International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Christopher M. Schulte
University of Arkansas

Eeva Anttila
University of the Arts Helsinki

Kristine Sunday
Old Dominion University

Tawnya Smith
Boston University

Christina Gray
Edith Cowan University

http://www.ijea.org/ **ISSN: 1529-8094**

Volume 21 Number 32 **November 5, 2020**

Musical Self-portraits and Representations of Non/Conformity: In the Music Classroom with Preservice Generalist Teachers

Terry G. Sefton
University of Windsor, Canada

Danielle Sirek
University of Windsor, Canada

Citation: Sefton, T. G., Sirek, D. (2020). Musical self-portraits and representations of non/conformity: In the music classroom with preservice generalist teachers. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *21*(32). http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea21n32

Abstract

Self-portraits are a genre of art, but also constitute artefacts of identity. This research explores student-created musical self-portraits produced by more than 150 generalist teacher education students (preservice teachers) in Ontario, Canada over a period of three years. The self-portraits were completed and submitted as an assignment at the beginning of the term in a compulsory music education class. This paper examines the material practice, influences, and symbols that students used. Most of the self-portraits conformed to the idea of 'the good teacher', while only a few represented

identities that lay outside social norms. The findings contribute to an understanding of how students may groom their self-image and construct a public identity to fit the institutional and cultural ethos of preservice teacher education programs.

Figure 1. Musical self-portrait created by a preservice generalist teacher for a music education class assignment

Prologue

The images appear to be arranged randomly. They include an eclectic mix from Mozart to Bob Dylan to Beyoncé. There is a bumper-sticker style message, "I [heart] zoning out," and three images that don't immediately read as musical references: an image of a runner's feet, a graphic of a weightlifter, and a notebook and pen. In the top right quadrant are images of European composers Mozart and Bach, piano keys, and a symphony orchestra. There is also an album cover graphic with a "Parental Advisory" at the bottom. This album is *40 oz. to Freedom* by the band Sublime. The title of the album has been blacked out, inked over, but with just enough transparency to decode. To the left of the Sublime album cover is an image of the rapper Eminem.

One could read the inclusions of classical composers, pianos, and orchestras as an affinity for Western classical music; Bob Dylan might allude to an appreciation of music of the civil rights movement, or as a gesture to family or parental influences. These images are 'safe' and

'school friendly'. Sublime, on the other hand, was a 1990's California band that created three albums before its lead singer/songwriter died of a drug overdose. The album *40 oz. to Freedom* – a reference to consuming a 40 oz. bottle of alcohol – includes the eponymous title song along with "Date Rape," "Stoned," and a cover of The Toyes' "Smoke Two Joints." Given the iconic graphics of the album cover art, covering up the title seems a bit coy.

Introduction

We, the authors, are both instructors in a Faculty of Education at a comprehensive university in Ontario, Canada. The collage described above was created by a preservice generalist teacher for a music education class assignment. The assignment asked students to create a musical self-portrait that would represent their musical identity. The majority of our students are preparing to teach at the elementary level (kindergarten to grade 8) as generalist (non-specialist) teachers, and will be responsible for teaching all, or almost all, subject areas.[1] Preservice teachers in the generalist stream come from an array of undergraduate backgrounds. Many have limited formal music education, and most feel insecure about being responsible for teaching music (Bresler, 1993; De Vries, 2014; Griffin and Montgomery, 2007; Holden and Button, 2006; Mills, 1989; Sefton & Bayley, 2011; Stunell, 2010). In 2016, we began investigating pedagogical approaches that we could take to help non-music students feel comfortable in a music education course. One of the activities we initiated, to encourage all students to see themselves as having a musical identity, was the musical self-portrait assignment. Collecting visual artefacts from our students to better understand their musical identities became phase one of this research project.

In this paper, we explore the intersection of musical identity and professional teacher identity formation, as revealed through visual artefacts created by preservice teachers in our classes. Many of our students are in their twenties: not so distant from secondary school, where musical tastes, dress codes, and other forms of identity performance define groups and subgroups. Students who played an instrument in high school, took music classes, or joined a choir or band may still align their musical identity with musical traditions they learned in school. But some may have listened to and identified with (and, perhaps, still listen to and

---

[1] Less than half of Ontario's elementary schools have specialist teachers for arts curriculum and music specialists are rarely available or assigned to teach the younger grade levels (People for Education, 2018).

identify with) music that represents anti-social behaviour, non-conformity, or simply escapism—music not generally viewed as 'school friendly'.[2]

Background

Many researchers have explored the professional identity formation of teachers (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Britzman, 1991/2003; Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010); music teacher identity (Beynon, 1998; Dolloff, 1999, 2007; Thompson and Campbell, 2003; Woodford, 2002); and the experience of non-specialist (generalist) teachers in teaching music (Bremner, 2013; De Vries, 2014; Griffin and Montgomery, 2007; Holden and Button, 2006; Mills, 1989). Our research takes a new approach by exploring music teacher identity and generalist teacher professional identity through visual sociology in order to inform and transform our own pedagogy.

Identity as an ongoing construction or process not only looks backwards, to past influences and experiences, but forwards, to future roles and "possible selves" (Markus and Nurius, 1986). As part of our analysis of student artefacts, we examined students' visual representations of their musical tastes and performances of identity (symbolic representations of class, race, gender, sexuality, or culture) to identify the common tropes and the outliers. The outliers that we identified were representations of genres such as death metal, gangsta rap, or hardcore punk. These are genres which, due to their lyrical content or underlying philosophy, would not be considered school friendly: that is to say, appropriate in a school setting. This led us to question whether such tastes and identities are rare, or whether they go underground, as students groom their image and construct a public identity to fit the institutional and cultural ethos of 'the good teacher'.

For our purposes, 'the good teacher' is a socially shared idea, one that can be constructed from popular tropes and metaphors (Dolloff, 1999; Thompson and Campbell, 2003), and that conforms to a community of practice, as perceived by our students. Rather than a list of attributes, the idea of the good teacher may be better approached as an image (Britzman, 1991/2003; Connell, 2009; Dolloff, 1999; Grant, 2015). This allows for layers of association

---

[2] We use the term 'school friendly' as adhering to policies and practices set out by the Ontario College of Teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2019). In Ontario, Professional Standards of Practice are overseen by the provincial department of education through its regulatory body the Ontario College of Teachers. Further policy is instituted at the local school board level, and community standards may be yet another layer of social approval or censure.

and for elements of discord to inhabit the same frame, revealing a composite or hybrid ideal within the context of a particular time and place.

The transition of student to teacher, from one identity (learner, responsible for oneself) to another (teacher, responsible for the learning and well-being of others), can be fraught with unease, and an accompanying loss or fragmentation of one's sense of self (Bernard, 2005; Britzman, 1991/2003; Dolloff, 2007; Salli and Ossam, 2017). Teacher candidates enter their professional education as if travelling into the forest, uncertain of their own capacities, and fearful of the dangers lurking in the unknown. One way for teacher candidates to navigate the unfamiliar territory of a new professional identity is by conforming to what they think of as the good teacher: their future ideal "possible self" (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

Methodology and Analysis

Both authors are music educators with years of teaching, performing, and identifying as musicians and music educators. Trying to plumb the experience of our students, whose life experiences and expectations were not the same as ours, would require strategies that could disrupt our sense of the music classroom as familiar (Mannay, 2010). We chose visual artefacts as a way to explore student perceptions through symbolic interaction.

We received ethics approval from our institution for a multi-year, multi-phase project that would include artefact collection, observation, focus groups, and interviews. Data for phase one of the project included student-created artefacts produced by more than 150 preservice teachers over a period of three years. Our analysis is not a quantitative one, however. Rather, we have used discourse analysis and symbolic interpretivism (Fine & Tavory, 2019).

In this paper we will only be discussing the musical self-portraits. We mined the musical self-portraits as visual data for signifiers of group and individual identity. The nature of this analysis is visual rather than text-based. Visual analysis places a greater emphasis on the interpretive lens of the researcher, as the intention of the creator of the artefact cannot be known (Prosser, 1998).

The self-portraits were completed and submitted as an assignment at the beginning of the term in the students' required music education class, in response to the following instructions:

> You will create a drawing or collage that represents your musical identity. These visual representations will be shared with the class on the bulletin board, so please only include what you wish to share publicly. The visual representations should be made on the cardstock that is provided during class, or you may use your own

equivalent material.

All students completed the task as part of their course; however, only artefacts of the students who had opted into the research were used for data. We provided students with coloured cardstock, which contributed to the nostalgic association of making a craft, and of engaging in play. Although some created their self-portraits digitally, most took on the activity in the spirit of an elementary art class and used the provided cardstock, glue, and markers or pencil crayons. Our intention was to give the students, who might feel intimidated by a music class, an inviting entry to their compulsory music education course (cf. Adler, 2012; Beltman et. al., 2015; Talbot, 2013). Nearly all the assignments were created with multiple images arranged in creative ways (collage), and many included hand-drawn graphics or text.

Voice, Reflexivity, and Resonance

Voice and reflexivity are a primary concern in qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 2008). Writing on experience and story in research, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that the researcher's "own narrative of experience" must be "central", since experience dictates who one is in the field and how data is interpreted (p. 70). The researcher is always in the text, fully present in the words used to share research.

As teacher-researchers, we bring our own immediate life stories and contexts to our research and put ourselves right into our field of study (Brown & Jones, 2001; Richardson, 2000). One of us is a mid-career scholar; the other is an early-career scholar. Both of us identify as formally trained classical musicians as well as music educators. Since research on one's own students could be susceptible to a host of ethical issues, teacher-researchers must be constantly and thoroughly reflexive in their research. Reflexivity encourages researchers to reflect on all components of the study: the personal, the cultural, the historical, the political, the interactional, as well as the dialogue between multiple forms of data. Reflexivity involves "thinking through what one is doing" (Alvesson, Hardy, and Harley, 2008, p. 497). Throughout the study, we critically analysed our epistemological standpoints and their effects on our observations and interpretations. Our aim was to carry out what Barrett and Stauffer (2009) call "resonant work"—work that is "responsible, rigorous, respectful, resilient" (p. 8). In that spirit, we completed the same assignment as our students, and explored our reflexive responses (Guba & Lincoln, 2008). We discovered layers of resistance in ourselves, self-censorship, and vulnerability in how we depicted our musical (and professional) identities as teacher-researchers. This caused us to rethink our assumptions that the assignment was "low-risk," as originally identified in our research ethics review.

Visual Sociology

Visual sociology is a methodology that places the visual at the centre of the research process, rather than as adjunct or illustration (Chaplin, 1994). It is used to study visual images produced as part of daily life. The visual culture of schools can be examined through its architecture, teaching spaces, and the ways in which teaching and learning leave visible traces (Prosser, 2007), including the artefacts that students create and often abandon. Visual images permeate our environment and are a form of "cultural texts" that too often go unexamined as to the ways in which they contribute to "how children, adolescents, and teachers learn, perform, or transform their identities, values, and behaviors" (Pauly 2003, p. 264). The use and understanding of visual images are governed by socially established symbolic codes (Chaplin, 1994; Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018). Images are constructed, and may, like any other form of discourse, be deconstructed (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002).

As spectators to a visual object created by another, we found that we could not escape nor avoid looking at the object through an 'art' lens. Even though we were not consciously assessing or analysing these artefacts as works of art, it was not possible to shut out the effect of the artefact working as an aesthetic object. This was magnified by the attention we brought to each self-portrait. As Herbert Read (1972) explains, there are several ways in which one analyses a work of art:

> We can take the physical elements in a particular picture, isolate them, consider them separately and in relation to one another. There are perhaps five such elements: rhythm of line, massing of forms, space, light and shade, and colour. (p. 50)

Students displayed a variety of approaches in constructing their self-portraits, some more aesthetically refined or skilled than others. We had asked the students to create a self-portrait — a familiar trope in the art world — and the students responded by using (self-consciously or intuitively) a variety of formal visual techniques. Most students created an art object as much as a document or representation of self, arranging and constructing their self-portrait in symbolic and aesthetic ways, using visual and material strategies. The act of choosing which elements to include in a portrait, which elements to exclude, and how each element is arranged on the page, is a form of framing (Becker, 1974).

We theorised that there would be an analogue between the physical object and the idea of self. We spread the images out and identified patterns, characteristics, and themes, based on our own familiar constructs, classifying each self-portrait as "performing the good student," "risky/exposing the personal," "family influence," or "performing the teacher role." During

this first attempt at analysis, we were interpreting each self-portrait (the artefact/object) as an intentional representation of the self. Hal Foster (1985) redefines the *artefact* as, "a passage from modernist 'work' to postmodernist 'text'. *Work* the sign is a stable unit of signifier and signified...the *text* reflects on the contemporary dissolution of the sign and the released play of signifiers" (p. 129, emphasis added). In other words, the artwork becomes a coded text, but one whose meaning is contingent on both the creator and the spectator; and inflected by the cultural and temporal context.

Our reading of the artefacts was constrained by our expectations, and influenced by knowing the students, or based upon the students' general age and demographic. A few images surprised both of us, especially when we perceived an incoherence (Markus & Nurius, 1986) between the ways in which students typically presented themselves in class, and the imagery in their self-portrait. A student might, through dress and behaviour, perform as conservative, adhering to the normalised cultural ethos of the classroom, but create a self-portrait that included musical genres associated with social or political difference, deviance, or resistance.

Visual Analysis

Material practice

Most of the self-portraits were created on the cardstock provided in class, but some were created on other material or were digitally created. The self-portraits were made up of downloaded pictures, photos cut out from magazines, and/or hand-drawn images. Self-portraits also sometimes included physical objects such as earbuds, CDs, instrument supplies (clarinet reeds, guitar picks), or concert tickets; or 'non-musical' items that represented musical experience for the student. Popular images included album covers, singers or bands, instruments, music symbols or logos, places where music might be consumed or created, and activities, equipment, or devices associated with music listening or with music making (driving in a car, running, music videos, music apps, instruments, digital music players). Many students incorporated text including descriptive words, labels, quotes, or other commentary, or text and image hybrids, like memes.[3] In quite a few artefacts, students also included photographs of themselves performing, attending a concert, or enjoying music with friends or family.

---

[3] Meme: an image that includes text, may be humorous or ironic, or intended as social commentary. Memes are shared through social media platforms.

Influences
The self-portraits revealed multiple influences on students' musical tastes and activities: the influence of family, friends and peers, cultural background, formal school music education, formal extra-curricular music education, informal music learning, media, and social media.

Symbols
Many students included symbols, incorporating music notation (music notes, treble and bass clefs); images that convey emotion or likes and dislikes (heart, circle with a slash through it) and music logos (apps, streaming services). Some students added forms of mapping, drawing lines to connect images, texts, and symbols, to represent geographic locations or to show narrative chronology. The effect leads the eye of the spectator from one area of the image to another.

Findings: An Analysis of Six Musical Self-portraits

For the purpose of this paper we have chosen six examples of the self-portraits. With each, we will describe the material practice, identify influences; and decode symbols to the extent that we can, given the subjectivity inherent in visual analysis (Prosser, 1998).

A collage is a collection, each piece chosen and included to construct a whole that is, by its nature, multi-faceted. Since we suggested to students that they create a collage, it is not surprising that most of them followed the instructions and created a representation of their musical identity that was built out of multiple elements. After the fact, we recognised that there may have been unintended inferences drawn from the wording of the instructions, and in the very idea of a collage, which might have encouraged students to present themselves as multiple, fragmented, and aggregate.

Self-Portrait Example #1: "First Favourite Artist"

Figures 2a (left) and 2b. "First Favourite Artist"; details from a sample collage[4]

At the top of the self-portrait are four photographs of pop musicians: Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, Backstreet Boys, and Shania Twain. Attached to the photograph of Shania Twain is a label indicating "First Favourite Artist" (Figure 2a). In the centre of the self-portrait are personal photographs of a campfire gathering, two people outside a theatre where the musical *Newsies* is on the marquee, and a photograph of a musical theatre cast that includes a label and arrow to the word "me!" At the bottom of the self-portrait are images of a grand piano, a flute, and a graphic of silhouetted dancers with the label "Jazz & Tap." The piano carries the label "7 - 14" and the flute has the label "12 - 14" (Figure 2b). We interpret these labels to indicate the ages at which the student studied these instruments. The labelling is part didactic, part storytelling, and creates a chronology of identity formation. The placement of the images also reveals to us that the student self-identifies as 'musical' or as 'musician'. The images of the professional musicians have been positioned at the top, but the images of the student herself performing or engaged in formal music education take up the most 'real estate' on the page. We read this as the student wanting us to know that they have formal music education in their background and that they are experienced in studying, consuming, and creating music. It conforms to the ideal of the good teacher.

---

[4] To maintain confidentiality some self-portraits are only shown as details.

Self-Portrait Example #2: "Thanks Dad."

Figures 3a (left) and 3b. details from "Thanks Dad" collage

The next portrait features arrows and years to indicate a timeline of birth to when the self-portrait was created (1992-2016). It includes a handwritten message, "'Classics' thanks Dad" between album covers of Pink Floyd, Queen, and Meat Loaf (Figure 3a). The label "High School!!" is placed next to the Grease movie musical logo and a Green Day album cover; along with the label #Party next to logos for Job for a Cowboy (a death metal band) and deadmau5 (electronic dance music, i.e., EDM). A line leads the viewer to the year 2012, which includes an image of reggae musician Bob Marley beside the phrase "chill out" (Figure 3b). Subsequently the eye travels to the words "good vibes" which point from an album by French electro duo Else to the logo for the hit musical Wicked, the words "daft punk" (another electro music duo), an album by Russian electro-house producer/performer Zedd, and Norwegian hip hop duo Madcon. The autobiographical journey outlined in the student's self-portrait could be read as a coming of age, beginning with the "classics" of American classic rock, to musical experiences in high school ("party" period), to a more mature period of "chill out" and "good vibes" music beginning in 2012, which would coincide with the student's entry into undergraduate study.

Self-Portrait Example #3: "Nursery Rhymes."

Figure 4. "Nursery Rhymes" collage

Two pieces of coloured construction paper are layered, one askew, then squared off with twine (Figure 4). Four corners contain lyrics of nursery rhymes; images of simple percussion instruments and a children's choir are placed in the middle. The twine has been glued to the blue and pink construction paper, reinforcing the elementary classroom arts and crafts aesthetic and school friendly content. Pictures of popular musicians Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber appear like bookends on either side of the textual centre of the portrait. The names of musicians Demi Lovato, Selena Gomez, Adele, and Taylor Swift are arranged in a vertical list. Whether knowingly or not, the student has included singers who are associated with children's and preteen television: Demi Lovato and Selena Gomez appeared in Barney and Friends and on the Disney channel. We interpreted this self-portrait as being explicitly representative of the good teacher, in its material practice, its textual content, its imagery, and its musical references.

Self-Portrait Example #4: "Hardcore."

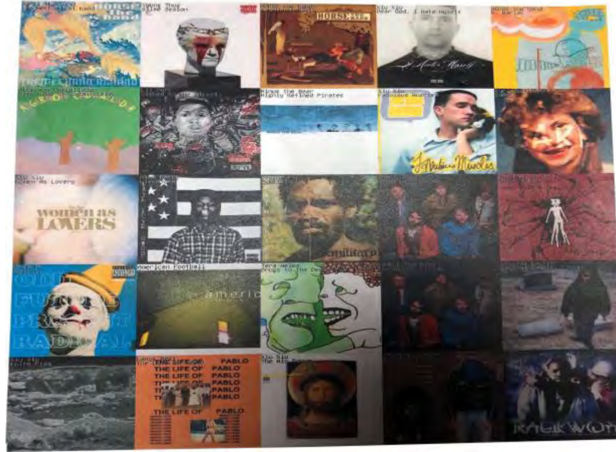

Figure 5. "Hardcore" collage

This self-portrait, which includes images of punk, hardcore rap, experimental rock, and emo music, is an example of what we identified as an extreme outlier (Figure 5). The collage is a series of squares with images of album covers. The artist and album names appear clearly in the top left corner of each square. Violence, illegal drug use, and destruction (of property, of self, of the establishment) are recurrent themes in the lyrics, album covers, and music videos (e.g., Earl Sweatshirt, EARL; Xiu Xiu, Dear God, I Hate Myself; Death Grips, Beware). The rejection of societal norms represented in the self-portrait push the boundaries into territory that glorifies or espouses self-harm or nihilism. The artists and genres portrayed in this self-portrait share an ethos of nonconformity, anti-establishmentarianism, and anarchy. The content of artists and genres in this collage, when contrasted with the majority of student self-portraits, is jarring. But another difference is in the material and aesthetic presentation. Long in advance of the internet and the advent of social media platforms, Marshall McLuhan (1964) presciently developed a theory of 'hot' or 'cool' media. Hearing is most often identified as a cool medium because it requires high participation from the listener, to identify pattern and meaning. Another later interpretation of this concept identifies 'cool' with distance, with less friction (Hildebrand & Vacker, 2018). The presentation of this collage, as a five by five square quilt, with each square labelled with a typewriter style font, distances the viewer; it provides just enough information to send us in search of the actual albums; it requires our active participation to listen in order to see this as a meaningful collection, to stitch together its many elements into a pattern. The 'cool' presentation points to a contradictory interpretation; that the musical self-portrait is less a (hot) nihilistic scream than a (cool) illustration of punk ethos.

Self-Portrait Examples #5 and #6: "Identical Identities."

Figure 6a (left) and 6b. Two collages with striking similarities

While completing our analysis of the student self-portraits, we had noticed similarities, and repetition of certain symbols or images. These two self-portraits are virtually identical, with each student using a hand-drawn approach and elementary-style drawing technique: colourful, rounded images; big block letters; and crayons or markers (Figures 6a and 6b). The self-portraits contain much of the same visual content, including a thumbprint, a shower, a car, and headphones. Both self-portraits include representations of elementary music instruction: a large recorder and music notation symbols (music notes, clefs, staff). Both include ways to consume music (headphones and digital music players), and activities associated with music consumption (a car in motion, a shower). The image of the musical thumbprint that appears in both of these self-portraits also shows up in other self-portraits. When we did a Google search for "musical identity" (a phrase from the assignment instructions), variations of this thumbprint image appeared in the top five search results. This form of imitation plugs into the digital zeitgeist, in which communication uses the shorthand of popular images and viral memes to express political or social identity (Bruns, 2006).

The Researchers' Own Self-Portraits: Risk and Self-Censorship

In the spirit of doing resonant work, we considered the idea of our own musical self-portraits after we had reviewed all the artefacts. Terry had made a musical self-portrait as an exemplar for her course. Danielle had not, and when Terry suggested she make one, Danielle had responded awkwardly, "You would probably laugh." This opened a series of deep

conversations over several days: what is the risk? how invested are we in a particular identity within a working context?

When Danielle eventually created her own self-portrait (Figure 7a), she wanted to include some of the same music groups and artists as the students did; she is closer to them in age than she is to most faculty colleagues. However, wanting to maintain a discreet professional identity and boundaries, she contemplated withholding representations of musical taste that would label her as 'young'. As an early-career scholar, Danielle consciously works to construct a professional image that fits within the faculty culture of mid- to late-career colleagues. Even though she created a self-portrait after her discussion with Terry, Danielle did not share it with students. She was reticent about creating an authentic self-portrait, and reluctant to show it publicly.

Figure 7a (left) and 7b. Danielle's collage detail; Terry's collage detail

Even as we were writing this paper, we continued to interrogate our own self-portraits, asking questions such as: "What is not there — what parts of your musical identity have you chosen not to include?" Terry had included photographs of herself as a music student and as a professional cellist (Figure 7b), but had left out any visual representation of herself as a teacher, although she had spent decades teaching private and group cello lessons and had taught music in elementary and secondary schools, as well as in higher education. There were no images of other musicians, popular or classical. Superimposed over the photographs were lists of her cello teachers, educational institutions, and professional music organisations. On

reflection, we realized that both of our self-portraits masked as much as they revealed; and this suggested a level of risk to the activity that we had not predicted.

We contemplated how much editing or self-censoring our students had done, as they constructed a self-portrait that would be seen by their professor and their fellow students. To what degree were our students shaping their representation of identity to what they believed we wanted to see, just as we had done in constructing our self-portraits?

Discussion

Most of the self-portraits conformed to the idea of 'the good teacher', while only a few represented identities that lay outside social norms. The findings contribute to an understanding of how students may groom their self-image and construct a public identity to fit the institutional and cultural ethos of preservice teacher education programs.

Culture of Conformity

Dolloff (2007) reminds us that, "Identity can . . . be used as a normative tool to keep some people from joining the conversation" (p. 7). Conformity of imagery in the self-portraits may be an indication of adherence to an ideal of the good teacher, or it may reveal a form of resistance, as students shield their authentic identity by presenting a 'fake ID'. It may, more simply, reveal shared cultural norms amongst teacher candidates (age, cultural background, social group). Our first instinct was to see imitation in the self-portraits as a theme or category for analysis. However, the prevalence of certain specific images, along with our emergent recognition of the potential of self-censorship, raised prickly questions of student intent and undermined any simple interpretation. We subsequently began to review the issue of authenticity in all of the self-portraits. Students may have been completing the assignment while sitting side by side and used many of the same images or material techniques, or they may have been trying to complete the assignment as quickly as possible and simply included images that appeared in the top five Google hits. Conformity in the self-portraits went beyond exact duplication, however. Over and over, we saw similar imagery of school music, such as recorders, music clefs, and choirs. The same artists, bands, musical genres, and representations of musical consumption such as listening to music in the car or singing in the shower were found across student self-portrait examples. A significant number of self-portraits included music that was not school friendly, but only one self-portrait used images and music that could be considered highly anti-social and nonconformist.

As Hogg et. al. (2016) argue, "Conformity is not merely surface behavioural compliance, it is a process whereby people's behaviour is transformed to correspond to the appropriate self-

defining group prototype" (p. 259). Whatever the case, we saw a remarkable amount of sameness: signifiers of middle class, White, Western, Christian, female, heterosexual, millennial culture and identity. We also saw sameness in ideas of the classroom music teacher, represented through musical imagery: gigantic recorders, music notation, lyrics to children's songs, references to formal music education (piano, flute, children's choir), and pictures of Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach. Was this a performance of conformity? We cannot assume student intention, nor can we assume reliability of the images. Students may or may not identify with the purported values or politics represented in their assignments. But it remains striking to us how few of our students' self-portraits, out of over 150 artefacts, included musical representations that fell outside of a fairly narrow list of artists, genres, and experiences.

Risk and the performance of identity

In the course of this research, we came to question our assumption of the "low-risk" nature of creating a musical self-portrait. Our concept of "low-risk" was too one-dimensional. We discovered that, despite the openness of the assignment, many students created artefacts that were similar and safe. Rather than considering whether an image would be acceptable in the professional context of a public classroom, perhaps we should have been asking ourselves whether the image was safe within the closer context of social relations between students; and coherent with the 'good teacher' persona that students were actively constructing for themselves. While creating our own self-portraits, we encountered resistance and reluctance to share a whole or authentic representation of our musical identities. Perhaps what we were witnessing was the inevitable disjuncture between the public and private selves; and for our students, between past and future selves.

Limitations

It is inevitable that visual signifiers will communicate differently to every viewer (Margolis, 1999). In a number of self-portraits, we found symbols whose intended meanings were unclear. This could be due to the limitation of our exposure to their generational culture: the authors of this study are in their 60's and 30's, respectively, whereas most of our students are in their early 20's. For example, a symbol of three arcs encountered at the beginning of the project was unknown to either of us. A quick web search revealed it as likely referencing the logo for Spotify, a music streaming service. A graphic symbol of a three-armed figure was eventually identified as a Celtic triskelion. A wavy line with two dots was identified as the symbol for yin and yang (the Taoist symbol of female and male), while a cowboy hat or boots, we assumed, indicated a love of country music. While some of these symbols were obvious in their intention or reference, others remained obscure, whether because of the limitation of the

authors' lenses and lived experiences, or because the students intended to encode their meaning.

Further research

We asked our students to create their self-portraits as a first assignment, before they had a chance to engage in music making in the classroom and before we had modelled music making, creating, or listening for them. In other words, most students were likely producing a self-portrait based on their past experience and future expectations of their possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

If we, as their professors, introduced music from a wide range of genres, and included artists who represented a diverse spectrum of cultural expression and political positions – including the disaffected and socially alienated – would our students reveal a broader spectrum of musical identities (cf. Way, 2018)? Alternately, is it possible that the teacher candidates who apply to our programs already self-identify as normative (i.e., normative in the culture of the classroom) or that faculties of education only accept students who fit a normative identity already established? If we allowed for more time for the musical identity assignment, and encouraged a greater openness to different types of artistic creativity, would students delve more deeply into the intersection of music and identity? Further research might explore whether any of these factors are having an impact on student engagement in music education courses; and whether opening up space for deviance (nonconformity to societal norms) and alternative pedagogies might create new opportunities for a broader spectrum of student identities in the music education classroom.

Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported by the Centred on Learning Innovation Fund through the University of Windsor's Centre for Teaching and Learning; and the Joint Consortium of Research, representing the Canadian Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in Canada.

References

Adler, A. (2012). Rediscovering musical identity through narrative in pre-service teacher education. In M. Barrett and S. Stauffer (Eds.), *Narrative soundings: An anthology of narrative inquiry in music education* (pp. 161-178). Springer.

Alvesson, M., Hardy, C., & Harley, B. (2008). Reflecting on reflexivity: Reflexive textual practices in organization and management theory. *Journal of Management Studies, 45*(3), 480-501. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00765.x

Beauchamp, C. & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 39(2), 175-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252

Barrett, M. S., & Stauffer, S. L. (2009). Narrative inquiry in music education: Toward resonant work. In M. S. Barrett & S. L. Stauffer (Eds.), *Narrative inquiry in music education: Troubling certainty* (pp. 19-32). Springer.

Becker, H. S. (1974). Photography and sociology. *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication 1*, 3-26.

Beltman, S., Glass, C., Dinham, J., Chalk, B., and Nguyen., N., (2015). Drawing identity: Beginning pre-service teachers' professional identities. *Issues in Educational Research 25*(3), 225-245. http://www.iier.org.au/iier25/beltman.pdf

Bernard, R. (2005). Making music, making selves: A call for reframing music teacher education. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, *4*(2), 2-36.http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Bernard4_2.pdf

Beynon, C. (1998). From music student to music teacher: Negotiating an identity. In P. Woodford (Ed.), *Critical thinking in music: Theory and practice* (pp. 83–105). University of Western Ontario.

Bremner, Z. (2013). Transforming an "unmusical" primary teacher into a confident musician: A case of personal narrative enquiry. In J. Finney and F. Laurence (Eds.), *Masterclass in music education: Transforming teaching and learning* (pp. 79-88). Bloomsbury.

Bresler, L. (1994). Music in a double bind: Instruction by non-specialists in elementary schools. *Arts Education Policy Review 95*, 30-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.1994.9936375.

Britzman, D. (1991/2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. New York Press.

Brown, T & Jones, L. 2001. *Action research and postmodernism: Congruence and critique*. Open University Press.

Bruns, A. (2006). *Blogs, Wikipedia, second life, and beyond*. Peter Lang.

Chaplin, E. (1994). *Sociology and visual representation*. Routledge.

Clandinin, J, and Connelly, C. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.

Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: Towards a new view of teacher

quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education, 50*(3), 213-229. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508480902998421

De Vries, P. A. (2014). Music without a music specialist: A primary school story. *International Journal of Music Education, 33*(2): 210-221. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413515818

Dolloff, L. A. (1999). Imagining ourselves as teachers: The development of teacher identity in music teacher education. *Music Education Research, 1*(2), 191-208 https://doi.org/10.1080/1461380990010206

Dolloff, L. A. (2007). "All the things we are": Balancing our multiple identities in music teaching. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education 6*(2), 2-21. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Dolloff6_2.pdf

Fine, G., & Tavory, I. (2019). Interactionism in the twenty-first century: A letter on being-in-a-meaningful-world. *Symbolic Interaction 42*(3), 457-467. https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.430

Foster, H. (1985). *Recordings: Art, spectacle, cultural politics*. Bay Press.

Grant, K. A. (2015). From lists to images: Exploring the concept of the good teacher in teacher education. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 13*(1): 36-59. https://jcacs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jcacs/article/view/40241/36060

Griffin, S. M., and Montgomery, A.P. (2007). Specialist vs. non-specialist music teachers: Creating a space for conversation. In K. Veblen & C. Beynon (Eds.), *From sea to sea: Perspectives on music education in Canada* (pp. 1-15). https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/musiceducationebooks/1.

Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Landscape of qualitative research* (pp. 255-286). Sage.

Hildebrand, Julia; & Vacker, Barry. (2018). Hot and cool in the MediaScene: A McLuhan-style art and theory project. *Media Scene*. https://medium.com/mediascene/hot-and-cool-in-the-mediascene-a-mcluhan-style-art-and-theory-project-658ce02a6af8

Hogg, M., Abrams, D., Otten, S. & Hinkle, S. (2016). The social identity perspective: Intergroup relations, self-conception, and small groups. *Small Group Research 35*(3), 256-276. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496404263424

Holden, H., and Button, S. (2006). The teaching of music in the primary school by the non-music specialist. *British Journal of Music Education 23*(1), 23-38.

http://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051705006728

Margolis, E. (1999). Class pictures: Representations of race, gender and ability in a century of school photography. *Visual Sociology, 14*(8), 7–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725869908583800

Margolis, E., & Zunjarwad, R. (2018). Visual research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 600-626). Sage.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist 41*(9), 954-969. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Mannay, D. (2010). Making the familiar strange: Can visual research methods render the familiar setting more perceptible? *Qualitative Research, 10*(1), 91-111. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109348684

McLuhan, M. (964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* McGraw-Hill.

Mills, J. (1989). The generalist primary teacher of music: a problem of confidence. *British Journal of Music Education 6*(2), 125-138. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051700007002

Ontario College of Teachers (2019). Ethical standards. https://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/ethical-standards

Pauly, N. (2003). Interpreting visual culture as cultural narratives in teacher education. *Studies in Art Education 44*(3), 264-284. https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2003.11651743

People for Education. (2018). *Arts education.* People for Education. https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/arts-education-2018/.

Phillips, L., & Jørgensen, M. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Sage.

Prosser, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Image based research*. Falmer.

Prosser, J. (2007). Visual methods and the visual culture of schools. *Visual Studies, 22*(1), 13-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860601167143

Read, H. (1972). *The meaning of art*. Faber & Faber.

Richardson, L. (2000). Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(2), 253-255. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040000600207

Salli, A., & Osam, Ü. (2017). Preservice teachers' identity construction: Emergence of expected and feared teacher-selves. *Quality and Quantity, 52*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0629-x

Stunell, G. (2010). Not musical? Identity perceptions of generalist primary school teachers in

relation to classroom music teaching in England. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 9*(2), 79–107. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Stunell9_2.pdf

Sutherland, L., Howard, S., & Markauskaite, L. (2010). Professional identity creation: Examining the development of beginning preservice teachers' understanding of their work as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 455-465. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.06.006

Sefton, Terry, and Jonathan Bayley. (2010). Stop calling it "PREP!" Implementing the new arts curriculum. *The Register,* 12 (17-20).

Talbot, B. (2013). The music identity project. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 12*(2), 60–74. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Talbot12_2.pdf

Thompson, L.K. & Campbell, M.R. (2003). Gods, guides and gardeners: Preservice music educators' personal teaching metaphors. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 158*, 43-54.

Way, L. (2018). Here's some scissors, here's some glue, now go make a zine! A teacher's reflections on zine-making in the classroom. In G. D. Sith, M. Dines, and T. Parkinson (Eds.), *Punk Pedagogies: Music, Culture and Learning* (pp. 144-155). Routledge.

Woodford, P. G. (2002). The social construction of music teacher identity in undergraduate music education majors. In R. Colwell (Ed.), *Handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (p. 675–694). Schirmer Books.

About the Authors

Terry G. Sefton is Associate Professor at the University of Windsor, where she teaches music and arts pedagogy in the Bachelor of Education program; and qualitative and arts based research theory and methodology in the graduate programs. Dr. Sefton has performed as a chamber musician in Canada, USA, Britain, and France, and has worked with contemporary composers, commissioning and performing new compositions. In addition to her performance-based creative work, Dr. Sefton has published in academic journals and books. Her research interests include institutional ethnography, identity of the artist, the arts in higher education, music education, and sociology of the arts.

Danielle Sirek teaches in the Faculty of Education and School of Creative Arts at the University of Windsor, Canada. She received her PhD from the Royal Northern College of Music (UK). She also holds a Bachelor of Music from Wilfrid Laurier University (Canada), and a Master of Music from University of Toronto (Canada). Danielle's program of research

is primarily focused on music teacher education, sociology of music education, and intersections between music education and ethnomusicology. Her most recent work can be found in the *International Journal of Music Education* (2018) and *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* (2018).

International Journal of Education & the Arts

http://IJEA.org ISSN: 1529-8094

Editor

Christopher M. Schulte
University of Arkansas

Co-Editors

Kristine Sunday
Old Dominion University

Christina Gray
Edith Cowan University

Eeva Anttila
University of the Arts Helsinki

Tawnya Smith
Boston University

Managing Editors

Christine Liao
University of North Carolina Wilmington

Yenju Lin
Pennsylvania State University

Associate Editors

Shana Cinquemani
Rhode Island School of Design

Christina Hanawalt
University of Georgia

David Johnson
Lund University

Alexis Kallio
Griffith University

Heather Kaplan
University of Texas El Paso

Hayon Park
University of Arkansas

Tim Smith
Aalto University

Deborah (Blair) VanderLinde
Oakland University

Advisory Board

Full List: http://www.ijea.org/editors.html#advisory

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.