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Teacher Agency through Duoethnography: Pedagogical DNA in a Community of Learner-Teachers

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Abstract

Through a duoethnographic study (Norris, 2008), Caitlyn, a newly graduated music educator and now masters student, and I, a seasoned music educator and new music teacher educator at Caitlyn's alma mater, collaboratively explored the experience of preservice teaching from our divergent roles and generational perspectives. Seeking to understand development of *music teacher agency*, we entered into a process of duoethnographic dialogue journaling as a primary data source. Ascribing to the tenets of this innovative qualitative methodology, we created and interrogated interwoven

dialogic narratives as we mutually investigated curricular approaches to and practices of the last year of preservice music education. The co-constructed process of duoethnography (a) enabled us to synthesize theory and research method with practice; (b) fostered development of professional identities through reflection within equitable and collegial relationships; (c) and potentially mitigated fears as each participant experienced emancipatory dialogue toward positive change, heightening music teacher agency.

Introduction

In this paper, we share an analysis process that emerged and evolved from opening conversations at a state music education conference, in which Caitlyn, a newly graduated and certified music educator and now masters student, and I, a K-12 music educator of thirty years and newly appointed music teacher educator at Caitlyn's alma mater, collaboratively explored the experience of preservice teaching from our divergent roles in the preservice process and generational perspectives. Through resonant connection at the conference, we mutually wondered, "How can music teacher educators foster a successful experience for preservice teachers and how can preservice teachers make the most of their preservice experiences?" Simply due to our busy lives, as Caitlyn had now begun graduate work, we communicated through a dialogue journal (Fitzpatrick, 2014; Higgins et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2003; Stillman et al., 2014; Stout, 1993) and talked by phone once, over the span of four months.

A Community of Learner-Teachers: Considering Music Teacher Agency

Lauri: I am dying to understand your experience and your ideas! Write me when you have a moment.

Caitlyn (sharing a YouTube video link as her first entry): I stumbled upon this blast from the past about teaching singers to do riffs (melismas) using real musical examples. It's a beautiful example of scaffolding, musical richness, authenticity, fearlessness, and humility.

Lauri (referring to the video): It was cool to watch his musical agency (Wiggins, 2016) flourish with a "more knowledgeable other" acting as a teacher-helper to a peer (Hogle, 2018), through scaffolding and being attuned to his needs. It was cool for *me* to see you send me something that has a lot of meaning for *you*, applying all that you have learned through so many amazing experiences. You were seeking connection with me, knowing I might appreciate the learning theory behind the video. It seems as though you were displaying an educator's empathy

through a point of connecting knowledge! The teacher in the video exemplified what Vygotsky, Rogoff, and Wenger describe.

Caitlyn: I am a HUGE fan of Wenger both with and without Lave.

Lauri: ME TOO.

Caitlyn: Okay, maybe we have transitioned into commentary on the role of scaffolding/support and mentors in education...It occurred to me that we often forget what it looks like to be both teacher and student, or what it is like to be a student in formal education. I wonder if there is a responsibility for mentor teachers to ask for more input from and collaborate with their mentees, as college students are the Vygotsky-an “more knowledgeable other” regarding the K-12 student experience given their proximity to the experience. I think the generational divide is not something to fear, but rather something to embrace.

Lauri: I have so many questions for you. How can we ask for input from preservice teachers when there are certain learnings that (we think) preservice teachers *have* to experience?

Caitlyn: There are times when educators in the field *need* to collaborate with colleagues, so I think having the opportunity to co-teach, co-design, or even just have a voice at a meeting happening at one’s field placement is an experience that preservice teachers *have* to experience. I think it might need to work in the same way that curriculum meetings happen in school districts. A day is set aside to talk about what’s working, what’s not working, and how to get on the same page. Thankfully, technology has made it so much easier to hold virtual meetings with professors, but a Google Doc could also work! I think undergraduates kind of need to think like journalists or field reporters. In the “real world” no one tells you what to do.

We began our dialogue journal with lively discussions of educational theory in practice and relational sharing about our lives and past experiences. As we intentionally continued our conference conversation, we dove immediately into thoughts about preservice music teacher education. I realized that I was asking for Caitlyn’s perspectives to inform my own practices as a new music teacher-educator; Caitlyn was dutifully answering my questions but was also intentionally seeking connection about our commonly espoused educational philosophies

(“That’s how I think of it too....This is huge...YESSS...”) and cultivating our personal relationship by connecting on social media, sending videos, pictures and stories, undertaking a process similar to Lavina and Lawson (2018) in mutually discovering identity in our new roles. I began to respond with openness and we quickly turned a corner as I realized I needed to share my own vulnerabilities as an educator to have a mutual dialogue rather than an interview:

Lauri: Roles. Humanness. What it is to be me? To be authentically me? How the *youness* of *you* becomes part of that becoming?

Caitlyn: I find that I’m also still trying to figure this out. And the more time I spend with it, I realize that my *humanness* really isn’t separate from my role as educator/grad student/emerging professional.

Lauri: Fears threaten the hope and belief that I can. Hope bravely pushes forth and therefore, I do. Hope prevails; hope wins the battle and I become. I want to do things well and I try to learn to do so, hopeful that I can do so, shrouded in fears that I might fail.

Caitlyn: I think your description of hope as being a way to look forward in the future despite present experiences of fear/anxiety definitely unlocks what is at the heart of acquiring agency and obtaining success thereby—which is what leads to the *becoming*. The acquisition of agency really is a process.

Lauri: That is a beautiful way to put it. I see the role of the goal as being essential. If we think we *can* achieve it, we will try. If a person like me doesn't think they can, they won't risk the failure. I really identify with those students who are afraid to fail.

Caitlyn: Speaking of failing, I remember a time when an older teacher scoffed at me for my suggesting that the role of a teacher is not to control the class, but to facilitate interactions between learners and their world/with other learners/with themselves.

Lauri: That word "control" is the key. Britzman (2003) says it’s a myth that “constructs learning as synonymous with control. Teachers tend to judge themselves and others tend to judge them” (p. 224) by how well they control the classroom and learning itself. I’ve felt this judgment (mostly in my mind) every time I teach...and I fight back.

Pedagogical DNA: Intergenerational family through co-constructed dialogue of mutual learning

In our initial dialogue journaling, Caitlyn and I shared multiple resonances as we delightfully discovered common educational philosophies grounded in theory, connecting theory to our various teaching/learning settings through narrative storytelling. We overtly called ourselves family members who shared *pedagogical DNA* because our common readings in prior academic experiences enabled us to quickly and intersubjectively empathize with one another, despite our generational and role differences. As Caitlyn began to share personal stories and relational comments, she initiated a culture of emotional equity, risk-taking and mutual respect.

Describing a community of learners in a methods class, D'Souza (2017) offers that trusting relationships ideally start with professors who share their personal interests, their mistakes, failures or hardships and how they learn from them. By normalizing mistakes, teachers build trust and community. A community of learners (Collins, 2006; Green, 2009; Rogoff, 1994, 2003; Rogoff, Matusov, & White, 1996) also includes co-construction of questions, ideas, and pedagogical goals; power-shared and collaborative relationships between teacher and learners; *thinking out loud*; mutual respect and caring; and emotional connection. Matusov (2001) suggests, "The students and the teacher have collaboratively shared responsibility and ownership for guidance and learning where the students are responsible for learning how to manage their learning and the teacher has responsibility for guiding the students in this process" (p. 383). Later, Matusov (2001) connects the concept of a community of learners with the concept of agency:

The main challenge of educating for agency in a learner is how to engage the person in the agency processes and avoiding the educator (1) taking over the processes (i.e., lack of freedom) or (2) jeopardizing the well-being of the learner (i.e., lack of guidance and care). (p. 396)

Fostering Music Teacher Agency Through Dialogue Journals

Caitlyn and I both felt that *teacher agency* was a foundational goal of preservice teacher education. In our initial dialogues, we discovered some essential qualities to foster teacher agency within a preservice teacher's experience: a) the preservice teacher's agentive design of one's own educational experiences; b) safety in making pedagogical mistakes; c) a caring and emotionally equitable relationship between professor and preservice teacher; and d) both professor and preservice teacher serving as *teacher-learners* or *learner-teachers*.

Teacher-learners or *learner-teachers* retain their roles as professor and preservice teachers with intentionally adjusted power and agency. Preservice teachers experience continual evaluation and potential loss of agency within inherently power-laden relationships with people in authority, particularly in the student teaching experience. In describing the act of learning to teach, Britzman (2003) shares the common perception that asking for help or feeling vulnerable in the dual role of student/educator is a sign of weakness; in reality, it is a sign of teacher agency. Teacher agency means believing that one's voice matters, within critically reflective and collaborative practices (Flessner et al., 2012). Because of inherent authority structures, teacher educators can honor preservice teachers' perspectives and foster their teacher agency by initiating dialogue, modeling and scaffolding reciprocity through a humble, caring, empathetic vulnerability in their own words. In doing so, an agentive and power-balanced community of *teacher-learners* might develop as each learns from the other, reflecting, inquisitively problem-solving, and sharing emotional responses to classroom experiences with lenses of mutual compassion.

As Caitlyn and I dialogued about essential elements of the dialogic space, we concluded that power-sharing through mutual trust, respect, discovery, honesty, and empowerment of the other is essential. As we questioned one another about teaching and learning experiences, we connected about relevant issues (Ritchie, 2003) as we scaffolded understanding of content and told stories about our own experiences. As we inquired about one another's perspectives about curriculum, teaching strategies and stories, we emotionally scaffolded one another's teacher agency in the process. We realized the power of this process as overtly modeling practices of a community of *learner-teachers*.

[Teacher educators] have the opportunity to engage preservice teachers in the very same process [of high-level thinking or problem-solving], using tasks, problems, and discussions on their level, relating to the content they are learning. Modeling, from this perspective, is not to be construed as a passive learning tool, the sole result being imitation by the learners. Instead modeling is used to engage the preservice teachers in experiences that are meaningful and confront their traditional schemes of teaching... Thus, the main purpose of the modeling is for critique, analysis, and debate of pedagogy. In this way, prospective teachers are engaged as learners, *along with* education faculty... aimed at developing a pedagogy of action. (Fosnot, 1989, p. 16)

“What Are We Doing?” Discovering Duoethnography as a Method

Twenty-five days into our journey together, we entered into flurries of dialogue journaling, emails and texting on a particularly exciting evening. As the more-knowledgeable researcher, I was trying to understand our qualitative method of study. Was it a dual case study? Two autoethnographies shared with another? Dual narrative inquiries? Were we simply co-

researchers as co-participants studying one another's stories? Through an emergent discovery of duoethnography (Norris, 2008), we dialogically experienced special co-construction of understanding.

Duoethnography as a Curricular Experience for Preservice Teachers

Lauri: Docherty-Skippen and Beattie (2018) discuss duoethnography as part of curricular work for medical students in their time of residency (isn't that much like the immersive experience of student teaching? We've talked about this several times in this journal!) as "a dialogic and collaborative form of curriculum inquiry...presented as a pedagogical model" (p. 76). They write, "Since duoethnographies are discussions about self-experiences with others, its ethical stance is centered on a foundation of care and trust that respects participants as both learners and teachers in the transformative and self-reflective process of curriculum exploration" (p. 79). They write about phases of duoethnography that the medical students did in a retreat setting. I was blown away by the phases because they parallel what you and I have done! Could sharing stories around central themes actually be a pedagogical practice in teacher education??

Caitlyn: Yes, yes, YES! We have a lot of the same language (shared *pedagogical DNA*) but have *different dialects* (researcher/teacher educator and emerging educator). We're both experiencing the same phenomenon (teacher education) but the two different "sides" of it.

Lauri: Look at this! They describe the first phase as one of sharing brief narratives, poems, lyrics, pictures, etc. for dialogic analysis. YOU DID THIS WITH ME FIRST!

Caitlyn: Now would you look at that! ☺

Lauri: Then, they describe the next phases. Participants share their experiences while exploring parallels and contrasts and asking questions. They start to dialogically deconstruct their texts and form reconstructed identities as they express and critically reflect on their feelings in the supportive and caring environment they create with each other. Could teacher educators enter into dialoguing with the preservice teacher in a mutual, reciprocal way that positions the teacher as a learner-teacher, not just a teacher? It seems to truly equalize the relationship as intergenerational sharing and questioning as colleagues.

Caitlyn: It's also something that "real" teachers do too. In curriculum meetings, during conferences, self-reflection/goal setting as part of formal evaluation, on social media.

Lauri: Then it puts a student into a role of being a "co-meaning-maker in the educational research process" (Cook-Sather, 2012, p. 13). If we as teacher educators were to approach dialogue journals (a common pedagogical tool) as dialogic, duoethnographic research, we would be "inviting students to be...agents in research on educational practice that challenges deep-seated social and cultural assumptions about the capacity of learners...to discern and analyze effective approaches to teaching and learning" (Cook-Sather, 2012, p. 1).

Caitlyn: *This*. I have a lot more to say about this/our conversation of the student/instructor relationship that we have (kind of??? But we're also colleagues? And friends?)

Lauri: Of course! All of it! What about continually dialoguing about "today's teaching," positioning the professor/mentor as colleague more than authority? Does this actually invite preservice teachers into metaphorical staff meetings, the conference rooms, the monthly potlucks? Into a community of teachers? Might this idea mitigate the fears of being observed and foster a healthier teacher agency because they truly experience co-ness and inter-ness with their professor/mentor/supervisor?

Caitlyn: *Yes*. And I hope that people can just be free to be open and honest about the process of struggle and success that is college. Writing a less formal journal as opposed to a "reflection paper" tends to allow for a more conversational tone that is authentic to the tone of a person-to-person conversation. I think this method would ultimately be successful for preservice learners.

We discovered that our duoethnographic method closely resembled that of Higgins et al. (2018) as we created a shared Google Document, each utilizing different colors as we shared our own voices, stories, images, web links, videos, WordClouds, pictures, and ideas from literature. We likened our process to that of "snail-mail" letter writing, reflecting and interrogating ideas and understandings in the in-between, quiet moments within our dialogic space.

Emergent Characteristics of Duoethnography

Norris (2008) pioneered the method of duoethnography, a “collaborative research methodology in which two or more researchers of difference juxtapose their life histories to provide multiple understandings” (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 9). An equally participative research method, duoethnographic researchers aim toward emancipation or transformation by enabling a change of perspective through critical questioning of constructed knowledge. Farquhar and Fitzpatrick (2016) explain that “participants collaborate in a method of inquiry, sharing and exploring differences and understandings about themselves in relation to a particular topic of concern” (p. 240). The approach is a form of data generation with ongoing analysis throughout, by each party (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). Both participants are the sites of the research, using themselves to assist each other and readers to better understand the topic, leaving space for readers to connect with empathetic understanding and their own subjective reflections.

Dialogue journals form the primary data source for duoethnography. Dialogue writing particularly encourages discovery through a metacognitive process of analysis and synthesis with iterative and recursive meaning-making of our own experiences (Stout, 1993). When grounded in an ethic of care (Noddings 1984), dialogue journals “enable humanizing encounters to which all participants contribute resources for learning and from which all participants learn” (Stillman et al., 2014, p. 146). In reports, both voices are made explicit, intentionally intertwined and reconstructed, much like a play script. Themes are identified and verified through additional dialogue and findings are summarized throughout the entire process (Guerra & Pazey, 2016).

Epistemologically, duoethnography aligns with Caitlyn’s and my shared social constructivist vision of learning and teaching (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998). When teachers collaboratively investigate events within their own teaching, they “generate a base of knowledge that goes beyond what any one of them could learn in the isolation [of] their classrooms...That is the principle of a ‘community of teachers’”(Shulman, 2004, p. 498). Shulman muses, “Perhaps communities of learners and communities of teachers are actually the same thing” (p. 485).

In our case, we also realized that the structure of duoethnography, in which both of us freely shared ideas and sought to understand and vicariously experience each other’s stories became a safe place to consider identity (Wenger, 1998), providing potentials for purposeful, agentic action in our new roles. Through our dyad, within the broader community of music educators, duoethnography became a social structure of identity-making in itself. We both experienced heightened teacher agency as our dialogues helped us socially co-construct our new places in the field of music education—our music educator identities. As a microcosm of community within the field of music education, we became a dyadic pair who perceived ourselves to be

what Tajfel and Turner (2001) describe as communal group members: that is, “members of the same social category, shar[ing] some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achiev[ing] some degree of social consensus” (p. 40). Our individual self-images converged with a joint/collective sense of a broader group membership and identity, socially constructed through our increasing and deepening interrogation.

Indeed, a strong duoethnography is one in which each author questions one another’s and their own stories, regarding the other as an equal and working together toward change. In addition, “differences between the writers’ points of view” are considered strengths from which readers can “explore different meanings to a shared phenomenon” (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018, p. 91). But we realized that, due to our shared pedagogical DNA, we had explored more commonality than difference. We had left the “elephant in the room” unexplored and needed to discuss its tensions.

Discussion of Inherent Authoritative Positionality: Breaking Down Walls

As part of my doctoral assistantship work, I had observed Caitlyn teaching several times in one of her early field placement classrooms. Although I was not her teacher, I served in an inherently authoritative position when I gave her feedback after she worked with students. At that point, I had taught music in a variety of school and community settings for over 25 years and she viewed me as a mentor in those moments. Therefore, when we re-connected at the music education conference and entered into our duoethnographic process, we did so with a short history of a quasi-teacher-student relationship. Because we did not know each other well before our interactions in this study, our initial dialogue naturally centered on our invigorating alignment of philosophical and pedagogical perspectives. We quickly moved into discussing how those perspectives could impact our relationship as mentor/mentee in the context of my extensive prior teaching experiences and the new roles we each had recently in the field of education.

Lauri: Could dialogue journals with a university supervisor or professor really happen this way? If we are pedagogical family, isn’t that the safest way of being? Could it foster preservice teacher agency to transparently write like this? I’m thinking it might, especially if I as professor would be vulnerable and transparent about mistakes or hard things that happen in my own teaching. Could a duoethnographic study with a mentor, who shares struggles too, become the safest personalized vehicle for modeling a community of learners? For example, I’ve shared some of my mistake fears with you. How do you deal with making mistakes?

Caitlyn: I make them all the time, and it's almost like an expedited five stages of grief process for me now. At the initial incident, it's hard to believe I just did/said something as incorrectly as I did...but eventually I have to move to acceptance of the mistake as part of the process and move on. My time is not best spent on attaining perfection. Sometimes the explicit judgement is harder to deal with than implicit judgement, isn't it? It's easier to shrug off (in time) the judgments that aren't tangible than those which are physical "data" in front of us....but it's also really easy to become emotionally reactive to either of them.

Lauri: Yes. For me, either used to destroy me emotionally. It caused a drive to never make mistakes, so I didn't have to live with that feeling. Could this be partly why I am so attracted to social constructivism? Why it matters so much to me that my students never feel that I judge them?

Caitlyn: It's funny how a culture of learning transcends age and experience! We're so quick to put personal information everywhere these days, but emotional intimacy and empathy aren't always a part of that. In doing a duoethnography, that relationship can be an exercise in vulnerability and relationship building through mutual reflection. It would certainly change the ways emerging educators think of themselves and the relationships they form with their mentors, and how they move forward and interact with students and colleagues.

Lauri: But there's a tension. Let's just acknowledge that a university professor is in an authoritative role with preservice teachers and there's no way around that, even in a social constructivist paradigm. I'm also literally as old as your mother, with many different educational experiences. And part of my role is to assess a preservice teacher, giving grades. What can preservice teachers do to enter into the dialogue journal experience with honesty?

Caitlyn: I prefer honesty and open dialogue because it signals to me a culture of mutual respect. I never really felt uncomfortable being 'real' with professors. Emotional scaffolding is a thing too and is really crucial in this profession which can be so emotionally taxing.

People are learners, learners are people, so why can't we put their humanity first? Person-centric is really where the terminology is going (and should be going). That's why there is a power imbalance in

classrooms across this country (among many other social injustices which influence this) and it's why Freire's *Pedagogy* is SO relevant, especially in the US, where we commonly think of ourselves as being "free" and having "liberty." But the opposite is true, more often than not, in our schools and in the system of education and teacher prep.

Lauri: Suddenly, with roles and titles and unspoken rules, walls are erected as barriers between so many types of people with hierarchies of power and control and belief systems where this type of relational learning seems impossible. It is so much about what Freire describes and it seems far worse to me than I thought, as I now have more of an emic perspective on academia. I may be utopian about this, but I not only think that person-centric learning and teaching is possible, but that it is necessary for education to maintain itself in the 21st century. In formal and informal spaces, in any space where experiences specifically invite learning and are pedagogically purposed.

Caitlyn: It seems like this is a divide/barrier that does actually exist, a barrier of educational spheres. Yes, both have valid identities and strengths/weaknesses as ways of being/learning (or communities of practice, really) but embracing these differences as part of the relationship instead of as a reason for why the relationship is strained or inauthentic will be *key* for this part of the field to continue and truly benefit both formal and informal teacher-learners.

I love that this work we're doing, the new knowledge I'm constructing alongside you, has other applications beyond what we're doing, which is something that has come out of our dialoguing and discovering together. It just feels good...and feels important.

Hearing your ideas about power and privilege in higher ed is something I'm thinking a ton about too. Even as we embark on this journey, I keep coming back to the idea that we are both white women who are in relationships with white men and we have some degree of education/research experience with financial stability. We are exemplifying a part of the dominant culture both in society and in academia, which is also what Freire (at least I think so) invites us to think about as we interpret/use his words today. We can't possibly collaborate in a meaningful way without first understanding and confronting our differences and core identities as practitioners.

Individual Difference as Strength in Teacher Education: Importance of Individual Experiences

Early in our dialogue, we discovered that our generational differences and resulting lived experiences might impact our worldviews and resulting approaches to teaching and learning, despite our shared pedagogical DNA. As we began to openly acknowledge and interrogate perspectives, we began to realize the dominating importance of individual experiences as heterogeneous strengths in teacher education.

Caitlyn: So, I'm going to ask you about generational stereotyping, labeling, and our assumptions and biases and pedagogies. This is our "elephant in the room." You are Gen X and I am a Millennial. You mostly teach Gen Z. How has music teacher education changed since your time in the university?

Lauri: I had so, so much reading to do. I now read about Gen Z's lack of interest in reading, wanting more video content, loosening those traditions. I do believe teachers, of all people, need to be able to investigate problems they encounter in the classroom through researching ideas. This requires reading with analysis and synthesis. In my work (as recent as 5 years ago), we relied a lot less on verbal discussion and a lot more on reading.

Caitlyn: We have to push ourselves to read for comprehension, analyze for application, and use research to inform practice. It's like any good teaching, reflective of an amalgamation of styles/approaches and encouraging the differentiation of instruction where necessary. However, literacy and fluency with the literature of our field is also important.

Lauri: I also did mock teaching for nearly every class I've taken, over many years, but some of my students find it very inauthentic.

Caitlyn: It can feel inauthentic when the "students" and/or peer teacher doing the lesson don't take it seriously, and there isn't a clear expectation of norms for the learning culture and environment during the episode. I think it's one of those moments where you just have to stop trying to either have students "act like 4th graders" or only look at it like a teaching episode for a grade. It's a simulation of a lesson, and an opportunity to practice in front of people who can give constructive feedback/identify places where a different approach can be applied. If we

treated peer teaching more like master/studio class for applied lessons, maybe it would feel less “weird” and awkward?

You know, it seems to me that generational stereotypes don't really apply in the way we're led to believe, and I wonder if that's why teacher-centered practices are still a thing. If we assume things about the learners we encounter, or about ourselves and our experiences based on generational traits/norms, then aren't we clouding our practice with bias? Furthermore, is this bias then not in the best interest of or meeting the needs of learners?

Lauri: *Can* two differing generations even approach this idea, when one is in the actual teacher role? If so, how can we mediate the generational thing? For example, 9/11 has shaped me, as a teacher in Maryland who was directly affected by the Pentagon terrorism. I literally had students in my office weeping and screaming as I desperately tried to reach their parents who both worked at the Pentagon, with no success because phone lines were down. The terror hit me deeply because I couldn't go pick up my own daughters from school. The frenzy and fear were unlike any other day of my life. The constant bomb shelter drills during the Cold War, in elementary school, deeply affected me. I have truly had to combat a sense of underlying fear of just being alive and that is something Gen Z has not had to deal with. So, like a true Gen Xer, I value comfort and security.

I think it may be in that latter idea that I am finding myself projecting onto my students. I want them to find jobs, be successful and secure, and have lots of teacher agency so they can thrive. I want them to discover themselves, their passions, interests and skills, but within a cushion that allows them to fail forward into learning.

But experiences shape us and aren't our experiences individual? Within sociocultural contexts, sure...but highly individual. And don't those individual experiences shape our identities? Am I being generational when I say this? Or just a Deweyan academic? I am really troubled by the blaming on identity and naming of identities as descriptors for someone's holistic being these days...labels don't seem holistic to me at all. I see identity as a very complex set of roles and experiences...individual ones, created in complexities of sociocultural contexts.

Caitlyn: So this statement gets me too. Identity is truly not one thing, but rather a mosaic or collage of all we have experienced and all that makes our experiences unique from one another. It's problematic for me when people use their identity as a justification for an opinion, or in describing themselves to others in conversation. I'm working on moving away from this in my own life, and it's a journey. We are all SO programmed to either identify with our occupation, political ideals (this one *really* gets me, since I don't see it as connected to personality/identity at all and I don't think it should be intertwined so tightly with identity) race, gender identity, sexuality, etc. depending on the situation, but the reality is that we are all and sometimes none of these things at the same time. Different parts of our experience become relevant at different times and in different situations, yet they all make up who we are.

This upcoming generation of teens/young adults prides itself on being socially "woke." But we must acknowledge that we are all biased, flawed, and limited by our experiences. We can be empathetic and considerate of the "more knowledgeable others" in our lives by hearing the voices of others and being patient in our urge to respond/react to a situation. In that way, I think that is where duoethnography thrives.

Lauri: YES! It comes down to experiences, varied, generational, impactful, sociocultural, personal. And then it comes down to understanding and care and, in the case of teaching, seeking to truly collaborate in a professional manner. We sought to find connection, despite generational difference, and there was/is so much. Our pedagogical DNA is part of that; we are in the same family. But, even with differences, we can more deeply understand one another as music educators and embrace differing perspectives.

Wouldn't it be amazing to experience this type of honoring in this world of people constantly seeking to challenge others, arguing and belittling others? Wouldn't it be amazing for a person-centric experience like this to occur between teachers and students? I don't call it learner-centered because it's transformative learning for *both* of us to enter into these types of discussions. And it's so relational. I have tears in my eyes because you have helped me so much, just through this sharing experience. I learned about my current need for my own teacher agency, discovering your ideas to battle my own fears and ways to approach my understandings of teacher education pedagogical strategies. You gave me your perspective

as an educator who just finished the formal music teacher education process.

Caitlyn: I think this model of questioning, sharing, interrogating, and responding is really helpful for understanding current concerns and matching them with prior experiences that provide context for the concern...exactly what effective communication looks/sounds/feels like!

I think this is applicable to all educators and people in supervisory roles/work relationships. There is space for both parties to share their ideas and use the ideas of another to spark inspiration, connection, and extension of thought in this equal cycle of discussion and discovery. It's even starting to change my thinking about where my master's thesis might lead.

Findings and Implications for Music Teacher Educators

The duoethnographic process has enabled us, as participants, to construct deeper understanding of our intersecting identities through our varied yet simultaneous relationships, as teacher-learners, colleagues, friends, and academic investigators, embedded in our *pedagogical DNA*. We have gained valuable insight into how generational differences, inherent in teacher educator/preservice teacher relationships, can develop into intersubjectivity as emergent teacher colleagues. Simulating authentic practices in local school communities, dialogue journals can become informal learning spaces within a formal learning sphere. But differing from traditional dialogue journals, duoethnography seemed to equalize our relationship, fostering an agentive culture of risk-taking and mutual respect that became our shared community of teacher-learners as we questioned and analyzed our writings. As is the case with duoethnography, our purpose was transformation, growth, and change in our own practices and thinking, through overt acknowledgment and acceptance of human difference. We now see more clearly that a pedagogical application of duoethnography, in which learner-teachers are situated as co-researchers of teaching practice, can become a tool to enrich teacher agency for both teachers (regardless of positional authority or generational difference) while enhancing inquisitive work as researchers. In duoethnography, both learner-teachers participate in synthesizing theory and research method with practice, fostering professional reflection through equalizing relationships with each other as emerging colleagues, potentially mitigating their fears. Duoethnography then might become a pedagogy of freedom¹, empowering each participant with teacher agency, as they share classroom-situated struggles

¹ After Freire (1998)

and differing perspectives. Paradoxical within formal education roles, generational or positional differences could enhance the strength of the work in pedagogical duoethnography.

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Dr. Lauri A. Hogle was appointed to the music education faculty of Oakland University in 2018, where she teaches undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students in music education.

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