience, but I went on because I needed the more difficult music. I just craved that, for sure.” This comment speaks to the way in which Keith uses teaching as an outlet for his own musical expression.

In our discussion of how his teacher colleagues perceive him, Keith revealed how teaching allows him to demonstrate his musical and athletic skills,

They [staff] knew I was a [sport] player and they saw me playing and they saw me coaching. I would play at my concerts with my sister, or I would accompany my kids. So they would also perceive me as a musician, and as a teacher I was very active in the school.

These performance avenues also allow Keith the opportunity to convince others of his validity as an athlete and as a musician.

I think it is important for the students to perceive you as a musician and for the community to see you as a musician. I think there is a definite level of respect there, “Wow, he can play, her sister plays.” It is something for them to look to as well. That is why I play all the time in the classes today. I grab my [ ] and play. It is very important for perception. Same in my phys. ed. classes, the sports that I do, you've got to back it up. It is very important. The students really respect that.

Keith is an excellent teacher and he works very hard preparing his students for festivals and uses the challenge and competition of festivals as a motivating factor and a learning experience for his students. The external recognition from the festivals is a way that Keith validates his musician and

teacher identities. Similarly, coaching and experiencing his teams win games, tournaments, and provincial championships are a way to validate his athlete and teacher identities.

Teaching is a profession that allows Keith to continue what he has been doing his entire life: balancing music and athletics. Teaching, unlike any other profession, allows him to balance, maintain, and be validated for both identities. Teaching then, is Keith's dominant strategy to maintain and facilitate his musician identity, not his source of conflict.



## **Chapter Seven – COMMON THREADS**

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies that school music teachers use in order to maintain themselves as accomplished musicians despite the demands of their teaching positions. The following chapter identifies and describes common expressions and experiences of the six participants and interprets these commonalities in light of the theoretical framework that supports this study. The identification and presentation of these commonalities are in no way intended to be, nor should they be, interpreted as generalizations. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of six individuals and not to generalize to all music teachers. There are as many differences between the experiences and expressions of the participants as there are commonalities. This author acknowledges the malleable and even mercurial nature of interpretation: different researchers will differ in their interpretations of the same expressions because of the variety of their life experiences. This chapter concludes with a comparison of points of interest generated from this study with the literature that was reviewed in chapters two and four.

### **Commonalities**

The threads of commonality found in the expressions of the participants are able to fit together in such a way that they form a fabric of understanding in relation to this topic. The participants engage in similar

musical activities, they speak about music in similar ways, their backgrounds as musicians share many striking similarities, and they all share an incredible work ethic and ability to prioritize and balance their time. Interestingly, it is one particular area of dissimilarity between the participants that has enabled this author to understand how their individual experiences coalesce into a connection of meaning – what it means when a musician becomes and continues to be a school music teacher.

### *Musician Identities – Salient and Prominent*

Without exception, all of the participants have extremely well-developed identities as musicians. It has been fascinating to witness the use of similar expressions when the participants describe themselves as musicians and when they speak of the activities they engage in that make them feel like musicians. Three classifications of self-concepts are common to all of the participants and they are prolific in their expressions: (a) expert knowledge of music and the instrument; (b) musical experiences and, in particular, playing experiences; and (c) recognition and validity from others. The responses of the participants indicate that a sufficient number of self-concepts are needed from each area of experience in order to form a highly salient musician identity and an identity that is prominent in the individual's identity hierarchy. Different individuals appear to need more of one particular kind of self-concept than other participants need. However, a very striking commonality between the participants is the on-going nature of the musician

identity: the participants are continually seeking to support and fortify their existing self-concepts with new musician experiences. Having an extremely well-developed identity as a musician and maintaining this identity is a fundamental strategy and starting place for living a life where the individual can be both a musician and a teacher. The following sections describe the three categories of self-concepts that were common to the musician identities of the participants. Acquiring and maintaining these self-concepts also constitute negotiating strategies that the individuals use to reconcile their musician and teacher identities.

*Expert knowledge of music and the instrument.*

Acquiring expert knowledge of music and a mastery level of command and competence on their principal instruments are important needs of the participants. Several of the participants had acquired a high level of performance mastery on their principal instrument before they came to teaching and others taught for a few years and then realized that they did not understand how to attain the next level of instrumental skill. One participant described his frustration, "I didn't know how to do things....Whenever I played I wasn't satisfied....There was another level I was looking for." The following is a poignant expression of an individual who taught school music for several years and through his teaching experiences realized that he needed to be a stronger musician and player, "I guess it was at that point when I really started to understand that I was a musician and I wasn't good enough for

what I wanted to be.” Four of the six participants went to American universities to attend graduate school and, in so doing, made significant sacrifices in order to satisfy their desire and need to increase their knowledge and playing abilities. These individuals left their teaching assignments and music programs, they incurred financial debt, and several of the individuals left immediate family while they attended school.

All of the participants appeared to need and worked hard to achieve a level of autonomy and self-sufficiency as a musician in order to feel content as a music teacher. The following expressions exemplify this self-sustaining quality, “...because I know all the things I need to do to sound better.” “I have all the background and I have all the books from my music degree, and still if I need to know something, it is right there.” Developing an expert level of knowledge and skill on one’s principal instrument appears to be an important reconciling strategy. The knowledge from master level teachers provides the most efficient and effective methods and techniques of practicing and, thereby, enables individuals to maintain their performance skills despite having severely limited time to practice. One participant described his practice routine as “maintenance.” The musicians experience comfort in knowing that even though they may not be advancing in ability level on their instruments, at the very least, they are maintaining their current playing level. They also derive satisfaction from knowing that if they needed to play more demanding repertoire for a performance engagement, they could easily “get it back” with some concerted effort. As one participant explained, “I could get it

back, because I am still playing without question. But I would need time to do it, for sure." These individuals spend copious amounts of time teaching and helping others to become musicians and, for their own psychological and emotional health, they rely upon the satisfaction of knowing they have spent the same degree of time and effort on their own music skills and development. The accomplished musicians that participated in this study describe a need they have for continually reassurance that their musical skills are an internalized part of them, that not even teaching can take these skills away from them, and that these skills can be readily called upon and used at any time.

*Musical experiences.*

The individuals who were interviewed for this study spend a great deal of time nourishing and fortifying their musician identities by participating in a regular regime of musical activities and, in particular, musical performances. Although several participants discussed the reinforcement of their musician self-concepts through writing music or doing score analysis, all of the participants described their reliance upon the performance of music as the most fundamental way to confirm their self-concepts of themselves as musicians. The significance of these performing acts is evident in the highly detailed and articulate manner that the participants described these experiences. It was intriguing how the transcripts of these interviews were absolutely filled with names and details of performances they have

participated in. The participants described what groups they play with or have played with, how long the groups have been together, how long they have played with these groups, where they recently played, and the names of other accomplished musicians in the group. The detailed nature of these expressions speaks to the way in which engaging in musical performances is an extremely significant and personal form of validation for a musician. I did not get the sense that the participants were providing these names in order to impress or convince me that they were musicians. There was, however, a sense that each engagement functions like a building block and forms the structure of who they are as musicians. One participant explained how he recently played at the Winspear with a particular musical group, "It was probably one of the best performances I ever had. I thought, wow, where did that come from?" Performances reaffirm the individual's confidence in his or her playing ability. Another participant explained, "Whether for your own ego or you want people to consider you as part of that community....But you take whatever you can because it makes you feel like you are more of a professional musician." Performance experiences help individuals feel "fresh" and "energized" and they motivate the musicians to strive for new musical goals. "Okay, I'll take this gig because if I take this gig it will force me to buy some time somewhere to get me back up for this gig." Musical experiences and, in particular, performing experiences, are central to the creation of new musician self-concepts and the act of recalling these musical performances

reinforces the individual's existing self-concepts – both of which sustain the musician identity.

*Recognition and validity from others.*

The need for recognition and validity from others for their identities as musicians was one of the most striking facets of commonality between the self-concepts of the individuals that were interviewed for this study. The participants look for validity from a variety of sources: students, the community, fellow musician colleagues, music teacher colleagues, and through comparison of their skills with other musicians. “It was important to be able to tell my students I was performing...” “I know that I am a musician, I totally know that people call me a musician.” One participant explained why it is important for his students and the community to see him as a musician, “I think there is a definite level of respect there. That is why I play all the time in the class...it is very important for perception...you've got to back it up.” Successful student performances appear to provide the teacher with some measure of validation as a musician, however, the most stabilizing and significant source of validation is the recognition that they receive for their own musical performances.

*Hard Work, Priorities, and Balance*

Without exception, all of the participants in this study describe their ability and desire to work extremely hard. Their ability to play their

instruments at an expert level attests to their ability to work hard. This work ethic is the primary means by which they are able to prioritize their time and balance the responsibilities of teaching in order to make music a fundamental part of their lives. The participants also share similar personal qualities that seem to accompany their outstanding work ethic and prioritizing skills: keen intelligence, determination, and talent.

The individuals in this study display a tremendous amount of fortitude in regards to maintaining themselves as musicians. These individuals have been practicing and performing music for decades and, yet, they still speak of how they actively seek to learn more about music and their instruments, to play new repertoire, to learn new skills, and the way in which they apply this same kind of work ethic and fortitude to their teaching. Their faithful adherence to a practice schedule is a testimony to their tireless penchant for growth and development. One participant described his days in university in regard to his instrumental studies, "I worked really, really, really hard." This same quality of fortitude is applied to the way in which these individuals teach their music classes, "If you want your program to go far you have to be prepared to give it, and be prepared for the time it requires of you." Another participant shared, "I pour out my heart and soul. Come festival time, I am spent and done because I give everything I've got." Their inspiring work ethic and perseverance is a critical strategy that enables these individuals to be successful as both musicians and teachers.



### *“Connection” to Music*

The participants share a deep personal affection for music. Several individuals expressed this affinity as a “connection” to music. The respondents use powerful language to describe this quality, “I love the sound of the [ ] and it gives me so much satisfaction to play it.” One individual described how it felt like his arm was being cut off when he was in a recent living situation where he was not permitted to play music in public. Another participant described music “...as my soul” and explicated his relationship to music as a lifelong commitment. These metaphors speak to the depth and personal nature of music in the participants’ lives. Music is not a hobby or simply the external application of skills and knowledge, rather, music is an integral part of their formation, substance, and sustenance as a person and constitutes an intimate part of how they live life. This “connection” to music is also an important reconciling strategy because it has a cohesive effect upon the musician self-concepts of the individual. This “connection” is a glue that draws these individuals back to the most fundamental part of themselves when report cards, booking buses for trips, band parent meetings, broken instruments, detentions, and staff meetings all draw them away from music.

This author is compelled to reconsider the conceptualization of the musician identity as a separate identity from the personal identity of the individual (as described in chapter three). The literature pertaining to the life-span development of musicians suggests that there would be a sufficient number of self-concepts formed through the course of the individual’s life and

from his or her life experiences to create an identity as a musician. However, as described in the previous paragraph, the responses of the musicians in this study in regard to how they feel about music and themselves as musicians, are so strikingly personal that it appears that there is no distinguishing line between the person and the musician. When these individuals speak of themselves, they do not say, "I am Patrick and I am a musician," rather, they speak of themselves as, "I am a musician and my name is Patrick." Their sense of personalness to music is stunning. Therefore, the musician identity of a highly accomplished musician does not represent another layer of identity that is separate from the core of the person, the musician identity is the person and the person is a musician. Being a musician is exactly that, a way of being in the world: a way of perceiving life and others and a way of functioning and interacting in the world. Being a musician is the integration of the entire person with music for an entire lifetime. The individual may develop other identities, but these are shaped and affected by the musician lenses through which the individual perceives and interacts with the world.

The strategies discussed thus far, the well-developed and salient musician identity (through the collection of knowledge, musical experiences, and validating self-concepts), the ability to work hard, prioritize, and balance time, and the individual's personal connection to music, all work in an interrelated and interdependent way. For example, without the ability to work hard, an individual would not develop the necessary skills to be a musician

and would not possess a well-developed musician identity. Without a “connection” to music, the individual would not have the fortitude to continue in music and reach an advanced level of playing. It seems that the musician identity, created through hard work, motivated by a “connection” to music, and integrated so profoundly and intimately with the personal identity of the individual has a unique stalwart strength and fortitude that fortifies the individual with a practical perspective and approach to the demands of teaching. Knowing this, we turn our attention to the final stage of possible reconciliation between the musician and teacher identities of an individual and, in this way, come to understand how these threads of commonality that have been discussed thus far are woven together.

### *Music Teacher Identity*

The participants in this study use very strong and personal language to describe how they feel about music and their relationship with music – they do not speak about teaching in the same way. One individual made the observation in the middle of his interview that even though he is concerned with performing and practicing regularly, he does not have this same concern in regard to teaching, “I never go, I haven’t taught a class, I’m not going to teach for two months, I am concerned about that.” With very few exceptions, the participants were not able to speak about teaching without making some kind of reference to music. This is exemplified by one participant’s self-assessment, “I have always viewed myself as a teacher first and player

second. I want to always try to play the best I can play.” This individual conceptualizes himself as a teacher, however, he defines a good teacher as someone who can play an instrument well. Another participant described how the nature of his concern for his students is related to music, “I am more concerned about the whole student as a musician and how music can relate to other aspects of their lives and how music can enrich them further....” One participant explained how his satisfaction as a teacher is related to the music he is teaching,

It is the literature and the music that really keeps me going. It is the demands and challenges of playing good music is the biggest thing, music that not only satisfies them but also me as well or else I can't do it.

These expressions are in contrast to the experiences of one individual who taught only academic subjects for one full year after he completed his masters degree, “It was liberating because it really made me think of myself as a teacher.” These musicians came to teaching because of music and, subsequently, they see teaching almost exclusively through music.

It was the differences in the way that the participants spoke about themselves as musicians and teachers and how this language related to their years of teaching experience that suggested a reconceptualization of what a teacher identity means to an accomplished musician. The participant who had the least amount of teaching experience was only able to speak of himself as a musician who teaches, “I was a musician teaching a class.” The

participant who had taught for the most number of years explained that music and teaching were so entwined with each other that he could not separate them. The difference in the amount of teaching experience that the participants have suggests that there is a significant difference in the number of self-concepts they possess about themselves as teachers. Also, it appears that the amount of teaching experiences also affects the relationship and dynamic between the participants' teaching self-concepts and their musician identities: The longer the individuals have been music teachers the more reconciled they are with the conflict between the demands of teaching in relation to who they are as musicians. This reconciliation does not compromise the salience or the individuals' integrity to their musician identities, in fact, the musician identities of these individuals remains strong and salient. This suggests that the more teaching experience music teachers have the more interrelated their concepts of teaching are with their concepts of themselves as musicians.

This observation and interpretation suggests that musicians who teach music may experience natural stages of negotiation between their teacher and musician self-concepts. The ultimate stage of negotiation results in the integration and amalgamation of one's musician self-concepts with one's teaching self-concepts and the formation of a new identity – a music teacher identity. This may explain why a critical pattern emerged in the language of the participants interviewed in this study: the longer the individual had taught music, the more frequently he referred to himself as a “music teacher” and the

less frequently he referred to himself as a “teacher.” Perhaps, achieving this amalgamation and eventual identity formation represents the highest form of resolution and reconciliation of conflicts between being a musician and being a teacher. The music teacher identity acts as a bridge to connect together what is the same and what is different (Bosma, Graafsma, Grotevant & de Levita, 1994): to connect together the person as a musician and his role as a teacher.

The following paragraph provides examples of the expressions and language that the participants provided that illustrate how they experience integration between their musician and teacher self-concepts. One participant explained his belief that it is a “connection to music” that enables music teachers to stay in the profession despite it being such a “hard job.” He described a music teacher he knew that was an excellent teacher but he did not play music and he did not love music and, therefore, he was only able to help his students produce music in a mechanical way and eventually chose to stop teaching music in order to teach a different subject. One participant described the activities that he engages in that make him feel like a musician, “...when I work with kids we talk about music and advanced concepts. I play for the students every day...” I asked this same participant to explain why he felt that he needed to play regularly in public performances and he replied, “Because it feeds a certain aspect of the teacher side of me. The more music I make, the more excited about being a teacher I am.” This individual, who I believe, has a very well-developed music teacher identity, feels like a

musician when he teaches music and when he plays music it feeds his excitement about teaching. These comments demonstrate the reciprocity between musician and teacher self-concepts and their symbiotic relationship when they are brought together to form a music teacher identity.

This connectedness was also evident by the statement that all of the participants, except for one, expressed: in order to be an excellent music teacher, one must be an excellent musician. It seems that this proclamation helped to encourage and ensure the amalgamation of their musician and teacher self-concepts. Like Scott, using this philosophy as a life mantra ensured that the participants did not neglect their musician identity. The participants expressed this in the following ways, "...if you are going to be a music education teacher you better be able to play your instrument" and "...you can't be a good music teacher unless you are a good musician and know your stuff."

The participants in this study do not allow the fulfillment that they feel from teaching to replace or, to be a substitute for, their own musical fulfillment and who they are as musicians. The formation of a music teacher identity does not negate the individual's musician identity, instead, the music teacher identity borrows or relies upon the musician self-concepts that make up the musician identity. For the participants in this study, their musician identities and their music teacher identities remain in a mutually beneficial relationship: they reinforce and support each other. The relationship is much like a marriage: the two parts support each other and become increasingly

connected so that over time, it may be difficult to perceive where one stops and where the other begins. However, without the separateness, or the strength of the individual parts, the structure is compromised and weakened. For some, this relationship is closer than it is for others and this may explain why one of the participants found it very difficult to speak of himself from the individual perspectives of musician and teacher. The core and foundation of the music teacher identity is the musician identity with its plethora of musician self-concepts. Hence, the health and sustenance of the music teacher is directly related to the continued nourishment and care of the individual as a musician.

This interpretation of the relationship between being a musician and being a teacher is unlike Bennett's (1985) suggestion for art teachers that they make a decided break between the artistic side of their lives and the teacher side of their lives in order to participate fully in the creation of art. The music teachers in this study clearly describe their need to be creative, "energized," and "fresh" musicians in the classroom. They all describe how being active musicians benefits their teaching, however, their "soul," their "passion," and perhaps even their motivation to keep teaching, comes from being a musician.

There are numerous common rationalizing strategies that the participants in the present study use to help them negotiate and reach this point of amalgamation between their musician and teacher self-concepts. Several participants described their sense of resolution with their personal



playing abilities in relation to other musicians who are full-time performers: “I am not so-and-so, I do not do what they do.” However, several participants spoke with pride that, as teachers, they have skills that full-time performers do not have: “They do not do what I do.” All of the participants, except for one, volunteered an explanation as to why they chose to not to be full-time musicians. These rationalizations were as follows: “Okay, do I want to do this the rest of my life? “I wasn’t willing to dedicate myself to that kind of life or that kind of commitment to life.” Many of these individuals also reasoned that teaching is a way to pay the bills in order to allow them more freedom to pursue musical activities and, ultimately, have more joy when they play music: “Teaching pays the bills so music can be fun.” Modifying one’s personal definition of what a musician is and what it means to be a musician is another rationalizing strategy that many of the individuals used in this study. For example, when Philip determined that he did not want to be a full-time performing musician he included teaching and conducting as other facets of his personal definition of musician.

Although I continue to use the term “strategies” in this chapter and in this document, I am persuaded to believe that the negotiation and reconciliation of musician and teacher identities is actually a journey and, more accurately, it is the journey of making life-directing choices. The words of one participant echo in my mind, “I was not prepared to make that kind of commitment to life.” This individual was referring to not being willing to make the needed sacrifices in his personal life (which for him, also meant family life)

in order to be a full-time musician. In actuality, these accomplished musicians who are music teachers are making a commitment to that kind of life – they are making many sacrifices in other aspects of their life in order to keep their musician identities strong and to fortify themselves as music teachers. For these individuals McCall and Simons (1966) words contain much meaning, “...in the act of “choosing” we veto other choices...” (p. 11).

For the music teachers in this study, being a musician is the core of who they are and they work diligently and conscientiously to maintain themselves as musicians. Over time, they eventually reach a place where teaching and being a musician work in synchronicity and benefit and fortify each other. This place of mutuality is never without a level of tension that is related to the need to balance the needs of both identities. The words of Maxine Greene (1978) relate and add richly to these conclusions,

I believe that teachers willing to take the risk of coming in touch with themselves, of creating themselves, have to exist in a kind of tension; because it is always easier to fall back into indifference, into mere conformity. (p. 30)

Understanding how the common threads of this study fit together also provides meaning to a comment that a participant made a year ago, a comment that sat uncomfortable without a place in my understanding. At the end of this one particular interview I asked the individual if he felt it was necessary to be an accomplished musician in order to be a good teacher. He replied, “I don’t think it is essential. If it was, then why is it the Stanley

Brown's and the Kelly Wood's are successful music teachers? Because, they just love teaching." The group of accomplished musicians who are music teachers that were interviewed for this study want to be more than "just" teachers, they also want to be musicians and they don't "just love teaching," they also love music because that is who they are at the core of their beings – they are musicians. This drive and desire to maintain themselves as musicians is both their fuel and the source of their tension.

### Comparison to the Literature

The musician and teacher identity literature suggests that most teachers experience conflict or tension between their musician and teacher identities (Bouij, 1998; Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Mark, 1998; Roehampton University, website, June 2004; White, 1996; Wilson, 1998). The six participants that were interviewed for this study were strikingly homogenous in the ease with which they were able to describe and define themselves as musicians. This is understandable considering that the first criterion for participation in the study was that the individuals be accomplished musicians. One participant, who had only a few years of teaching experience, had difficulty defining and conceptualizing himself as a teacher, subsequently, he described the relationship between being a musician and being a teacher as one of conflict. The other five participants were able to talk about themselves as teachers in relation to the subject of music and have well established identities as music teachers. The formation of this identity is the result of

many years of combining the individuals' worlds of music and teaching, of finding the elements of compatibility between the two worlds, and negotiating a balance between being a musician and being a teacher. Today, when these individuals speak, after 10 or close to 20 years of teaching music, they do not speak of a conflict as much as they describe a tension related to the constant need to balance their time in order to support each identity with the necessary and appropriate experiences.

There are several points of interest in the related literature that correspond with expressions that the participants in this study have made. Most of the participants in this study are involved in part-time performance engagements in the way that Clinton (1991), Mark (1998), and Wilson (1998) describe as being typical of their participants. All of the participants in the present study indicated that they did not want to pursue a full-time performance career and many described the financial benefits and security of a teaching career as enabling them to indulge themselves in musical pursuits. This sentiment corresponds with the responses that Clinton (1991) obtained in his study.

The literature related to the identity struggle for musicians who become teachers indicates that the longer the individual is a teacher, the more likely it is that his or her conflict will diminish in intensity (Bernard, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Kerchner, 2002; Mark, 1998; Wilson, 1998). The experiences of the participants in this study correspond with this finding. These findings also support the teacher life cycle models of Sikes (1985) and

Huberman (1989) that describe how the commitment level of the teacher swings back and forth like a pendulum until the individual finds a level of commitment towards teaching that satisfies his or her psychological, emotional, and physical needs. In the case of the music teacher, his level of commitment would be the compromise between teaching responsibilities and musical development. Interestingly, the participants in this study never allowed their level of commitment to teaching to swing so far that they lost their connection to and ability to play music. This suggests that it may be crucial for a music teacher to decide upon a level of commitment to teaching sooner than it is necessary for teachers of other subject areas.

Clinton (1991) found that artistic development was important to the teachers he interviewed primarily because they felt that it helped them to be better teachers. Cox (1999) determined that many teachers in his study described the music making in the school with their students as more meaningful to them than pursuing their own musical goals. The participants in the present study did describe how their personal musical development helped them to be better teachers and that student performing successes helped to confirm their musician identities. However, the teachers were very clear that the verifications to their musician identities from teacher role acts were not a sufficient substitute for their need to be recognized and supported for their own musician acts of practicing and performing. Being a music teacher was a not a substitute for being a musician. Hence, the expressions of the participants in this study correspond more closely with the participants

in Wilson's (1998) study who used the commonalities between teaching music and being a musician as a source of resolution to the tensions between them. The participants of the present study, who have an average of 11 years of teaching experience, agreed with Wilson's participants in that "The line between the two roles becomes even finer the more the crafts are practiced" (p. 160).

One of the most significant connections to the literature is the way in which the life stories and expressions of the participants in this study correspond with the three factors that Burland and Davidson (2000) describe as being important determinants as to whether or not a musician will successfully shift to an expert level of musical ability as an adult. The three factors are as follows: (a) music must be the main determinant of the individual's self-concept, (b) the individual must have a repertoire of positive experiences with others and within the related institutions, and (c) the individual must have methods of coping in order to "...help the individual to adapt to new experiences and challenges" (p. 134). The participants' life experiences center on music and form the basis of their musician self-concepts and result in the formation of strong musician identities that they have as they commence their teaching careers. The participants related that they seek out performing experiences and playing experiences in order to support and validate their identities as musicians. They also described strong emotional connections to music and being a musician. This "connection" contributes to their intrinsic motivation to maintain a strict schedule of

practicing in order to maintain themselves as musicians. Their ability to work hard and prioritize their time to meet the demands of both teaching and being a musician are fundamental “method[s] of coping” between the pressures of the two demanding careers. The development of the music teacher identity is the most significant “method of coping” and is the fundamental way that the participants in this study were able to reconcile their musician and teacher identities.

The participants in this study care about their students and about giving to their students and they are not satisfied to assign a “role” status to their teaching (Britzman, 1992). However, their musician identities are life investments that they are also not willing to sacrifice. The creation of a music teacher identity allows teachers to combine their sense of self with their responsibilities as teachers. In this way, individuals are able to teach more than a subject: they are able to teach in a personal environment of mutual functioning that allows for both compromise and consistency and, therefore, they are able to also teach who they are.

## **Chapter Eight – SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND PROBLEMATICS**

### **Summary**

#### *Research Questions and Method*

The extant literature confirms that the majority of music teachers experience conflict between their musician and teacher identities (Bouij, 1998; Clinton, 1991; Cox, 1999; Mark, 1998; Roehampton University, website, June 2004; White, 1996; Wilson, 1998). There are many accomplished musicians who maintain their level of playing and reputation as musicians and have full-time music teaching positions in schools. The purpose of this study was to describe how accomplished musicians who become music teachers negotiate and reconcile their musician identity with their teacher identity.

The following research questions were used to help focus the study:

- 1) If the individual experiences conflict between his musician identity and his teacher identity, how is this conflict experienced?
- 2) How does being a teacher affect the salience and the prominence of his musician identity?
- 3) What strategies does the individual use in order to reach a compromise between the demands of his musician and teacher identities?
- 4) Does the individual feel resolved with this negotiated balance between his musician and teacher identities?



The present study used a multiple case study research methodology in order to obtain rich descriptions of the experiences of the six participants. Only those who teach or who have taught music in the secondary schools, or grades 7 through 12, were used in this study and the participating teachers were required to have a minimum of two years of teaching experience. The definition of an accomplished musician was defined as follows: The individual must be a member of the Musicians' Union, or have completed a Bachelor of Music Degree, or have achieved the highest level of conservatory grades on his or her principal instrument. Selected participants were not restricted to a particular school district or geographic area. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire and complete one or two semi-structured interviews. A pilot study was conducted to test the usefulness and effectiveness of the research questions. The common experiences of the participants are not generalizable to other music teachers.

### *Conceptual Frameworks*

To conceptually frame this research, a composite model explicating the relationship between the self, one's identities, and the self-concepts that constitute one's identities was constructed from a large corpus of the self and identity literature. The multiple identity structure of the self and its hierarchical arrangement of identities is another key feature of this framework. The author relied heavily upon the theories of the symbolic interactionist and social psychological perspectives. The literature that explores the life development of

musicians describes the plethora of significant experiences that a musician has in his or her life. This understanding combined with the study's model of self and identity suggests that the life accumulation of the individual's musician self-concepts will form a salient musician identity that places prominently in his or her identity hierarchy. The literature suggests that a teacher identity is a process of "formation" and "transformation" as occupational expectations and previous teaching experiences are integrated with the individual's personal life history (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Bullough & Knowles, 1991; Britzman, 1992; Hamachek, 1999; McLean, 1999; Sachs, 2001; Tusin, 1999). These three theoretical frameworks function as interpretive tools and enable the author to bring together and apply meaning to the expressions of the participants in a coherent and consistent way.

#### *Research Questions Answered*

The six participants interviewed in this study experience conflict or tension between their musician and teacher identities in two fundamental ways. Firstly, they struggle with balancing their time and energy in order to maintain themselves as musicians and fulfill their teaching responsibilities (and in the case of one participant, with his participation in sports). The second area of tension that the participants experience is the need to acquire continual support and recognition from others for the maintenance of their musician identities. The musician act that provides the musicians with the greatest degree of validation and legitimation is participating in public performances.

The question of how being a teacher affects the salience and prominence of an individual's musician identity is answered by an analysis of the negotiating and reconciling strategies that the participants in the present study apply in their lives.

The creation and maintenance of a well-developed musician identity, through the collection of knowledge, musical experiences, and validating self-concepts, is the fundamental reconciling strategy that the participants in this study use. The ability to work hard, prioritize, balance time, and the individual's personal connection to music work in an interrelated way to maintain his or her musician identity and ensure that it is highly salient and prominent in his or her identity hierarchy.

The participants who have the most teaching experience view teaching through their perspectives as musicians and therefore, were not able to talk about teaching without making a reference to music. This suggests that the highest form of reconciliation between one's musician and teacher identities is the amalgamation of teacher self-concepts and musician self-concepts to form a music teacher identity. The music teacher identity and the musician identity share common musician self-concepts and this contributes to a compatibility and sense of resolution in the individual's life. Being a teacher does not diminish the participants' ability to be musicians, in fact, being a teacher has provided them with opportunities to use their musician skills on a daily basis and engage in musical activities outside of the school day and, in this way, teaching reinforces their musician identities. Conversely, participating in

musician acts increases their skills that they rely upon to be excellent music teachers.

The five participants, who have extensive teaching experience, expressed a strong sense of contentment and resolution with who they are as music teachers, however, they also describe an on-going tension that exists between their musician and teacher identities. The participants feel pressure to constantly balance and prioritize their time in order to maintain their self-concepts as musicians – to neglect themselves as musicians jeopardizes both the musician and the teacher.

### *Reconceptualizations*

The experiences of the participants caused the author to reconceptualize the distinction that was made in the opening framework of the study between the personal identity of an individual and his or her musician identity. The words of the participants spoke of music in relation to their lives in an unquestionably intimate and personal way. The participants do not speak of music as something that is added on to who they are; they speak of music as who they are. The musician identity is an emotionally and psychologically stabilizing factor in their lives. Subsequently, this author suggests that a serious and accomplished musician may have a personal identity that is fundamentally amalgamated with musician self-concepts and, essentially, it is one identity.

The process of teacher identity formation for a musician will have special meaning in view of the unique nature of his or her personal identity that is comprised of a lifetime of musician self-concepts. The musician who becomes a teacher combines occupationally related concepts with concepts of the self as a musician and these form into a music teacher identity. The identity of the musician is very strong and salient and the music teacher identity shares common self-concepts with the musician identity. For these reasons, the formation process of becoming a teacher and developing a music teacher identity makes minor transformations to the person. Participants in this study describe being a more patient person, more confident, less self-centered, however, they did not indicate significant changes as a musician (which this study suggests is also the person). In fact, these individuals describe a level of mutuality between their musician identities and their music teacher identities: they rely upon each other and fortify each other. These individuals work diligently and conscientiously to maintain a balance between identities and yet always respect that the unique nature of the musician identity requires continual recognition and support. The present study suggests that the sustenance of the music teacher who is an accomplished musician is dependent upon the preservation of who he or she is, namely, a musician.

#### Limitations of the Study

Because the research is concerned with self-knowing and self-understanding, observation and the collection of documents is beyond the

scope of this study. Issues of gender are not of interest to this study. This study is reliant upon the truthfulness, the knowingness, and the openness of its participants. The study is limited to what the participants are willing to share and what they are able to share in regards to their experiences and self-understanding. The study is limited in complete candor and objectivity because of the researcher's professional relationship with the participants as music education colleagues. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, the author was limited in the amount of contextual background she could provide in regards to their individual teaching environments.

A significant limitation of this study is related to one of the most defining features of the self, namely, the unknowability of the self. To apply structures to what, by nature, is unstructured is essentially an act of futility; the application of structure to humanness is what traditional theories of the self attempt to do. Humbly, this author acknowledges that her study is limited by its reliance upon the symbolic interactionist perspective and other social psychological theories of the self as the basis of its interpretative framework.

The author chose to situate her study in traditional perspectives of the self and identity for several reasons: (a) the extant literature on music teacher identity uses the symbolic interactionist and social psychological orientations as their theoretical bases and, therefore, this study represents an extension of these existing studies; (b) the author found relevance and relatedness between her experiences as a musician and the conceptualizations in this literature; and (c) it provided the author with the structure and language that she needed to

conceptually manage the open-endedness of the topic of identity and the diverseness of multiple identities. Acknowledging the limitations of the traditional theories of the self is not intended to negate the usefulness of this study. It does suggest, however, that there are many other interpretative orientations to the self that could be used and would yield additional valuable insights.

### Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited to identifying the strategies that individuals use to negotiate and reconcile their identities. This study did not attempt to discuss how reconciling conflicting identities affects an individual's professional practice as a teacher. This would be a worthy topic for future study. In addition to observing the participants teach music classes, the study could also include observations of the participants engaging in musical performances. These are the sources of data collection that proved to be very informative in Wilson's (1998) study of performing musicians who also teach school music. These sources of understanding would further probe the relationship and interrelatedness between a music teacher's musician and teacher self-concepts.

It would also be useful to investigate the experiences of individuals who are accomplished musicians who have not been able to reconcile and negotiate their musician and teacher identities. A study of this nature could explore how the loss of an individual's musician identity may affect his or her teaching

practices and the impact that this loss may have on his or her psychological and emotional well-being.

To date, there is very little research on the topic of musician identity (Hargreaves, Miell & Macdonald, 2002). The present study suggests that an individual's musician identity is a highly personal and intimate part of who the person is. The subject of the musician identity deserves to be explored for its own sake and also for its relatedness to other identities that are based upon a lifetime of investment of the self.

### Problematics

#### *The Place of Music and Music Education in Society as a Problematic*

You work really hard, the music educators don't want you to be too good of a musician because they think you are split or you will spend all your time pursuing gigs or whatever. The music guys don't want you in education because you don't bring any credibility to the program if you are not a high level enough performer. I have come to terms with all that, I get it, that is fine. (Scott)

The heart of these expressions speaks to the lack of credibility that Scott feels as a musician and as a music teacher. References to being valued or being recognized as a musician and as a music teacher absolutely saturate the pages of the participants' transcripts. Several participants linked the feelings of credibility that they receive from one identity to the feelings of credibility received from another identity. For example, Keith explained, "...there is more



respect for musicians who are teaching music,” whereas, others described feelings of increased respect as teachers because they are musicians. Scott summarized his concern for the way society devalues music and musicians, “Maybe all of us really feel that we never really get our due and that could be where music is in society.”

I am not a philosopher and I only offer the most humble of ideas to contribute to this discussion of why we experience a lack of societal value for music and music education. The value of music education may be related to the value of music. For Plato, music was a crucial component of citizenship education and for Aristotle, music was an educational tool to help create a noble person and for intellectual relaxation (Mark, 2002). Maxine Greene (2001) suggests that music is a vehicle for aesthetic education and aesthetic education is fundamental to the cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and imaginative development of people and their appreciation of the world’s plurality. I suggest that the value of music is confused with the purpose or function of music. Music is a form of human expression and it is as natural, if not more natural, than language. Music is a part of our humanness. Human expression most frequently takes place in the context of function: we may express ourselves for religious reasons, for social reasons, for entertainment purposes, or for purely aesthetic pleasure. These purposes for human expression are mistakenly assumed to be the function or purpose for music and have become the measures by which society determines the worth or value of music. In so doing, we find it difficult to speak about music without relating it to

one of these functions. If we peel away and separate these modes of functionality we see music for its intrinsic worth – for its ability to express humanness and not for what it expresses or the effects that ensue from its expression.

Society's functional orientation to music places a functional expectation on music education. This orientation is illustrated by the following definition of music education,

The incorporation of music training from preschool to postsecondary education is common in North America and Europe, because involvement in music is thought to teach basic skills such as concentration, counting, listening, and cooperation while also promoting understanding of language, improving the ability to recall information, and creating an environment more conducive to learning in other areas.

(Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia)

The use of the words “incorporation” and “training” speak to the modern perspective of music as an instrument of economic function in society. Perhaps the reason why Scott and others feel that there is “no credibility” in music education is because society has not come to a consensus as to what the functional value of music is or should be. This confusion is related to society's basic uncertainty as to how to live life in our modern world. This confusion is counterbalanced by questions that gnaw at us and represent a return to the innateness and humanness of music and deny this functional perspective: Why does music have the ability to reach deeply into the emotional and

psychological fabric of people? Why are some people driven to devote their entire lives to playing and studying music? Why are singing and emotional responses to music so natural to babies? Music is not about function in relation to living; music is about living in our humanness and exploring and discovering who and what we are by our engagement in music and our appreciation of music.

Society places great value on usefulness, commodity, and production. Just as society attempts to find function in music, there is pressure to transform the performance of music into a product – musical performances as the manifestation of production and viability. The value of music and the musician is further lost in this culture of productivity and sadly, the value of music education and the music teacher is confused by this culture. Musical performance are not necessary if the purpose of music education is to be better in math and science and, yet, this reasoning contradicts the principle that its value is contingent upon production and musical performances are needed as the proof of its viability. Music education is confused by these conflicting messages. The functional expectations for music and the culture of productivity leave music education in a nebulous state that ultimately affects its perceived value and affects the quality of music education programs.

Alternative models exist for music education and music educators. These models reflect the way that some societies acknowledge and value the intrinsic meaning of music. Mark (1998) explains that the Austrian model of music education is in contrast to the “*performance-orientation in North America*”

(p. 9). "In Austria *music-making* is only one of four approximately equivalent elements, which primarily does not include appearance in public..." (p. 9). The Austrian system of separating the performance of music and the making of music may be a result of their philosophy of the value of music and music education.

Music education should make the young person aware of music as an essential part of human existence, widen his horizon of experience, provide access to the beauty of art and awaken the joy of music making. Accordingly the following specific teaching goals are defined which should be transmitted in each grade in equal proportion: (1) singing, music-making and musical creation; (2) information about music; (3) appreciation and interpretation of musical works; (4) music and society.

(p. 9)

The Austrian appreciation of music for non-functional reasons seems to remove the pressure and need for musical demonstrations of performance.

In Cuba, the organizational structure of the music school allows the music teachers to work as professional musicians outside of the school. The instrumental music teachers work approximately five hours a day, four days a week. They are given Fridays to work on lesson preparation. The history and theory instructors teach fewer hours because of the increased class sizes. Also, the organization system of the professional musical ensembles "allows Cuban music teachers to be employed both as professional musicians and as educators" (Lorenzino, 2006, p. 97). The large professional ensembles

schedule their rehearsals in the morning to allow teachers to work in a musical ensemble in the mornings and teach in the school in the afternoons. Music educators are allowed to take a one year sabbatical from their teaching positions in order to tour with professional organizations and are guaranteed their jobs when they return.

The Cuban society is willing to make monetary sacrifices to reduce the teaching load of its music teachers and build flexibility into their schedules in order to allow them to maintain and develop their musician skills. This system not only acknowledges the unique needs of the music teacher to maintain him or herself as a musician, it also has benefits to society at large: it ensures a high quality of instruction for Cuban students and it encourages their teachers' contributions to the musical richness of the community.

### *The Self and Identity as a Problematic*

In 1998, Baumeister (as cited in Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 72) noted that there had been more than 31,000 papers published on the subject of the self in the last 25 years. Despite the immensity of this corpus of literature it has failed to coalesce into an accepted and, perhaps more importantly, an encapsulating theory about the identity of the self. Western traditional theories of the self, such as George Mead (1934), McCall and Simmons (1966), and Gergen (1971) are not useful by themselves, but they are useful as stepping-stones to what we understand today. These writings have confirmed that we have the ability to reflect and think about ourselves and they have propelled decades of

discussion by asking the question, “How should we conceptualize the organization of the self?” The postmodern writings of the self, such as Taylor (1991), Giddens (1991), and Gergen (1991) are not useful by themselves, but they are useful because they highlight the need to situate a discussion of the self in an understanding of our complex social world and these writings position the consideration of the “other” as a necessity and not simply as an option. Postmodern writings have initiated hundreds of discussions by asking the question, “Should we apply organizing structures to the self?” Perhaps the problem we face of the unknowability of the self suggests that the Eastern religious and philosophical traditions have the most accurate orientation to this question – that a knowable self does not exist.

The danger of asking the question of “Who am I?” is the possibility that the answers to this inherently inward question create psychological boundaries that preoccupy the individual and seduce the individual into a state of complacency. This complacency prevents the individual from asking, “Where am I in relation to others?” To not ask this question is to be blind to our boundedness to the philosophies, the culture, the assumptions, and our relationships to the cultures and the humanity that surround us.

The preoccupation with the quest for understanding the self is only the first step towards what human beings desire to achieve. We strive for understanding of the self and its identities in the hope that it will provide coherence and consistency in our lives, that in turn, leads to meaning and that ultimately, results in a profound sense of self-fulfillment. Searching for

understanding of the self is not the end goal; rather, it is a means to arrive at a final state of satisfaction with one's self. Hence, the self is a process of living the journey of life. Our identity is only a conceptual manifestation of our choices and our cravings and, therefore, represents a path on the journey that takes us in a particular direction. Although we want to believe that our human psychological journey culminates in a place of ultimate peace with who we are, our reality, or what is "real," suggests that there is no such place in one's self that will provide this kind of coherence and meaningfulness. Yet, we are constantly drawn back to the innateness of this task; to the way in which we yearn for it, our ability to visualize it, and the way we strive so diligently to achieve it. Our penchant for turning inwards suggests not only its innateness, but also its possibility.

We tend to think of the mind as the ultimate organizer that is capable and responsible for realizing this fulfillment, but perhaps, the mind is only the gateway. Perhaps we confuse our need to understand the self with the need to understand something beyond the self - the spiritual. Perhaps when we realize that the spiritual is really our quest, and not the self, we turn in the very direction that can provide this fulfillment, namely, outward.

## **My Return to the Research Question**

Just as in mutual understanding we constantly search out commonalities of experience when we speak with other people, so in self-understanding we are always searching for what unifies our own diverse experiences in order to give coherence to our lives. (Lakoff & Johnson as cited in Bullough & Knowles, 1991, p. 124)

As I listened to the participants talk about their life journeys with music, I realized that for the most part, I did not have the same experiences as these individuals. I always worked very hard on my music, but I did not start studying classical music until I was 18 years old and I was essentially forced to stop when I was 24 years old. My six years of classical studies did not compare with the lifetime of musical studies and experiences that most of these individuals had. By and large, all of the participants began their teaching careers with very strong identities as musicians. As the research in this document has shown, the musician identity is simply the by-product of a plethora of musical experiences. These individuals had decades of experiences of practicing, performing in public, identifying with music, friendships with musicians, playing in ensembles, and being recognized as a musician even before they started teaching school. Perhaps, most importantly, they acquired an expert level of knowledge about their instruments so that they knew how to practice and what to practice to continue progressing on their own; this was a crucial skill when they started teaching and their time was so limited. For the participants in this study, their musician identity was their fortification against the pressures and



encompassing nature of teaching. I did not have this kind of musician identity and I did not have this kind of fortification. I wonder if the relationship between my musician and teacher identities would have been different if I had taken a few more years to increase my palette of musical experiences and skills: overcome my hurdle of re-learning how to play without pain, performed more concerts, finished a graduate degree in music, and hung-out more with my organist friends. I do not intend to diminish the sense of loss that I feel - my musician identity is as precious to me as any other dedicated musician. However, this honest self-evaluation is fundamental to my resolution with the research question: it enables me to understand why my experiences are different from the experiences of the participants, it provides me with a sense of satisfaction, and it suggests a direction for my future.

I have been thinking about this topic for many years, but in these last few weeks I find myself thinking less about being a musician and more about what it means to be a teacher. I am perplexed why it is that my sense of self as a musician can readily vacillate, but I always feel like a teacher. When I enter a room full of children I feel like I have Spiderman's spider senses because something inside of me starts tingling and my eyes automatically start panning the room to assess the status of the children. Being a musician is about loving, studying, listening, and performing music. Being a musician is also about understanding a level of intense discipline to life and living – about living routine and structure and self-sacrifice in order to acquire and maintain complex skills. I believe that being a teacher is also about acquiring complex skills. However,

being a teacher can also be an approach to life that ostensibly may seem more subtle and more inner, but it is pervasive and affects everything you are - attitude, behavior, perspective, and imagination. Being a teacher can mean that you carry with you a constant sense of the possibility and potential for human growth and development for anyone who steps onto your path of life. A conversation with the Safeway carry-out girl is an opportunity to help her feel important because of the interest you take in her school courses, and praising the kind act of the neighborhood child who lacks social skills is an opportunity for her to learn new possibilities of friendship. Teaching is a grand and precious responsibility because inherent in teaching is the principal that the change you incur in your "students" is related to the way you treat them, the care that you take with them, and the kindness you show to them. Teaching has the potential to help people connect with who they are as a person, connect with others, and to better understand what it is to be human. Teaching is an approach to the world – being a giver to the world, instead of a taker.

Last week I had an experience that provided me with great clarification in regard to my journey into the research question. I have met and had conversations with a former student of mine the last few days when I go for coffee in the quiet area in the Students' Union Building (SUB). I remember Mary very well: a real sweetheart, who always sat guardedly in the same seat in the front in the far right row as if her desk was her provision of security. I remember the first time I taught her class I thought she would be a problem because she seemed ready to pounce at the slightest sign of injustice or

unfairness. Her eyes were wide and round, intelligent and yet, there was also this timid uncertainty about her. The first time I saw her in SUB she was excited to see me, but quite paralyzed by a kind of disbelief – perhaps it was my aged appearance, or perhaps it was the ‘weirdness’ of being a student colleague with your social studies nine teacher. On our second meeting, she started to tell me about her upcoming wedding and the difficulties from the cultural clashes between the two families. I shared my experiences of the cultural clashes that I incurred from my family when I got married. I felt thrilled and privileged that she would share the details of her life with me because it suggested an unspoken trust.

A few days later, Mary and I were both in the quiet area working on our school work. I walked over to her table to say goodbye and she explained that she was studying for an economics exam that she was having the next day. She said, “I still remember how you explained laissez-faire to us in our social nine class. When you are on a date with your boyfriend and he starts to get too friendly, you hold out your stop hand and say ‘Laissez-faire baby!’ which really means, back off!!!” She had a smile, a twinkle in her eye, and an expression of appreciation that I cannot describe with words. Suddenly, I felt like I was performing on the Davis organ at the Winspear and 300 people were clapping for me. It was a very significant feeling of validation as a teacher. This sincere sense of validation came from the realization that I had left this young person with more than a beautifully shaped melody running through her head, I had left her with a piece of me.

My encounter with Mary has helped me to understand how being a teacher is a profound dynamic between the nature of teaching and one's personal nature. The giving nature of teaching has the potential to create a dilemma: you can give so much of yourself to your students that it is possible to reach a point where it feels like you have very little left to give. However, in so doing, you can easily forget that these young people, who grow into young adults and then young middle aged people, are carrying these pieces of you around with them. When you are absolutely blessed to cross paths with former students and they are kind enough to remind you of what piece of you they have in their possession, you are reminded of the grandness of teaching and being a teacher.

All of this, leads me to this understanding – that the sacrifices I made, including the loss to my musician identity, were not completely in vain and they were not completely without deliberateness. In stepping back, in understanding better how individuals are motivated in relation to their sense of self, in hearing the experiences and meanings of others, I realize that I made my choice to make those kind of sacrifices because of the person that I am. If teaching is about combining role expectations with the person of the teacher, then a larger issue concerning being a teacher is this issue of maintaining integrity to who you are. Giving as much as I did was the only way I could be a teacher and maintain my personal integrity. A phrase I used frequently with my students when issues of kindness, or cooperation, or work ethic arose was, "You have to be able to wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and like who you see."

Had I spent as much time as I needed to in order to maintain myself and grow as a musician while I was a teacher I don't think I would have liked the person I saw in the mirror. My life experiences and interactions, which include my musical and cultural upbringing, have made me what I am - this is the lesson of traditional theories of self and identity. In the same way that I have not been able to walk out of my house to go to the university to do my academic work when my children were "missing mommy" or when the in-laws had to put their cat down, I was not able to not open the door and answer student questions about clarinet reeds in the morning when I was trying to practice. Regardless, I hold my head high with deep satisfaction that I taught with integrity to who I am and that as a result, some of my students that I see today have some recollection of our experiences together. As their lives become increasingly complicated there is no doubt that they will forget the details of our classes, they will forget my name and may even forget what laissez-faire means or how many beats a dotted half note contains, but I have faith that they will always remember what it felt like to be cared for so much by a teacher.

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