

Liberty University

School of Music

Potential Pathways to Culturally Relevant Licensure

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the School of Music
in Candidacy for the Degree of
DME. in Music Education

by

Jeremy Fritts

Lynchburg, VA

August/2023

Doctor of Music Education
Thesis Defense Decision

The thesis Advisor and Reader have rendered the following decision concerning the defense for

Jeremy Fritts

on the Thesis

Potential Pathways to Culturally Relevant Licensure

as submitted on August 8th, 2023

 X **Full approval to proceed with no proposal revision.**
___ The document should be prepared for submission to the Jerry Falwell Library.

___ **Provisional approval pending cited revisions.**
The student must resubmit the project with cited revisions according to the established timeline.

___ **Redirection of project.**
The student is being redirected to take MUSC 889 again, as minor revisions will not meet the expectations for the research project.

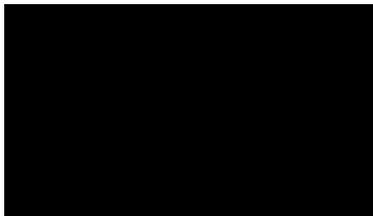
Jerry L. Newman
Print Name of Advisor



8/8/23
Date

Nathan Street

Print Name of Reader



Signature

8-8-23

Date

Acknowledgments

This project is the culmination of more than two decades of teaching. During this time, I have been blessed with exceptional mentors, colleagues, and students. I have also been granted opportunities to share my music on numerous stages throughout the United States and abroad. These privileges were, however, not of my own making. On the contrary, they are the reflections of others' generosity—others' sacrifice.

I am particularly indebted to the outstanding faculty from Liberty University, especially Dr. Newman and Dr. Street, for guiding me through this process. Their encouragement, their support, and their prayers have truly inspired me. I am also indebted to James Hodges for his outstanding editing contributions. Additionally, I am thankful for the support of my wonderful family. My father and mother, my “pit crew,” were instrumental in freeing up the time to complete these assignments. Most importantly, I am grateful to my Heavenly Father, God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, who provided me with this opportunity and all the blessings of life.

Abstract

Despite recent trends favoring the integration of vernacular music in higher education, there are still stakeholders who are resistant to change. This qualitative study seeks to account for such responses. By examining relevant literature relating to the movement and interviewing educators with substantial experience in the field, the researcher seeks to uncover potential pathways to music education licensure for college graduates specializing in bluegrass and roots music studies. This study also considers foreseeable advantages and impediments to the initiative, including classism, Euro-centric musical biases, the marginalization of likely participants, and educational mandates for cultural relevancy. The study cross-references and compares these phenomena with interviewee responses to identify and contextualize those forces that deny formally trained and credentialed bluegrass and roots music studies specialists an equal opportunity to pursue Tennessee music education licensure. This study also examines a variety of alternative licensure pathways that could potentially facilitate music education licensure for these individuals. Additionally, the study contextualizes the individual, institutional, and societal benefits that can potentially emerge in the event that these individuals are provided with consistently replicable and navigable pathways through this process.

Keywords: bluegrass and roots music studies, cultural relevancy, music education licensure

revision

Contents

List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background	2
Bluegrass and Roots Music in Higher Education	4
Classical Music Education	6
A Pedagogical Gulf that Remains	7
Theoretical Framework	8
Statement of the Problem	8
Statement of the Purpose	10
Significance of the Study	12
Research Questions and Sub Questions	14
Working Hypotheses	15
Identification of the Variables	18
Core Concepts	18
Marginalization	19
Euro-Centric Biases and Classism	19
Cultural Relevancy	20
Definition of Terms	21
Bluegrass Music	21
Roots Music	23
Summary	24

Chapter 2: Literature Review	25
Introduction	25
Justifications for Music Education Reform	25
Praxial Learning Philosophy.....	25
Classism and Euro-Centric Biases	29
Cultural Relevancy	37
Indicators of Progress	40
The Institutionalization of Jazz Music: A Precursor	40
Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies in Higher Education	46
State Licensure: A Mandate for Reform	48
Traditional Licensure Practices	48
Alternative Licensure	53
NASM Accreditation	56
Future Projections	59
An Inclusive Calling	61
Summary	63
Chapter 3: Methodology	65
Introduction	65
Questions and Hypotheses	65
Research Questions	65
Hypotheses	66
Research Design	67
Participants	70

Sampling Size	72
Recruitment Plan	73
Researcher Positionality	73
Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives	74
Instrumentation	76
Qualitative Data Collection Plan	77
Question-Based Protocol	77
Interview Transcriptions	85
Data Saturation	86
Procedures	87
Data Collection	87
Coding	88
Post-Coding Analysis	90
Setting	92
Data Analysis	93
Chapter 4: Analysis	98
Introduction	98
Interview Results	98
Thematic Data saturation	98
Interview Data Analysis	103
Analytical Organization	105
Phenomena Favoring K-12 Music Studies	106

Student Benefits from Acceptance and Support for Vernacular Music	107
Benefits of K-12 Vernacular Music Licensure	108
Arguments Supporting Licensure for Vernacular Music Educators	109
Indicators of Interest in K-12 Vernacular Music Studies	111
Alternatives to K-12 Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies: Beyond Licensure ..	112
Factors Supporting Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies	114
Impediments to K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and Licensure	116
Financial Concerns	118
Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies	120
Various Arguments Against Bluegrass and Roots Educator Licensure	121
Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies	122
Multidimensional Impediments: A Comparative Analysis	124
The Future	125
Jazz Education: A Precedence for Reform	126
Licensure Alternatives	127
Summary	128
Chapter 5: Conclusions	131
Summary of Study	131
Summary of Findings and Prior Research	131
Literature Review and Interview Comparisons	136
The Power of Precedence	137
Euro-Centric Biases, Classism, and Marginalization	139
Exposure is Critical	139
Understanding is Critical	141

Legitimacy and Creditability are Critical	143
Accreditation May be Useful	145
NASM Policy: Ambiguity in Action	146
NASM Policy: Unintended Inequity	147
Advocacy is Critical	148
Limitations	150
Recommendations for Future Study	151
Implications for Practice	152
Summary	157
Bibliography	164
Appendix A	173
Appendix B	174
Appendix C	176

List of Tables

Table 1:	100
Table 2:	100
Table 3:	101
Table 4:	101
Table 5:	102
Table 6:	102
Table 7:	103
Table 8:	103

List of Figures

Figure 1:	104
Figure 2:	107
Figure 3:	109
Figure 4:	110
Figure 5:	111
Figure 6:	113
Figure 7:	115
Figure 8:	116
Figure 9:	117
Figure 10:	119
Figure 11:	121
Figure 12:	123
Figure 13:	138
Figure 14:	141
Figure 15:	142
Figure 16:	143
Figure 17:	145
Figure 18:	149
Figure 19:	153
Figure 20:	155

Chapter 1: Introduction

In a world of unrivaled diversity and an era of unprecedented interconnectivity, it behooves all educational stakeholders to reconcile between narrowly focused pedagogical approaches of the past and current trends. Per these demands, modern-day institutions of higher learning are striving for increased inclusivity. They are also becoming increasingly devoted to cultural equity and cultural relevancy causes. Astute, conscience-driven educators will characterize these objectives as noble and entirely warranted. However, they will also recognize that these goals are only achievable if educational stakeholders afford all demographics equal respect, appreciation, and acceptance.

Colleges and universities in recent times have begun to recognize, appreciate, and embrace broad-ranging, vernacular music forms. For example, since its inception in 1982, East Tennessee State University's bluegrass music program has evolved into a decidedly inclusive initiative offering roots music courses ranging from bluegrass to old-time to Celtic to country music formats.^{1 2} Denison University also recently rebranded its bluegrass initiative as the "American Roots" program.³ In addition, Boston's Berklee College of Music American Roots Music Program has piloted an American Roots Music Program that is exceptionally diverse in scope and vision. At Berklee, students experience numerous musical styles, including the

¹ "History: IN THE BEGINNING: Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music," Bluegrass, Old-Time, Country Music: Department of Appalachian Studies, accessed on October 10th, 2022, <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/das/bluegrass/about-us/history.php>.

² "History: IN THE BEGINNING: Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music," Bluegrass, Old-Time, Country Music: Department of Appalachian Studies, accessed on October 10th, 2022, <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/das/bluegrass/about-us/history.php>.

³ Rachel Block, "Denison's Bluegrass now American Roots," Denison, accessed on September 11th, 2023, <https://denison.edu/academics/music/wh/143987>.

following: “blues, bluegrass, cajun, classic country, early gospel, early jazz, folk, gospel, old-time, polka, spirituals, Tex-Mex, and western swing.”⁴ Significantly, to educational stakeholders with vested interests in vernacular musical traditions, these innovations indicate musical and societal progress.

Background

Disparate pedagogical approaches have become increasingly prone to overlapping or convergence in higher education environments. Educators and educational researchers may attribute such phenomena to increased institutional emphases on inclusivity or current sociological propensities favoring the acceptance of diverse musical forms. In his dissertation case study of three higher education music programs, Dr. Nathaniel Olson (East Tennessee State University’s Academic Director of Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies) observed that “. . . in recent years society has become increasingly aware of and sensitive to the tremendous cultural diversity present in the world and in local communities.”⁵ He further concluded “that not only are these schools open to diverse musical traditions, but they have some respect for the alternative pathways to expertise in these traditions.”⁶

These pedagogical trends portend an era of inclusive educational and sociological progress. Nonetheless, musical educators and researchers must acknowledge and appreciate the

⁴ “American Roots Music Program: Digging deep to connect with the diverse rural roots of American music in the first half of the 20th century,” Berklee College of Music, accessed on October 10th, 2022, <https://college.berklee.edu/focused/roots>.

⁵ Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education: Three Cases,” 19, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_journals_1545887806.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 332.

magnitude of their remaining tasks. In the words of Sarath et al., “it is a tall order . . . to live out diversity principles at work towards inclusionary practices.”⁷

The researcher has frequently observed pedagogical and ideological rifts between disparate musical constituents relating to college-level bluegrass and roots music studies. For example, adherents to the Euro-centric “classical” model are likely to stress musical literacy or, in layperson’s terms, note-reading skills. At the same time, bluegrass and roots musicians prefer more intuitive, aurally-driven approaches—specifically, playing by ear. In the words of ETSU’s director of bluegrass studies, Dan Boner, “. . . at no point will they [students] come to a band class and play by sheet music.”⁸ He added that “it’s not what we do” and “it’s not how it works.”⁹ In these instances, the classically trained musician or scholar may characterize such approaches as alien, insufficient, or inappropriate to the pursuit of music. Nonetheless, bluegrass educators recognize such an approach as commonplace and proven in their unique discipline.

Beyond the debate of procedural disparities and pedagogical incongruities, Euro-centric musical biases have continually flourished in academic circles. These ideologies may be rooted in entrenched pedagogical precedence or stereotypical misgivings. According to Good-Perkins, “assumption[s]” are made that “Western Classical music is the ‘high’ art form for those who are cultured,” and “these discourses of superiority emphasize what is appropriate and therefore worthy of being included in the music classroom.”¹⁰ Given the incompatibility and impracticality

⁷ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies in an Age of Change: Creativity, Diversity, and Integration, 1st ed.* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 24, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4324/9781315649160>.

⁸ Pat Moran, “Bluegrass U” *Acoustic Guitar* 26, no. 3 (Sept., 2015): 31-32, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/bluegrassu/docview/1700972463/se-2>.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰ Emily Good-Perkins, “Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 29, no. 1 (spring, 2021): 50, <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/786578>.

of such diametrically opposing strategies, it behooves the researcher to seek further understanding of the unique origins of these educational traditions.

Bluegrass and Roots Music in Higher Education

There were numerous skeptics of the initiative when Jack Tottle piloted the East Tennessee State University bluegrass program in 1982.¹¹ Tottle was not, however, deterred by their lack of vision. Instead, he remained diligent and resolute until his efforts were reciprocated with additional course offerings. ETSU also expanded its existing roster of bluegrass instructors while exploring a pedagogical vision that would eventually culminate in the creation of several groundbreaking degree paths: a minor, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in Appalachian studies with bluegrass or roots music course options.

When considering Tottle's noted accomplishments, it is important to note that higher education vernacular music studies did not originate at East Tennessee State University, nor were they exclusive to the region. A Texas-based institution, South Plains College, bears the distinction of being "the first institution to award diplomas in roots music."¹² This educational milestone was realized in 1975 when the junior college added a bluegrass minor to its catalog.¹³

The ETSU and South Plains models serve as blueprints for current or aspiring bluegrass and roots music programs. This trend has continued to the present day, and there is evidence that the support and momentum for higher education bluegrass and roots music studies is growing. In 2015, Moran identified seventeen institutions of higher learning offering related coursework (in a

¹¹ "History: IN THE BEGINNING," Bluegrass, Old-Time, Country Music: Department of Appalachian Studies, accessed on September 7th, 2022, <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/das/bluegrass/about-us/history.php>.

¹² Paula Dittrick, "SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE STUDENTS MAJOR IN BLUEGRASS," Chicago Tribune, accessed on September 7th, 2022, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1985-02-07-8501080105-story.html>.

¹³ Ibid.

non-peer-reviewed article from a standard trade magazine).¹⁴ By 2020, the IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) database would also showcase fifty colleges or universities featuring bluegrass-related musical opportunities.¹⁵

The researcher sought to reaffirm the above trends by engaging in relevant internet searches. He entered the following phrases into the Google search engine on July 12th, 2023: “college or university bluegrass or roots music program,” “university bluegrass or roots music program,” “college or university bluegrass band,” and “college or university bluegrass ensemble.” In a relatively brief timeframe, he identified thirty-seven colleges and universities, including junior colleges, offering bluegrass or roots music-related courses. As Lehmann astutely observed, “. . . bluegrass music is going to college.”¹⁶

The previous narratives do much to establish the premise that bluegrass and roots music studies initiatives are becoming increasingly prevalent in higher education spheres. However, these discourses do not offer proof of a unanimous or even majority-based higher education adoption of such coursework. Nonetheless, the researcher recognizes that widespread pedagogical changes have recently transpired, and metaphorically, the seeds for additional transitions remain in the educational ground. In the words of Moran, “while the rise in the number of college-level bluegrass offerings over the past four decades doesn’t exactly constitute a flood, it does represent a sea change in musical education: a traditionally down-home, do-it-yourself genre now finds itself being embraced by the formal, exclusionary world of

¹⁴ Pat Moran, “Bluegrass U,” *Acoustic Guitar* 26, no. 3 (Sept., 2015), 30, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/bluegrass-u/docview/1700972463/se-2>.

¹⁵ “BG College email spreadsheet 2020,” The IBMA Foundation, accessed on October 2nd, 2022, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yWSYbxM0dDpNKPQbQy1m87Z4alrwkTEzu8eb1-cgRds/edit#gid=0>.

¹⁶ Ted Lehmann, “Bluegrass Goes to College, But Should it?” *No Depression* (July, 2017), accessed on October 14th, 2022, <https://www.nodepression.com/bluegrass-goes-to-college-but-should-it/>.

academia.”¹⁷ Within these observations, the educational researcher is, at a minimum, reminded that radical shifts in pedagogical thinking have recently occurred at institutions of higher learning. These institutions may continue along their current trajectories, and the movement may continue its exponential growth pattern—a continuance of the pioneering missions of East Tennessee State University and South Plains College.

Most importantly, the previous observations serve as reminders of unwritten yet thoroughly relevant mandates for musical inclusivity. Educational institutions, university educators, and music researchers are reminded of their unique responsibilities and distinct privileges to embrace the contributions of all musical demographics, particularly the contributions of educational groupings that have been marginalized. Fortuitously, twenty-first-century college educators work in an environment conducive to resolving such diversity issues. As Olson demonstrated in his dissertation case study of three universities, “. . . institutions of higher learning can be vital locations of preservation, perpetuation, and evolution for fiddle and folk traditions, and . . . striking educational benefits can come from including these traditions.”¹⁸

Classical Music Education

In the perpetual quest for greater inclusivity, American music instructors may be reminded of the singular origins and the narrow focus of their craft. Bates et al. attributed these educational approaches to Lowell Mason, who showcased a strong affinity for Euro-Centric pedagogical models.¹⁹ These examples are undoubtedly artistically valid, intellectually

¹⁷ Pat Moran, “Bluegrass U,” 30-31.

¹⁸ Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education,” Abstract.

¹⁹ Vincent C. Bates, Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling, “Country Music Education for Diverse and Inclusive Music Classrooms,” *Music Educators Journal* 107, no. 2 (Dec., 2020): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432120956386>.

stimulating, and worthy of continued recognition. In the words of Lornell, “Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, . . . Beethoven . . . [and] Wagner . . . wrote grand music that well deserves to be performed and studied today.”²⁰ Nonetheless, this study contends that such European models can neither qualify nor preclude the study of additional works: other notable musical achievements originating from diverse-ranging demographic groups. The observant music scholar will recognize that entirely valid, oftentimes equally compelling examples fall outside the purview of traditional Euro-centric musical hierarchies. To this end, Bates et al. were led to speculate as to the current state of music education “if Lowell Mason . . . had been more deeply influenced by the music of enslaved people during his time in Savannah, Georgia.”²¹

A Pedagogical Gulf that Remains

The previous narratives provided evidence of the evolutionary growth patterns of bluegrass and roots music studies initiatives within higher education. However, it is essential to note that these patterns—propensities for inclusive change—do not necessarily reflect typical higher education evolutionary patterns. Despite these encouraging gestures, music educators and researchers must continually contend with, as one author put it, the pedagogical gulf that remains “between much of what happens in most music schools and the broader musical landscape behind these schools.”²² As Sarath et al. astutely observed,

Despite music’s centrality to civilization, the core aspects of undergraduate music study have remained largely insulated from relevance to issues arising from a shrinking global society, technology’s influence on every aspect of our lives, including the creation,

²⁰ Kip Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012): 29, https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_ebookcentral_EBC932777.

²¹ Vincent C. Bates, Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling, “Country Music Education,” 29.

²² E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, 1.

performance, distribution of, and access to diverse music, and growing tensions associated with demographic and economic divides.²³

Theoretical Framework

Numerous philosophical and theoretical justifications exist for integrating bluegrass and roots music studies in educational programs. This study reinforces the premise that musical inclusivity and cultural relevancy benefit all stakeholders, a notion supported and reaffirmed in praxial teaching philosophies. When considered “as a verb,” the term “praxis” refers to “a doing or trying to of a musical kind.” Praxial music studies are, therefore, conducive to an action-based learning process or musicking.²⁴ Bluegrass and roots music practitioners are generally familiar with these pedagogical strategies, which are ideally suited to studying aurally disseminated music. Ideally, these praxial learning strategies will also portend of an inclusive learning state where, in contrast to aesthetic philosophies, music’s “. . . value is not [measured in] its inaccessibility to all but a ‘cultivated’ few; it is seen in the many forms by which music praxis is readily accessible to all people”²⁵

Statement of the Problem

Of the many impediments and inequities that formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals, particularly educators, contend with, one phenomenon seems to tower over all others: this demographic’s exclusion from K-12 state-level music licensure opportunities. The researcher has uncovered ample evidence supporting the premise that current teacher training and music licensure approaches are inherently flawed and decisively inequitable. Elpus

²³ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, x.

²⁴ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education as Social Praxis*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015): xv-xvi, 7, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315686493>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

underscored these assertions in his conclusion that “music teacher licensure candidates are not representative of the population of American adults, not representative of the population of currently working public school music teachers in the United States, not representative of the population of U. S. undergraduate students, and not representative of the pool of high school graduates who had persisted in music through the entirety of their high school careers.”²⁶

These disparities may indicate a procedural failure at the administrative level in current public education models. In failing to adequately correlate the demographic profiles of public school educators with the general population or the existing pool of aspiring music teachers, administrators deprive all educational constituencies of various inclusive benefits. As Sarath et al. observed, diverse educational experiences benefit the music education process. Sarath et al. asserted that “music majors in preparation for an array of professional activities ahead benefit greatly from embracing diversity as it relates to knowing the structures, functions, and meanings of music as a global phenomenon.”²⁷

In light of the previous observations, it is evident that current state-level music licensing procedures may warrant an overhaul. These processes are riddled with inconstancy and ambiguity. As May et al. pointed out, “. . . licensure practices . . . vary from state to state.”²⁸ While the 1986 Carnegie Task Force advocated for “uniform teacher certification procedures,” it can be inferred that these “state certification practices are as varied as the 50 states

²⁶ Kenneth Elpus, “Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States: A Demographic Profile and Analysis of Licensure Examination Scores,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 3 (2015): 314, 329, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43900301>.

²⁷ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, 18.

²⁸ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification and Licensure Practices in the United States,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 1 (October 2017): 65, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717699650>.

themselves.”²⁹ Interestingly, some individuals may attribute these incongruities and the lack of specificity to inadequate “oversight” at the federal level. According to May et al., the “ESSA [every student succeeds act] requires teachers to be ‘effective’ in their fields; however, individual states have oversight concerning how teacher effectiveness is to be defined and measured.”³⁰

When considered in tandem, the researcher recognizes potentialities for these phenomena to cultivate narrow and decidedly inequitable licensing hierarchies—resulting in the exclusion of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from state-level educational licensure. Regardless of whether these individuals excel in their chosen disciplines or whether they are eager to share their experiences with others as teachers, these dedicated professionals—college graduates in their respective fields—may also be relegated to non-musical vocations.

This study seeks to examine these educational shortcomings and identify their root causes in the current educational climate. On an encouraging note, the researcher has identified numerous indicators of progress within the academic community relating to the integration of vernacular musical traditions. The problem is that there is also a void in scholarly discourse and literature regarding formalized bluegrass and roots music advocacy, and a comprehensive assessment of variables relating to the licensing of formally trained bluegrass and roots music studies professionals is nonexistent.

Statement of the Purpose

Many impediments are relevant to the music education discipline’s broader adoption of vernacular musical traditions. The researcher proposes to explore and assess these elements in

²⁹ Michele Henry, “An Analysis of Certification Practices for Music Educators in the Fifty States,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 14, no. 2 (January 2005): 53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837050140020108>.

³⁰ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification,” 67.

the context of a particular phenomenon that has continually impeded this process: an incongruity in employment opportunities for college-educated music professionals with disparate stylistic specializations. Through the qualitative research lens of hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher aims to address a gap in the literature pertaining to potentialities for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to attain Tennessee music education licensure. As the available evidence demonstrates, this demographic is often victimized by classism, Euro-centric biases, and marginalist tendencies. From a licensure perspective, the researcher finds this evidence to paint a decidedly bleak and inopportune picture—an educational canvas riddled with inadequacy, inequity, and obsolescence.

This study's relevance is underscored in the emerging trends offering support for higher education vernacular music studies, trends that may be indicative of broader academic and societal acceptance of vernacular music. In a non-peer-reviewed yet highly relevant article interviewing noted jazz violinist and educator Scott Tixie, Templeton observed that a "move is being made, slowly, at a number of . . . esteemed universities" in favor of increasingly diverse curricula.³¹ Several higher education institutions now offer folk-based instruction, including the University of Northern Colorado, Carleton University, Berklee School of Music, and the University of Northern Texas.³² Additionally, Stimeling and Enriquez recognized "recent" additions to the higher education bluegrass or roots music studies lineup: the programs at Hazard Technical and Community College and Glenville State College.³³

³¹ David Templeton, "ALL THAT JAZZ," *Strings* 33, no. 2 (Sept., 2018): 39, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/all-that-jazz/docview/2450797683/se-2>.

³² *Ibid.*, 39.

³³ Travis D. Stimeling, and Sophia M. Enriquez, "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES: DECOLONIAL DIRECTIONS IN HIGHER ED BLUEGRASS PEDAGOGY: CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MUSIC," *Intersections* 39, no. 1 (2019): 59, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?>

Significance of the Study

There are many justifications for an expanded music education licensure process. These revisions could stimulate new job opportunities for college graduates specializing in non-traditional music studies. Such revisions could also open doors for music educators interested in sharing a broader and more culturally relevant grouping of styles while helping to alleviate marginalist or classist tendencies. Finally, by integrating overlooked vernacular music forms in the classroom, educators can participate in a pedagogical course correction that some educators would regard as long overdue. In keeping with this sentiment, Bates et al. hypothesized that “it may well be that implicit class bias plays a key role in prejudice towards country music, thereby contributing to its relative absence in school music programs.”³⁴

The need to address such occupational inequities for formally trained bluegrass or roots music professionals is innately evident and entirely pressing. Surprisingly, the researcher has found little research addressing this or many other occupational dilemmas this demographic will likely face. Gee and Yeow further supported this premise by asserting that deficits exist in data regarding musicians’ “employability beyond higher education work program[s].”³⁵ Thus, the researcher attests to inequitable shortcomings in music education employment hierarchies—a manifestation of incongruities that have guided and, in many instances, impeded pedagogical processes for current and prospective music education professionals.

url=<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/building-relationships-sustaining-communities/docview/2479073168/se-2>.

³⁴ Vincent C. Bates, Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling, “Country Music Education,” 30.

³⁵ Kate Gee and Pamela Yeow, “A hard day’s night: building sustainable careers for musicians,” *Cultural Trends* 30, no. 4 (2021): 341, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2021.1941776>.

This study, in response to the above scenario, seeks to uncover and examine potentialities for expansive music education licensure. The researcher will collect and analyze data yielded through multiple theoretical lenses, including praxialism. From a praxial or action-based learning perspective, Regelski stressed the importance of relevance, practicality, and useability in pedagogical decisions. According to Regelski, “school Music has unfortunately become its own extremely limited and limiting musical praxis that comes with what seems to be a do-not-use-beyond-the-school-years . . . ‘shelf life.’”³⁶ In response, readers are cautioned that “when what is taught does not (or cannot) transfer to life outside or after graduation from school to active and lifelong musicking of some degree and kind, then its inclusion in a curriculum should be doubted.”³⁷

Beyond the scope of relevancy, accessibility, and transferability arguments for vernacular music education licensure, the researcher would highlight the proposal’s likely impact on current labor pools. If these practices were amended favoring the adoption of vernacular music styles, the probable end product would be a larger, more equitable teacher workforce. This scenario could prove particularly beneficial to educational staffers given that, as one researcher stated, “there is a global shortage of music teachers, and this deficit is continually growing.”³⁸ This assertion is further reaffirmed in a 2022-2023 U.S. Department of Education study recognizing “Teacher Shortage Areas” for music educators in twenty percent of the states.³⁹

³⁶ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education*, 58.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁸ Daniel Mateos-Moreno, “Why (not) be a music teacher? Exploring pre-service music teachers’ sources of concern regarding their future profession,” *International Journal of Music Education* 40, no. 4 (Nov., 2022): 489, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614211073138>.

³⁹ “Teacher Shortage Areas,” U.S. Department of Education, accessed on March 25th, 2023, <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/reports>.

With the expansion of current licensure practices to include avenues for bluegrass or roots music practitioners, educational administrators would also facilitate a literal sea change in how professional vernacular musicians strategize for their careers. As Gee and Yeow pointed out, many professional musicians “need to consider careers through a lifespan portfolio perspective, where intersections of organizational level practices and policies collide with individual level contexts such as age, gender and culture.”⁴⁰ Of course, certain advantages are associated with such approaches: flexibility and mobility, for instance. However, many formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals may find these advantages usurped by other career perks such as economic predictability, stability, and longevity. Given such licensure opportunities, these formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals may aspire to stable working environments with an average yearly income of \$39,024.⁴¹

As demonstrated, music education stakeholders may benefit from a revised licensure process in multiple ways. Aside from expanded workforces and employment opportunities, this scenario offers potentialities for improvement in stakeholders’ lifestyles. Furthermore, society, in its entirety, stands to benefit from the proliferation of culturally relevant pedagogical practices. Throughout this study, the researcher will draw upon theoretical, empirical, and practical evidence supporting these assertions.

Research Question and Sub Questions

This study is rooted in the premise that scholarly research and critical deliberation may, at some point, facilitate a pathway for Tennessee music education licensure for formally trained

⁴⁰ Kate Gee and Pamela Yeow, “A hard day’s night,” 341.

⁴¹ “Educator Pay and Student Spending: How Does Your State Rank?” National Education Association, accessed on September 14th, 2022, <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/educator-pay-and-student-spending-how-does-your-state-rank>.

bluegrass or roots music professionals. The study contends that such revisions are not only warranted—they are long overdue. As Sarath et al. pointed out,

It is astonishing . . . that with a recognition of music’s universality, that in these intercultural times in which people from different cultures recognize and respectfully accept different worldviews, the programs of music in higher education should be so reluctant to open up to, and offer students, education and training in forms outside and beyond the western European classical repertory.⁴²

The assessment and contextualization of this dilemma are of central importance to this study’s literature review. These factors are also pivotal to the study’s interview of college-level bluegrass or roots music educators.

RQ1: What circumstances could potentially enable college students majoring in bluegrass or roots music studies to pursue Tennessee licensure in music education licensure?

SQ1: What are the potential impediments to enabling college-level bluegrass or roots music students to pursue Tennessee music education licensure?

RQ2: What are the potential benefits of education licensure for bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education?

SQ2: What are the alternative licensure routes available to college-level bluegrass or roots music students seeking Tennessee music education licensure?

Working Hypotheses

The Main Research Question may be answered with the following hypothesis:

H1: Circumstances that could potentially enable college students majoring in bluegrass or roots music studies to pursue Tennessee licensure in music education include alternative

⁴² E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, 21.

licensure approaches, adaptations in coursework per NASM guidelines, and aggressive advocacy campaigns directed toward decision-makers.

Given current educational trends in favor of diverse musical offerings and it seems logical to assume that Tennessee music education licensure may, at some point, be made available to music students specializing in vernacular musical traditions. To achieve these goals, it is also likely that compromises will have to be made and, to a large extent, minds will have to open. If these initiatives are to succeed, bluegrass and roots music instructors may need to alter coursework per state mandates or NASM directives. Administrators may elect compelled to reevaluate rules or guidelines that are overly narrow in scope or shortsighted. Communities may need to band together in support of such revisions. Finally, students and educators must be open-minded regarding current certification procedures.

There will be some individuals who do not perceive alternative licensure strategies as opportune or even legitimate. Berry expressed cynicism for alternative teacher certification initiatives in his observation that evidence does not support the premise that content knowledge equates to teaching ability.⁴³ According to Berry,

Many midcareer recruits lack the wide range of knowledge and skills that research has identified as necessary for effective teaching: understanding subject matter in ways that allow them to organize it and make it accessible to students, understanding how students think and behave, what they find interesting, what they already know, and how to motivate them: recognizing student differences that may arise from culture, language,

⁴³ Barnett Berry, "No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers," *Educational leadership journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A.* 58 no. 8 (2001): 33, https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=No%20shortcuts%20for%20preparing%20good%20teachers&rft.jtitle=Educational%20Leadership&rft.au=Barnett,%20Berry&rft.date=2001-05-01&rft.pub=Association%20for%20Supervision%20and%20Curriculum%20Development&rft.issn=0013-1784&rft.eissn=1943-5878&rft.volume=58&rft.issue=8&rft.spage=32&rft.externalDBID=NO_FULL_TEXT&rft.externalDocID=74846313.

family background, and prior schooling, and adapting lessons on the basis of that understanding.⁴⁴

These issues aside, numerous individuals offer support for alternative licensure practices. As such, Hellman et al. asserted that “over the past 25 years, alternative certification has emerged as a realistic option for obtaining teacher certification in music.”⁴⁵ Likewise, Henry stated that “regardless of one’s opinion on the relative merits of such programs, . . . [the] increasing commonality [of alternative certification opportunities] has tremendous implications for music education and teacher training at large.”⁴⁶

The Secondary Research Question may be answered with the following hypothesis:

Potential benefits of education licensure for bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education include expansive employment opportunities, enhanced cultural relevancy, and increased enrollment.

Several advantages can be associated with the aforementioned proposal. Bluegrass or roots musicians may gain access to additional employment prospects. They may also benefit from a heightened state of cultural relevancy in academia. Furthermore, college-level bluegrass and roots music studies programs may benefit from heightened public awareness, support, and enrollment. Unfortunately, some obstacles may also threaten or impede such initiatives. In the

⁴⁴ Barnett Berry, “No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers,” 34.

⁴⁵ Daniel S Hellman, Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani, “A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure Programs in Music Education,” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59 no. 4 (2011): 78, https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=Info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=A%20Research%20Agenda%20for%20Alternative%20Licensure%20Programs%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.jtitle=Journal%20of%20Research%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.au=Hellman,%20Daniel%20S&rft.au=Resch,%20Barbara%20J&rft.au=Aguilar,%20Carla%20E&rft.au=McDowell,%20Carol&rft.date=2011-12-01&rft.pub=National%20Association%20for%20Music%20Education&rft.issn=0022-4294&rft.eissn=1945-0095&rft.volume=59&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=78&rft.externalDBID=NO_FULL_TEXT&rft.externalDocID=2545254781

⁴⁶ Michele Henry, “An Analysis of Certification Practices,” 48.

quest for a more inclusive licensure system, students and educators may be subject to marginalization, Euro-centric biases, and a general lack of cultural relevancy.

Identification of the Variables

Formally trained and aspiring bluegrass and roots music professionals are frequently subjected to classicism, marginalization, and Euro-centric biases. These phenomena are often interrelated, and sociological, societal, and academic trends impact them. This study identifies and assesses these variables in a dualistic analytical framework. After thoroughly reviewing and contextualizing critical literature sources relating to the previously referenced phenomena, the author will interview experienced industry professionals—educators in bluegrass or roots music studies in higher education. Each data point will be triangulated to access and predict potential outlets for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to pursue music education licensure in Tennessee.

Core Concepts

The following concepts are interrelated and, to an extent, causal. As an example, musical constituencies may be less likely to participate in college-level coursework in response to marginalization. Inversely, through participation in college coursework, marginalized students will be prone to share the unique aspects of their music with others—cultural relevancy put into practice. Thus, through their acceptance of and appreciation for unique musical cultures, educational institutions can become more appealing to broader, more diverse student bases, and these populations can encourage institutional acceptance through their openness to sharing.

Marginalization

Certain population segments have been repetitively marginalized throughout human history. Vernacular musicians are often subject to this phenomenon, and these biases have proven to be particularly strong and deep-rooted in bluegrass and roots music studies. Regarding related country music traditions, Bates observed that “. . . country music has historically been marginalized in American music education”⁴⁷ On a similar note, Sarath et al. concluded that,

Despite music’s centrality to civilization, the core aspects of undergraduate music study have remained largely insulated from relevance to issues arising from a shrinking global society, technology’s influence on every aspect of our lives, including the creation, performance, distribution of, and access to diverse music, and growing tensions associated with demographic and economic divides.⁴⁸

Euro-Centric Biases and Classism

College-level bluegrass and roots music educators and students are frequently subjected to Eurocentric biases and stereotyping. Educational administrators are often quick to undermine the validity of such forms. Ironically, even the very musical label that many such individuals endorse, “art music,” may be interpreted as a condescending gesture and an indicator of classism.

From Lowell Mason’s pioneering educational experiments to current procedures, European models have dominated much of America’s pedagogical dialogue. Kugelman confirmed an “over emphasis on western music” in a dissertation survey.⁴⁹ In light of this research, the author recognized “a disparaging imbalance between orchestral music and other

⁴⁷ Vincent C. Bates, Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling, “Country Music Education,” 28.

⁴⁸ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, x.

⁴⁹ Louis Samuel Kugelman, “Effectiveness of Undergraduate Music Teacher Education Programs: Perceptions of Early-Career Music Educators,” 64, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2021.

genres of music listed in the NASM competencies.”⁵⁰ Among the competencies for “THE LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE WITH A MAJOR IN MUSIC” or “a Liberal Arts Degree with a Comprehensive Major in Music Industry,” the NASM requires “acquaintance with a wide selection of musical literature, the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources including, but not limited to jazz, popular, classical, and world music.”⁵¹

Cultural Relevancy

Cultural relevancy is a challenging yet rewarding proposition for music educators. When engaged in a culturally relevant curriculum, educators may notice improvements in student performance, collaboration, and overall satisfaction—three innately correlative measures. After all, “culturally relevant pedagogy, incorporating varied cultural perspectives and tools in teaching practice, can result in a deeper knowledge of self and others.”⁵² Per this principle, Sarath et al. also recognized a “largely untapped potential for music majors to know deep experiences in the music of an intercultural America and of selected cultural communities from across the globe” exists “in [the] departments and schools of North America.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Louis Samuel Kugelman, “Effectiveness of Undergraduate Music Teacher Education Programs,” 68.

⁵¹ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK 2022-23,” National Association of Schools of Music (Reston, VA): 99, 101, 198-199, accessed on March 26th, 2023, <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/03/M-2022-23-Handbook-Final-02-27-2023.pdf>.

⁵² Sarah M. Ray, “Teaching Case— Applications of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in a Community College Classroom,” *New Horizons in Adult Education & Human Resource Development* 31, no. 4 (Nov., 2019): 65, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/nha3.20267>.

⁵³ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, 23.

Definition of Terms

Bluegrass Music

It can be challenging to settle on precise definitions for musical genres with decidedly rich and storied musical histories. In the case of bluegrass music, there are multiple opinions concerning the origins and defining measures of the style. On the one hand, “many” individuals consider the birth of bluegrass to have occurred in 1945 when Earl Scruggs joined Bill Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys.⁵⁴ Kip Lornell, however, claimed that this “final link” in the formation of bluegrass transpired in late 1946.⁵⁵ Krakauer further elaborated on the phenomenon with his statement that “in 1945 innovator Earl Scruggs joined Monroe’s band, and the recordings they made together in 1946 and 1947 are considered to be the first recordings of bluegrass music proper.”⁵⁶ Significantly, Bill Monroe, commonly billed as The Father of Bluegrass, had “firm conviction[s]” that bluegrass music was born in 1939.⁵⁷ If true, the ramifications for Mr. Monroe’s claims are profound as it fails to account for most scholars’ inclusion of Scruggs-style banjo in defining bluegrass.

As a more commercialized extension or evolution of earlier string band traditions, Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys showcased exceptional technical prowess and versatility prior to Scruggs’s addition to the group. By this point, string band performers had already settled on a

⁵⁴ Tom Ewing, *Bill Monroe: The Life and Music of the Blue Grass Man*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2018): 7, accessed Oct. 15th, 2022, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/etsu/detail.action?docID=5518178#>.

⁵⁵ Kip Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music*, 105.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Krakauer, “A 'Traditional' Music Scene and Its Fringes: experimental bluegrass of 1970s New York City,” *American Music* 36, no. 2 (2018): 167, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A641263852/BIC?u=vic_1iberty&sid=summon&xid=f8cdcf9.

⁵⁷ Tom Ewing, *Bill Monroe: The Life and Music of the Blue Grass Man*, 7.

standard set of performance practices and a common framework of instrumentation: mandolin, guitar, fiddle, banjo, and bass. Nonetheless, it can be most difficult, if not impossible, for uninitiated musical connoisseurs to differentiate between the pre-Earl Scruggs Bluegrass Boys sound and other string bands of the time. However, the distinctions become much more apparent when Scruggs's playing is considered. For this reason, this study will rely on a definition of bluegrass that accounts for and recognizes Mr. Scruggs's virtuosic, three-finger banjo technique. In this light, Krakauer defined bluegrass music as "music played by an acoustic ensemble with some combination of fiddle, mandolin, guitar, resophonic guitar, bass, and Scruggs-style banjo, with two-to four-part harmony singing, semi-improvisational instrumental solos, and a 'boom chick' or 'boom chick chick' rhythm."⁵⁸

Alan Lomax characterized the post-Scruggs bluegrass approach as "a sort of mountain Dixieland combo in which the five-string banjo . . . carries the lead like a hot clarinet."⁵⁹ To some, this description may seem overly dramatic or misplaced. However, Lomax's descriptors are well-taken, and they are accurate. When a Scruggs-style banjo player is paired with the fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bass, and the occasional resonator guitar, bluegrass performance practices do correlate with Dixieland jazz styles. Both musical styles are conducive to driving, pulsating rhythms, lively, often virtuosic, improvisation practices, and a relatively dense instrumental background compared to other popular forms.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Krakauer, "A 'Traditional' Music Scene and Its Fringes," 165.

⁵⁹ Travis D. Stimeling, "The Country Music Reader," 157-158 (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2015), https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9780199314935.

Roots Music

Another central terminology to this study, “roots music,” can be equally difficult to define. To some degree, the Berklee College of Music framed its’ American Roots Music Program around a specific historical period: “the first half of the 20th century.”⁶⁰ In these parameters, the term roots seems to denote the music of an earlier time. This labeling also correlates with the stereotypical misnomer that roots music is old rural music—an inherently flawed and shortsighted viewpoint.

In contrast to the previous descriptions of roots music, Benjamin Filene offered a “roots” music definition that is more concrete. According to Filene, “‘roots’ is used to identify musical genres that, whether themselves commercial or not, have been glorified as the pure sources out of which the twentieth century’s commercial popular music was created.”⁶¹ Significantly, Filene’s definition is retrospective in nature. In this framework, roots music is not limited to any specific era, and the styles cannot be brand new. The only caveat for roots music is that these styles must have influenced successive musical formats-styles “glorified as the pure sources out of which the twentieth century’s commercial popular music was created.”⁶² Given this description’s relevance and broad ramifications, this study will rely upon Filene’s definition of roots music.

⁶⁰ “American Roots Music Program: Digging deep to connect with the diverse rural roots of American music in the first half of the 20th century,” Berklee college of Music, accessed on October 14th, 2022, <https://college.berklee.edu/focused/roots>.

⁶¹ Benjamin Filene, “romancing the folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music,” 4 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.

Summary

Chapter One highlights the project's core premises, motivations, and objectives. This narrative also contextualizes current trends supporting the integration of bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education. In recent decades, bluegrass and roots music initiatives have proliferated in higher education. These trends remain in effect today, and they are gaining momentum. Sadly, though the acceptance for such initiatives is currently at a high point, bluegrass and roots music studies majors do not have a clear pathway toward Tennessee music education licensure. This study contends that such omissions are attributable to deep-seated Eurocentric pedagogical biases and sentiments of classism.

This study, in response to these deficiencies, advocates for the integration of culturally relevant pedagogical procedures. As such, the author contends that scholarly inquiry and critical deliberation may lead to a pathway for the licensure of these individuals. The author also proposes the following research goals: the exploration of opportunities that could potentially enable bluegrass or roots music students to pursue Tennessee music education licensure, benefits that are correlative to the process, foreseeable impediments to the process, and alternative licensure pathways that might enable this type of licensure.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This study assesses wide-ranging variables—biases, historical precedents, societal trends, and stereotypes—impacting bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education. Specifically, it examines Tennessee music education licensure practices while considering factors that might eventually facilitate procedural amendments. These premises imply that state-level music education licensure may be logical, feasible, and opportune for university bluegrass and roots music studies majors and other educational constituencies. This assertion is supported by an ever-expanding body of literature highlighting Euro-centric biases and classist tendencies that call for revision. This literature further supports an increasingly diverse and culturally relevant educational landscape.

Evidence suggests that, beyond the justifications mentioned above for licensure reform, these transitions may have already been set into motion. Individuals may recognize precedents for educational inclusivity in the formal proliferation of jazz education. Like bluegrass and roots music, modern educators may recognize jazz as a popular form rooted in vernacular traditions. There are many parallels between these disparate pedagogical traditions. Significantly, when paired with research concerning the rapid proliferation of college-level bluegrass and roots music studies, jazz precedents may be used to predict the trajectories of the former.

Justifications for Inclusive Music Education Reform

Praxial Learning Philosophy

Music education advocates have offered numerous justifications for music's inclusion in higher learning institutions. Recently, this phenomenon has hinged upon aesthetic justifications.

On the other hand, there are ever-growing contingencies of scholars who favor revisionist strategies rooted in praxialism.

Elliott offered the following critique concerning the current state of music education philosophy: “. . . while music education is well established, it is not well developed.”⁶³ He pointed out that aesthetic philosophies are atypical and unprecedented in the history of music education. According to Elliott, “. . . the original Greek meaning of art had much more to do with the process than the product.”⁶⁴ It was, however, through philosophical revisions of the 1700s that artistic emphases began to shift toward “art objects or ‘works of art.’”⁶⁵

Music scholars, as a result of these developments, have increasingly advocated for aesthetically driven music studies—courses emphasizing beauty in form over individual reaction. Elliott, however, contended that music could not be comprehensively understood through formal aesthetic methodologies. On the contrary, he believes that “. . . the ability to cognize the structural prerequisites and designs of musical works is only one dimension of the musical understanding students require to achieve the values of music and music education.”⁶⁶ Beyond this skillset, Elliott considers music to be “a four-dimensional concept”—an action-based amalgam of “a doer, . . . some kind of doing, . . . something done, and . . . the complete context in which doers do what they do.”⁶⁷

⁶³ David James Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

Significantly, Elliott’s forward-looking “praxial” approach offers particular appeal to advocates for non-traditional music studies. The author hypothesizes “that formal knowledge ought to be filtered into the teaching-learning situation parenthetically and contextually.”⁶⁸ Given this emphasis on context specificity, scholars may also be tempted to interpret Elliott’s statement through lenses of cultural relevancy and vernacular music advocacy. Unfortunately, in this context, it does not appear that Elliott is fully committed to these premises. For instance, while conceding that one’s ability to read or “decode” standardized “musical notation” is not synonymous with “musicianship,” Elliott recognizes the skills in question as “one part of the formal and procedural dimensions of musicianship” –a premise that many vernacular musicians vehemently oppose.⁶⁹

Finally, in stark contrast to aesthetic musical justifications aligning with the objectives of the exceptionally talented or the privileged few, Elliot advocated for music-for-all approaches. He believes “that achieving the values of music and music education requires that all music students develop the same kinds of musical knowings in essentially the same kind of curricular context.”⁷⁰

It would seem logical and prudent, given Elliott’s forward-looking yet inconclusive assertions, for educators to further explore these rationales in a modern, more inclusive pedagogical framework. According to Elliott, this model is coming to fruition. The author recognized that “during the past thirty years [at the release of this edition in 1995], the decline of the aesthetic concept ha[d] been steady and dramatic among scholars in the philosophy of music,

⁶⁸ David James Elliott, *Music Matters*, 61.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

the sociology of music, musicology, ethnomusicology, curriculum theory, and . . . in music education.”⁷¹

Regelski, like Elliott, recognized “the speculative–rationalist aesthetic theory of art and the aesthetic ideology” as a newcomer on the music education scene—having emerged “only two centuries ago.”⁷² Also, as with Elliott, Regelski recognized aesthetic musical justifications as a relatively recent phenomenon. According to the author, “music was thoroughly praxial for thousands of years until, in the mid-eighteenth century, the rise of aesthetic theories in philosophy, socially motivated, led to its departure from earlier bases in what the Greeks called ‘anthesis,’ the bodily source of sensible experience and knowledge.”⁷³ In response to propensities toward aesthetic music education, Regelski concluded that “music . . . [has been] placed on a pedestal that selected or even created social class differences along musical lines.”⁷⁴

Most importantly, Regelski offered unwavering advocacy for universal and unanimous musical studies⁷⁵—another fundamental correlation with Elliott.⁷⁶ Per praxial learning theory, Regelski believes that “all students . . . [are] innately imbued with some capacity for music.”⁷⁷ These approaches stand in stark contrast to aesthetic models that eschew “participatory musics” while “dismiss[ing] with colonial arrogance” the other ““popular musics, and ethnic musics of the non-Western world.”⁷⁸

⁷¹ David James Elliott, *Music Matters*, 29.

⁷² Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education*, 15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, x.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁷⁶ David James Elliott, *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, 32.

⁷⁷ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education*, 6.

Regelski also highlighted critical fallacies in current educational hierarchies that do not account for the culturally relevant demands of all individuals. As such, Regelski observed that “. . . today’s typical theory, history, and ‘music appreciation’ textbooks and classes typically address only an incredibly small percentage of all the music in the world—even of the Western world—certainly not the musics used and enjoyed daily by most people.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, “. . . too many students fail to have their legitimate musical interests and needs met by school music—interests often inspired by many models of musicking outside the schoolhouse doors but not offered (or offered enough) in school music curriculums.”⁸⁰

Classism and Euro-Centric Biases

Music schools and conservatories began functioning as conduits for “high” or “art music” during the Age of Enlightenment.⁸¹ However, as previously established, music educators have increasingly transitioned toward more inclusive, praxial educational justifications. In a non-peer-reviewed yet compelling article interviewing jazz violinist and educator Scott Tixie, Templeton observed a “move . . . being made . . . at a number of . . . esteemed universities” in favor of increasingly diverse curricula.⁸² Templeton also called the readers’ attention to an unfortunate, yet evident, manifestation of classism and bias in current music education: a “dividing line” between “classically trained” individuals and those who are not.⁸³ As a benchmark (or, perhaps,

⁷⁸ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education*, 27.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸² David Templeton, “ALL THAT JAZZ,” *Strings* 33, no. 2 (Sept., 2018): 39, <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/all-that-jazz/docview/2450797683/se-2>.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

the benchmark) of musical achievement, Templeton characterizes the “classically trained” moniker in the following manner: “the unspoken message . . . is that any form of education that is not classical training is more or less the same thing as having no training at all.”⁸⁴ These observations may, to some individuals, seem counterproductive or unsettling. However, the educational optimist may also recognize sentiments of encouragement in Tixier’s assertions and Templeton’s commentary. After all, twenty-first-century educators do borrow from disparate traditions, including bluegrass and roots music. In response to such notions of reciprocity, Tixier recognized that “classical music . . . does have good things to teach jazz—just like jazz has good things to teach classical music.”⁸⁵

Bates, in an article showcasing intersections between racism and classism relating to music education, concluded that the current “antiracist trend [in music education] is welcome, encouraging, and long-overdue.” Sadly, he also acknowledged that “considerably less social justice work has focused on social class in music education.”⁸⁶ To address this incongruity, Bates built “a case for more extensive considerations of class, including a much stronger intersectional alliance between critical class and antiracist scholarship in music education.”⁸⁷ In these discourses, it should also be noted that the author did not hierarchically equate classism with

⁸⁴ David Templeton, “ALL THAT JAZZ,” 38.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁶ Vincent C. Bates, “Standing at the Intersection of Race and Class in Music Education,” *Action, Criticism, & Theory for Music Education* 18, no. 1 (2019): 119, [https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=Info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Standing%20at%20the%20Intersection%20of%20Race%20and%20Class%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.jtitle=Action,%20criticism,%20%26%20theory%20for%20music%20education&rft.au=Bates,%20Vincent%20C.%20Bates&rft.date=2019-03-01&rft.issn=1545-4517&rft.eissn=1545-4517&rft.volume=18&rft.issue=1&rft.spage=117&rft.epage=160&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.22176%2fact18.1.117&rft.externalDBID=n%2Fa&rft.externalDocID=10_22176_act18_1_117](https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=Info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Standing%20at%20the%20Intersection%20of%20Race%20and%20Class%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.jtitle=Action,%20criticism,%20%26%20theory%20for%20music%20education&rft.au=Bates,%20Vincent%20C.%20Bates&rft.date=2019-03-01&rft.issn=1545-4517&rft.eissn=1545-4517&rft.volume=18&rft.issue=1&rft.spage=117&rft.epage=160&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.22176%2Fact18.1.117&rft.externalDBID=n%2Fa&rft.externalDocID=10_22176_act18_1_117).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 121.

racism, nor did he assert “that one element of oppression can or should be subsumed within the other.”⁸⁸ Bates stated that he had actually been subjected to classism during his youth while, at times, benefitting from “privileges” such as “being white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and male.”⁸⁹

Bates highlighted the propensities of American music education to focus upon classical music directives aimed at “cultural assimilation”—an attempt to redirect student objectives toward “elite White musical values and practices.”⁹⁰ Significantly, within these assertions, the author also drew distinctions between “elite” values and the musical tastes of average individuals. As such, Bates hypothesized that “it [classical music] is not, nor has it ever been the music of poor Whites, whose old-time, country, and heavy metal musics—each one associated with improvisation, oral tradition, and movement—are complex mixtures of ‘folk’ or ‘low-brow’ musical traditions from Europe, Africa, and America.”⁹¹ Thus, “. . . poor and working-class students of all races are marginalized by common music education practices.”⁹² These observations are pertinent and entirely relevant to this study, given the multidimensional nature of their assessment of biases.

In a related article dealing with country music inclusion, Bates, Gossett, and Stimeling advocated for country music’s inclusion in the classroom. The authors contended that, while “. . . country music has historically been marginalized in American music education . . . ,” it should,

⁸⁸ Vincent C. Bates, “Standing at the Intersection of Race and Class,” 124.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 122-123.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 142.

in the interest of cultural relevancy, for the artform to be included.⁹³ Bates et al. attribute such inequities to “class bias,” and they reminded “music teachers [that they] have an ethical obligation to help students learn about their own music, expanding students’ horizons within preferred genres while creating a space for personal music exploration and critical reflection.”⁹⁴ In further support of this cause, the authors also referenced evidence that country music is, indeed, diversifying. Specifically, they directed readers’ attention to CMA (Country Music Association) reports claiming that “Black and Latino [country music] audiences” are expanding. They also highlighted an increasingly diverse roster of notable country artists.⁹⁵

In an extension of class-driven dialogues, Cattaneo, Chan, Shor, Gebhard, and Elshabassi examined the propensities of classism to intersect with race, immigration status, financial wherewithal, and parental education.⁹⁶ Cattaneo et al. observed that “. . . financial stress was significantly associated with interpersonal classism”⁹⁷ Additionally, though parental education levels were not found to be “significant predictors of classism in the multivariate analysis,” the authors recognized that “financial stress is highly relevant to the college student, whereas parental education is [only] one step removed.”⁹⁸ Given the previous observations

⁹³ Vincent C. Bates, Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling, “Country Music Education,” 28.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30, 33.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹⁶ Lauren B. Cattaneo, Wing Yi Chan, Rachel Shor, Kris T Gebhard, and Nour H Elshabassi, “Elaborating the Connection between Social Class and Classism in College,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 63, no. 3–4 (June 2019): 479, 484, <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mnh&AN=30869811&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=liberty&authtype=ip,shib>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 483.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 484.

concerning Euro-Centric biases and classism in academia, these assertions appear justified, and they are entirely relevant to this study.

Biases can, of course, take on many formats, and they can be rooted in a wide range of motivations—sentiments of a conscious or unconscious nature. An article by Thomas and Enders showcased extreme bias toward bluegrass musicians and bluegrass culture. Overtly, Thomas and Enders employed a case study on “a not-so-good bluegrass band and particularly its leader” to highlight the breadth of roles assigned to folklorists while lobbying against the renaming of the discipline.⁹⁹

According to Thomas and Enders, individuals are often biased toward folklorists and the term “folklore” in general.¹⁰⁰ The authors examine questions that emerge as to “why” one would “want to study lowly art forms and associate with the kinds of people who produce them.”¹⁰¹ In opposition to such narrow-minded assertions, Thomas and Ender advocated for a more comprehensive research approach. They remind readers that “. . . aesthetic cultural productions—exemplary or not—are not solely about greatness or beauty,” and “if we only focus on the good and the beautiful, we deny a large part of our cultural memories and histories.”¹⁰²

Ironically, to a certain degree, Thomas and Enders initially seem to champion the cause of the marginalized. The authors directed readers’ attention to a perceived “problem”—a

⁹⁹ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, “Bluegrass and ‘White Trash’: A Case Study Concerning the Name ‘Folklore’ and Class Bias,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 37 no. 1 (Jan. 01, 2000): 38, 41, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bluegrass-white-trash-case-study-concerning-name/docview/1308429783/se-2>.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 23, 41.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 39-40.

manifestation of “class biases” directed toward folkloristic disciplines.¹⁰³ According to Thomas and Enders, some individuals criticize folklorists for being “too closely” aligned with the lower classes. Nonetheless, the astute folklorist is responsible for “communicat[ing] the depth, diversity, and relevance of their field.”¹⁰⁴ Given these assertions, one would expect these scholars to adhere to a similar standard when assessing their subjects. This was not the case.

Thomas and Enders’ study serves as a clear example of over-generalized research. The authors highlighted the negative connotations of Doug’s experiences without engaging in comprehensive research or analysis of the industry. While the authors acknowledged that similar “. . . attitudes can be found among all groups who create aesthetic forms, whether considered ‘elite,’ ‘popular,’ or ‘folk,’” Thomas and Enders failed to differentiate between this “case” and the case of a typical bluegrass band and band leader—or a typical bluegrass band and band leader who is not artistically successful.¹⁰⁵ From a research standpoint, these observations are incomplete and unsubstantiated.

There is compelling evidence that Thomas and Enders’ case study examples are not typical of the cultural phenomenon known colloquially as the bluegrass “way of life.”¹⁰⁶ In their one-dimensional analysis of disturbing viewpoints and events, Thomas and Ender overlooked a consideration that “is important to the precision of empirical research”: “triangulation.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, “Bluegrass and ‘White Trash,’” 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 41-42.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁷ Per Runeson and Martin Höst, “Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Case Study Research in Software Engineering,” *Empirical Software Engineering* 14, no. 2 (April, 2009): 136, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/guidelines-conducting-reporting-case-study/docview/87966262/se-2>.

Runeson and Höst describe the triangulation research process as “taking different angles towards the studied object and thus providing a broader picture.”¹⁰⁸ According to Runeson and Höst, “the need for triangulation is obvious when relying primarily on qualitative data, which is broader and richer, but less precise than quantitative data.”¹⁰⁹

Thomas and Ender devoted significant efforts in support of their hypothesis that research subjects conformed to definitions of “hillbilly” or what they called “a Big Daddy of white trashness,”¹¹⁰ They emphasized the consumption of alcohol in a bluegrass gathering that Doug frequented, and they cited a definition of “Hill-Billie” highlighting the consumption of whiskey.¹¹¹ According to Doug, “many of the musicians drank, usually inexpensive beer, but some carried pint-size mason jars of moonshine that they carefully and selectively passed around.”¹¹² In contrast, Tunnell and Groce observed bluegrass musicians to be “more conservative than other musicians” and less inclined toward alcohol or other drugs “than musicians of other genres.”¹¹³

On a similar note, Doug described an episode leading to his eventual departure, where the bandleader addressed him with profanity.¹¹⁴ Tunnell and Groce, however, pointed out that bluegrass musicians have a proclivity toward “unprofane language.”¹¹⁵ When taken together,

¹⁰⁸ Per Runeson and Martin Höst, “Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Case Study Research,” 136.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 136.

¹¹⁰ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, “Bluegrass and ‘White Trash,’” 25, 28, 34-35, 39.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 28, 35.

¹¹² Ibid., 28.

¹¹³ Kenneth D. Tunnell and Stephen Groce, “The social world of semiprofessional bluegrass musicians,” *Popular Music and Society* 22, no. 4 (Jul., 2008): 64, 72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007769808591718>.

¹¹⁴ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, “Bluegrass and ‘White Trash,’” 32.

¹¹⁵ Kenneth D. Tunnell and Stephen Groce, “The social world of semiprofessional bluegrass,” 66.

these incongruities further the premise that Thomas and Enders' study is inherently biased and overly generalized.

In addition, it should be noted that Thomas and Enders did little to establish their purportedly "unequivocal" claim that ". . . this bluegrass band [their research subjects] does not produce great art."¹¹⁶ They failed to define "great art" or delineate between minimal and exceptional bluegrass performance practices. Instead, Thomas and Enders generally focused on aesthetic assessments of subjects from the singular perspective of a disgruntled former employee—an unlikely indicator of objectivity.¹¹⁷ These deficiencies are offset by Doug's assertions that he "gained proficiency as a bluegrass musician" and became an "expert in the music." Given that Doug did not acquire his skillsets through the commonplace familial or community-driven pedagogical outlets described by Tunnell and Groce, these claims appear to be exaggerated or, at the very least, unsubstantiated.¹¹⁸

Conscientious and objective scholars will undoubtedly recognize troubling undertones in the previous narratives. Thomas and Enders' assertions speak of deep-seated biases and opportunistic analysis. Ironically, they also sought to defend the discipline of folklore and the folklorist's mandate for "looking at all levels of culture, including the culture of the overlooked" by offering qualitative data that is innately skewed, inconclusive, and incomplete.¹¹⁹ The incidents presented are worthy of debate, and they should be thoroughly examined. These occurrences also fit within the authors' narrative that biases exist toward scholarly folklore. It is,

¹¹⁶ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, "Bluegrass and 'White Trash,'" 39.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 32, 39.

¹¹⁸ Kenneth D. Tunnell and Stephen Groce, "The social world of semiprofessional bluegrass," 68-70.

¹¹⁹ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, "Bluegrass and 'White Trash,'" 42.

however, Thomas and Ender's characterization of the data that opposes the greater mission of scholarly research and academia.

Cultural Relevancy

Ray highlighted many advantages of “culturally relevant pedagogy.”¹²⁰ According to this author, these approaches can cultivate “deeper knowledge of self and others,” perpetuate “different ways of knowing and learning,” and help students to “. . . translat[e] knowledge into real world applications”¹²¹ Such strategic benefits should, within themselves, provide sufficient motivation for their unanimous adoption. Nonetheless, Ray was compelled to remind educators of their inherent responsibilities to diverse musical constituencies. The author asserted that “the role of the teacher is . . . dynamic, making culturally relevant pedagogy applicable into other settings outside of a formal classroom.”¹²² Additionally, Ray recognized her duty “to develop additional awareness and incorporate different perspectives into . . . [educational] practice.”¹²³ She also reminded readers that “as an educator and/or leader in your department you are charged with preparing other educators and administrators to directly address the needs of . . . diverse, multicultural students and create a more inclu[sive] environment.”¹²⁴

Sarath, Myers, and Campbell, like Ray, proposed that America's educational system needs an overhaul. These authors speak of a “misalignment of the structure, content, and process of undergraduate music studies, both with students' interests and needs and the realities of the

¹²⁰ Sarah M. Ray, “Teaching Case—Applications of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” 66.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 66, 68.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

musical world in which they will live and work, [that] calls for a radical rethinking of not only the curriculum but of the overarching aesthetic and cultural orientation of the field.”¹²⁵ They attribute this incongruity to Euro-centric modes of operation that have dominated America’s music education landscape to the present day. In response to the dilemma, Campbell advocates for inclusive curricular transitions underpinned by the premise that music is “a pan-human phenomenon” that “show[s] certain universal principles—or minimally, cross-cultural similarities.”¹²⁶ As many exemplified in many of the previously discussed literature examples, the authors highlight the universality of musicianship and the notion that human beings are, at times, more alike than they are prone to recognize.

Myers also stressed that updates are needed in America’s educational systems. The author characterized the dilemma in the following manner: “. . . the current model of higher music education, derived in another era and educating musicians primarily for worlds of Western classical music that today are facing enormous economic, social, and artistic challenges, is not a viable model for the well-being of graduates or the society in which they live and work.”¹²⁷ Also, like Ray,¹²⁸ Myers equated the resolution of these issues with the ethical responsibilities of all music educators. This sentiment is reinforced in the author’s statement that “today’s curriculum must advance understanding of the sociocultural context of music expression, reflect research-based knowledge about music, and nurture students with core competencies in music that will, in

¹²⁵ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, ix-x.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, 26.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹²⁸ Sarah M. Ray, “Teaching Case— Applications of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” 67.

turn, equip them to be artists, scholars, teachers, and leaders for music and for the greater good of society through music.”¹²⁹

Significantly, per the College Music Society’s progressive initiative for change, Sarath emphasized “three pillars of the manifesto”: “creativity, diversity, and integration.”¹³⁰ In compliance with Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major’s (TFUMM) recommendations, Myers stressed that “higher order [creativity-centered] discourse” can motivate musical constituents to integrate or overlap the content from various music subjects in order to provide students with a more comprehensive learning experience and a deeper, more holistic understanding of the content.¹³¹ He also called attention to the TFUMM manifesto’s emphasis on the creative practices of improvisation and composition. Through these practices, the “. . . TFUMM seeks to restore improvisation and composition to their rightful, foundational status, not by subordinating performance and analysis, but by rendering the entire scope of music study as a creative and highly-skilled endeavor.”¹³²

Most importantly, Sarath et al. believe that these practices can alleviate marginalist tendencies and, at the same time, unify broad-ranging musical constituencies. The authors feel that “this reemergent, creativity-based paradigm has the capacity to transcend its own boundaries and enhance a much broader synthesis—where Afrological, Eurological, and multitudes of other waves unite.”¹³³ These objectives may, perhaps, be accomplished through the realization of one

¹²⁹ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*,” 35-36.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49, 86.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 54, 60, 89.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 60, 62, 73.

of the manifesto's most notable objectives: the creation of a "new degree track" emphasizing "creativity and relevancy."¹³⁴ Significantly, the authors also consider that such a degree could ultimately lead to a new "certification option in the contemporary improviser-composer-performer vein."¹³⁵

Indicators of Progress

The Institutionalization of Jazz Music: A Precursor

The integration of jazz music studies in higher education precluded recent roots music initiatives by decades. Educators began adapting jazz music studies to college learning environments "by 1938."¹³⁶ Significantly, though specific musical, historical, and pedagogical attributes differentiate these styles, many roots music scholars have identified correlations and parallels between these interrelated approaches. In a recent forum, Olson identified these correlations while simultaneously urging caution. According to Olson, ". . . a lot of academics have argued . . . that, as jazz has become more institutionalized, that it's kind of lost its characteristics of . . . jazz."¹³⁷

Riley, in a thesis study comparing old-time music programs in two universities, highlighted similarities between college-level jazz studies and current trends toward vernacular music in higher education.¹³⁸ Riley examined "the ways that jazz and alternative string education

¹³⁴ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, 78.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹³⁶ Andrew Krikun, "Popular Music and Jazz in the American Junior College Music Curriculum during the Swing Era (1935-1945)," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 30, no. 1 (10, 2008): 45, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/popular-music-jazz-american-junior-college/docview/197388987/se-2>.

¹³⁷ John Lawless, "ETSU faculty responds to No Depression article," *Bluegrass Today*, accessed on February 19th, 2023, <https://bluegrasstoday.com/etsu-faculty-responds-to-no-depression-article/>.

¹³⁸ Holly Bugg Riley, "Community in the Academy: Musicianship and Transformation in University Old

inform and coincide with old-time university music practices.”¹³⁹ Among the precedents attributed to jazz in higher education, Riley noted “the addition of non-classically trained faculty, concert spaces and sound equipment geared towards different types of instruments, and the further inclusion of jazz, folk, and world musics in music educational curricula.”¹⁴⁰

In an article chronicling jazz studies’ emergence within higher education, Luty attributes this phenomenon to WW II-era military service approaches and a resultant governmental initiative known as the G.I. Bill. During the war, service members frequently practiced and performed jazz music as a component of their special service duties. Many of these individuals would enroll in college upon returning to the mainland. According to Luty, as a result, the institutions of higher learning were motivated to compete for their enrollment and G.I. Bill funds by offering jazz studies. In the words of Luty, “. . . jazz education owed its formal beginnings to the United States military services.”¹⁴¹

Luty also speculated regarding additional motivations for the institutional adoption of jazz pedagogy. Coinciding with the noted growth of formalized jazz education, the author highlighted a “demand for college graduates with jazz experience.” Apparently, this phenomenon “was one of the major factors that caused jazz education to expand at a rapid rate from 1960 to the present day [the article’s publication date, 1982].”¹⁴²

Time Ensembles and Local Music Scenes,” ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (2017): 9. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_journals_2018309748.

¹³⁹ Holly Bugg Riley, “Community in the Academy 10.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁴¹ Bryce Luty, “Jazz education’s struggle for acceptance: Part I,” *Music educators journal* 69, no. 3 (Nov., 1982): 39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396019>.

¹⁴² Ibid., 53.

In a second installment of Luty's chronology of formalized jazz studies, Luty identified yet another motivation for jazz in higher education. With "approximately 5,000 United States high schools boast[ing] at least one organized jazz band" by 1960, it would seem inevitable that intuitions of higher learning would follow suit.¹⁴³ Predictably, this was the case, and ". . . the college curriculum bowed to increasing pressure from the growing high school stage band movement and expanded to accept jazz studies into the curriculum."¹⁴⁴

The alliance between jazz music and academia also led to the forging of other relationships. Luty identified correlations between the professional jazz performer landscape and academia in the 1970s. During this era, Jazz students were being "recruited as sidemen" for "professional recording bands" while "the universities. . . bestow[ed] honorary degrees on outstanding jazz professionals."¹⁴⁵

Significantly, in light of such observations, Luty concluded that "the college jazz ensemble and jazz education are here to stay."¹⁴⁶ Admittedly, the majority of these college enrollees would never become professional performers. Nonetheless, Luty continued to advocate for these pursuits. In the author's words, "regardless of what they do with that portion of their education, . . . it must only be a plus for them and all of what music stands for in society."¹⁴⁷

Like Luty, Spencer recognized the role of governmental supplements and the pent-up ambitions of returning troops as a motivation for educational reform. In an article chronicling the

¹⁴³ Bryce Luty, "Part II: Jazz Ensembles' Era of Accelerated Growth," *Music Educators Journal*. 69, no. 4 (Dec., 1982): 49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396145>.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

contributions of the Westlake College of Music's role in the early coalescence of higher education jazz studies, Spencer attributed the newly emerging impetus toward institutionalized jazz music to strategic governmental policies. In response to "the U. S. State Department-sponsored tours of American jazz artists [in] the Middle East, Asia, and Africa during the 1950s to promote American democracy and capitalism," Spencer recognized the emergence of "a parallel aesthetic—among jazz enthusiasts in particular—which held that jazz necessitated installation into the American academy to legitimize the efforts of the U. S. government."¹⁴⁸ Similar to Luty, he also recognized the role of G.I. Bill funds in the early success of Westlake College. In addition, Spencer characterized the overwhelmingly forward-looking praxial educational strategies of the university founder, Alvin Learned, in the following manner: "Learned emphasized practical instruction over abstraction and developing tools that musicians could use in their everyday lives."¹⁴⁹

Significantly, Krikun recognized correlations between institutionalized jazz music studies and multiculturalism.¹⁵⁰ The author also linked popular music's higher education integration with "multiculturalism and critical pedagogy . . . promot[ing] . . . instructional practices relevant to the students' everyday lives and cultural backgrounds" —a praxial learning proposition.¹⁵¹ Additionally, Krikun attributed the "breaking down of boundaries result[ing] in unprecedented opportunities for professional and semi-professional musicians" to transformative music

¹⁴⁸ Michael T. Spencer, "Jazz Education at the Westlake College of Music, 1945-61," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 35, no. 1 (Oct., 2013): 51, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/jazz-education-at-westlake-college-music-1945-61/docview/1448258129/se-2>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 55-56, 63.

¹⁵⁰ Andrew Krikun, "Popular Music and Jazz in the American Junior College," 40.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 40-41.

technologies that aided in the dissemination of jazz: “radio” and the “phonograph.”¹⁵² In this light, individuals may infer that the appreciation and acceptance of jazz music were, to some degree, facilitated through expanded exposure.

In adopting jazz coursework, these forward-looking community colleges were addressing critical demands that other institutions overlooked. Krikun highlighted numerous benefits from these initiatives, including “vocational education and community outreach” and “covering topics ignored by the more conservative four-year institutions.”¹⁵³ As the author observed, it would be “almost ten years” before four-year universities would begin to follow suit. In the words of Krikun, “. . . American educational institutions have been slow to accept these indigenous musical practices [jazz, blues, gospel, rock, and hip hop] as worthy of study in the higher education musical curriculum.”¹⁵⁴

In contrast to the previously examined rationale for jazz studies, Tanner attributed jazz music’s institutionalization to various sources. It is also worth noting that Tanner gathered his observations in a context—a time period—that was innately closer to its source: the formative years of jazz studies in academia. In 1971, the release date of this article, Tanner observed an expansion in formal jazz coursework opportunities. According to Tanner, though “many administrators [we]re still not ‘true believers,’ . . . in more and more schools, this vital music [wa]s accepted and taught as best it can be in the individual situation.”¹⁵⁵ Significantly, the author also highlighted reasons for the growing institutional adoption of jazz music studies,

¹⁵² Andrew Krikun, “Popular Music and Jazz in the American Junior College,” 41.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 39, 45.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Tanner, “Jazz Goes to College: Part I,” *Music Educators Journal* 57, no. 7 (Mar., 1971): 113, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3393808>.

including increased enrollment, expanded publicity, and a “broaden[ing] [of] the students’ awareness.” Sadly, Tanner points out that instructors may also view their role as a musical guide for their students—as a filtering agent to “wean students away from [some] music.”¹⁵⁶ Finally, instructors may also embrace these courses to highlight the artistic interchange between disparately trained musicians while recognizing the “contributions” of the jazz art form.¹⁵⁷

Like Tanner, Marquis highlighted multidimensional justifications for institutionalized jazz education. In Marquis’ view, “the long, arduous passage of jazz from a despised, marginal entertainment to the solid respect conferred by academe has relatively little to do with the music, and a great deal to do with class, race, jobs, and—that potent persuader—money.”¹⁵⁸ Though many vernacular musical traditions were overlooked or entirely ignored by academia, Marquis attributed early efforts to delineate college-level jazz studies from other vernacular music to the American civil rights movement.¹⁵⁹ With the art form’s integration into higher education, Marquis recognized a strong propensity toward assimilation. According to Marquis, this confirmation strategy has brought “respect” to educators. She also concluded that “the price of respectability . . . has been steep.”¹⁶⁰ In these statements, Marquis offers support for Olson’s unflattering assessment of institutionalized jazz education. According to Olson, “. . . a lot of times . . . the classical music culture wants that other music to sort of assimilate to it,” and “. . .

¹⁵⁶ Paul Tanner, “Jazz Goes to College: Part I,” 104.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁵⁸ Alice Goldfarb Marquis, “Forum: Jazz Goes to College: Has Academic Status Served the Art?” *Popular Music and Society* 22, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 117, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/forum-jazz-goes-college-has-academic-status/docview/1338473/se-2>.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

forty years ago, jazz music was a lot more improvisational [and] . . . a lot less hierarchical . . .
.”¹⁶¹

In a 2014 study of formalized jazz education, Solis observed that these studies have become “increasingly interdisciplinary” and more commonplace. Most importantly, the author highlights an inherent opportunity relating to these initiatives as jazz students frequently showcase an affinity for other styles—particularly world music.¹⁶² Unfortunately, on an additional note, Solis also recognized that such jazz studies continue to be “marginalized in many university schools of music in comparison with the Western classical tradition and the symphonic band tradition that dominates much music education.”¹⁶³

Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies in Higher Education

This study has established and reaffirmed an increased proliferation of bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education. There are many proponents and critics of these processes, and, in many instances, the end results are yet to be determined. Nonetheless, the momentum for such initiatives is apparent, and from the viewpoint of many vernacular musicians, these propositions are entirely welcome.

Mills contrasted important distinctions between formal and folk-based musical learning processes. In a formalized, public school learning environment, a premium is placed on “music

¹⁶¹ John Lawless, “ETSU faculty responds to No Depression article,” *Bluegrass Today*.

¹⁶² Gabriel Solis, “*Ethnomusicology Scholarship and Teaching - Blurred Genres: Reflections on The Ethnomusicology of Jazz Today*,” *College Music Symposium* 54 (2014), Abstract, Conclusion: Jazz and the Redefinition of Disciplinary Boundaries, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26574373>.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Abstract.

reading and performance skills.” Conversely, through folk-based approaches, music is disseminated and “preserved through family traditions in noneducational settings.”¹⁶⁴

Mills attributes great cultural significance to the latter process, as exemplified by the following statement: “passing along the music from one generation to the next has been a mainstay of folk music and the preservation of art forms that define traditional cultures found in immigrant-based communities, rural areas, and recognized heritage areas and corridors throughout the United States.”¹⁶⁵ She also referenced the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations’ “Standard 9” and the capacity of “bluegrass and country music” to facilitate these objectives. According to Mills, this standard requires “music students . . . [to] engage in activities that help them understand music in relation to history and culture.”¹⁶⁶

In a 2017 commentary on including bluegrass music in higher education, Lehmann highlights the “Bluegrass Goes to College” phenomenon.¹⁶⁷ Lehmann stressed caution and thoughtful deliberation regarding such ventures. According to Lehmann, “the professionalization and institutionalization of any emerging contact areas in higher education should be examined under a number of criteria, including advantages to students in the institution in terms of education, scholarship, and marketing.”¹⁶⁸ Lehmann believes that college students should be trained for two primary occupations: educators and “practitioners.” In response to these

¹⁶⁴ Susan W. Mills, “Bringing the Family Tradition in Bluegrass Music to the Music Classroom,” *General music today* 22, no 2 (Jan., 2009): 12, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.ecdu?url=http://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bringing-family-tradition-bluegrass-music/docview/235939129/se-2>.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁶⁷ Ted Lehmann, “Bluegrass Goes to College, But Should It?”

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

demands, Lehmann posed several troubling questions addressing the employability of such vocations, the cost-to-benefit ratio of college training for aspiring performers, and the transparency of related institutional objectives. Most alarmingly, Lehmann insinuated that participating “. . . students [may have] be[en] fooled into thinking that a degree in bluegrass or traditional music can provide a satisfactory living for most, or even many, of its graduates.”¹⁶⁹ Dr. Olson, a noted faculty member of the East Tennessee State University Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies program, offered an alternative scenario analysis. In Olson’s view, college-level bluegrass and roots music studies can play a role in students’ journey to “empowerment” and “self-actualiz[ation].” Significantly, Olson conceded that these objectives might be realized through other non-university outlets. Nonetheless, Olson is convinced that “college[can] provide . . . a lot of resources to make that happen.”¹⁷⁰

State Licensure: A Mandate for Reform

Traditional Licensing Practices

Numerous studies of state licensure practices are available to educational researchers. These narratives often hinge upon common themes that licensure practices are inconsistent between states, that they do not serve all portions of the population equally, and, furthermore, these approaches fall short of meeting the staffing requirements and pedagogical demands of twenty-first-century classrooms. Not surprisingly, these approaches are also heavily debated among educational constituents.

¹⁶⁹ Ted Lehmann, “Bluegrass Goes to College, But Should It?”

¹⁷⁰ John Lawless, “ETSU faculty responds to No Depression article,” Bluegrass Today.

Elpus, in his assessment of educators “seeking music teacher licensure in the United States,” observed critical disparities in demographic makeups of prospective educator pools and other relevant population segments. Affirming previously established research consensuses, Elpus asserted that requisites for educational licensure “. . . vary slightly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.”¹⁷¹ Within the process, the author also discovered an element of consistency: “a music content test . . . required for candidates seeking teacher licensure in nearly all jurisdictions [with the exception of Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming] in the United States.”¹⁷²

Elpus’s findings also led to the conclusion that current licensure practices do not accurately represent the available workforce.¹⁷³ Referencing Educational Testing Service data, the author observed that, in “compar[ison] to various populations of interest with known ethnic/racial compositions, people of color were significantly underrepresented among music teacher licensure candidates, while white people were significantly overrepresented.”¹⁷⁴ Elpus also referenced the Educational Testing Service’s 2007-2012 report that White individuals represented 86.02% of the licensure pool. He also discovered a “significant relationship” in “demographic characteristics” and the results of Praxis II music exams. Significantly, Elpus attributed such licensure inequities to students’ “enrollment in a formal teacher education program” or their race, sex, and native language—an entirely alarming observation.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Kenneth Elpus, “Music Teacher Licensure Candidates,” 314-315.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 318-319.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 314.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 314.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 314, 323-324, 327.

Unfortunately, Elpus did not fully pinpoint the “root causes for demographic disparities in Praxis II music exam scores.”¹⁷⁶ He did, however, recognize the need and “targeted support” for the students likely to be impacted by inequities and a mandate for continued research. According to Elpus, “it is presently unknown how, or if, a preservice teacher’s performance on a music licensure exam is associated with the likelihood that the teacher will develop into an effective or a superlative teacher.”¹⁷⁷

May, Willie, Worthen, and Pehrson provided further evidence of national licensure disparities. In support of their hypothesis that “. . . licensure practices . . . vary from state to state,” the authors examined the certification strategies in all fifty states and the District of Columbia.¹⁷⁸ They also detailed “concerns about teacher competency” that facilitated the current demands for licensure. Additionally, May et al. referenced multiple claims of “increased assessment” trends for educators,¹⁷⁹ an observation substantiated in the writings of Henry.¹⁸⁰ Significantly, among these assessment measures, educators are frequently required to complete the Praxis exams and the Educational Teacher Performance Assessment or edTPA.¹⁸¹

In addition to these revelations, May et al. recognized that “. . . many teacher candidates may arrive at the teaching profession through alternate certification pathways.”¹⁸² Apparently,

¹⁷⁶ Kenneth Elpus, “Music Teacher Licensure Candidates,” 331.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 331-332.

¹⁷⁸ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification,” 65, 69.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 66, 68-69.

¹⁸⁰ Michele Henry, “An Analysis of Certification Practices,” 48.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 48.

¹⁸² Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification,” 82.

this practice is, to some extent, utilized in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia. According to May et al., “. . . the term ‘alternate route to licensure’ refer[s] to . . . certifying those holding a bachelor’s degree in a field other than education; . . . providing a pathway for interested individuals who did not complete an accredited teacher preparation program, but who wish to obtain the training necessary to become a teacher; and . . . assisting those who hold emergency certification to become fully certified.”¹⁸³

Koziel criticized licensure strategies as a component of the “McDonaldization” of educational assessment in her dissertation on “edTDA” assessments. The author conducted a series of interviews with “participants identified by their former association with the Tennessee Board of Regents system that included six 4-year universities in Tennessee” and additional educators recommended by the former demographic.¹⁸⁴ Via these processes, she sought to discover “the experiences of the music education teacher trainers in Tennessee with the edTPA” and determine whether “. . . the framework of McDonaldization assist[s] in understanding Tennessee’s music education trainers’ discourse regarding their experiences with the edTPA.”¹⁸⁵

According to Koziel, educational priorities have changed in recent decades. In particular, stakeholders have transitioned to an environment of “increased accountability.”¹⁸⁶ In response to this phenomenon, Koziel expressed concerns that “. . . many of these [edTPA related] evaluation

¹⁸³ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification,” 82-83.

¹⁸⁴ Ellen B. Koziel, “Are We Lovin’ It?: The edTPA and the McDonaldization of Music Teacher Training,” Order No. 10788085, The University of Memphis, 2018, In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 1, 54, 56, <https://go.openatens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/are-we-lovin-edtpa-mcdonaldization-music-teacher/docview/2051387803?pq-origsite=summon>.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

processes can be characterized as mechanized, rationalized, bureaucratized, and alienating when considered in the context of arts based education.”¹⁸⁷ In effect, increased assessment measures may not achieve their intended or desired results. As the proverbial saying holds, it may, indeed, be possible to have too much of a good thing.

On a similar note, Prichard generally reaffirmed May et al.’s and Koziel’s assertions that increased emphases toward teacher assessment are evident—particularly concerning licensure. In comparing licensure proceedings within the fifty states, Prichard discovered inconsistencies between governmental and institutional licensure assessments. She also stated that “there was no consistent pattern of agreement between institutional assessments and state licensure requirements.”¹⁸⁸ Alarming, this data implies that licensure objectives are hierarchically skewed in favor of “general knowledge” and “content knowledge” over “pedagogical knowledge.” Prichard observed that “. . . roughly three fourths of schools require[ed] an assessment of content knowledge compared to only one third requiring an assessment of pedagogical knowledge.”¹⁸⁹ Ironically, Prichard also cautioned against overassessment practices that may coincide with these assessment deficiencies. Inasmuch, she surmised that “it may also be that in conforming to CAEP [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation] accreditation guidelines, teacher licensing programs have instituted high-stakes assessment requirements beyond what is required for state licensure.”¹⁹⁰ Most importantly, in light of these

¹⁸⁷ Ellen B. Koziel, “Are We Lovin’ It?” 37.

¹⁸⁸ Stephanie Prichard, “A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices in Music Teacher Education,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 3 (June, 2018): 96, 98-101, 103, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717750079>.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 95, 102.

inconsistencies, Prichard posed an entirely valid question: “. . . does it make pedagogical sense to use such tasks as gatekeepers or measures of competency within teacher educator programs?”¹⁹¹

Alternative Licensure

All educational constituents—and society, as a whole—could benefit from comprehensive licensure revisions enabling formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to pursue educational licensure. At some point, these objectives will likely come to fruition. In the interim, however, it behooves the conscientious educator to weigh all relevant alternatives, including the pursuit of alternate licensure.

Hellman, Resch, Aguilar, McDowell, and Artesani contend that alternative certification practices have, within “the past 25 years,” developed into a viable option for music education licensure.¹⁹² These authors speculated that “. . . this phenomenon has the potential to alter the face of music education preparation and practice”¹⁹³ Astoundingly, Hellman et al. referenced research from the National Research Council (2010) attributing twenty to thirty percent of new teacher hires to alternative licensure. On the other hand, Hellman et al. also referenced wide-ranging fallacies conducive to alternate certification, including the misinformed assumption that content mastery can inequivalent be molded into pedagogical prowess through alternative certification courses. According to these authors, “the idea that prospective teachers have mastered content knowledge and only need pedagogical training is at odds with the

¹⁹¹ Stephanie Prichard, “A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices,” 102.

¹⁹² Daniel S Hellman, Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani, “A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure,” 78.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 84.

disposition of lifelong learning that university music educators strive to instill in teaching candidates.”¹⁹⁴

Like Hellman et al., Duncan recognized alternative licensure’s potential to alter teacher training fundamentally. The author supports alternative processes when they are “high-quality . . . like High Tech High, the New Teacher Project, Teach for America, and teacher residency programs.”¹⁹⁵ Interestingly, Duncan’s assertions are also underpinned by a note of skepticism. Beyond noted concerns relating to the “quality” of such programs, Duncan recognized that these programs, “produc[ing] fewer than 10,000 teachers per year,” are insufficient in meeting the perceived demand for educators. Curiously, at a later point in the article, the author seems to contradict himself and their supposed advocacy for appropriate alternative licensure with a declaration that “it takes a university to prepare a teacher.”¹⁹⁶ Regardless of these discrepancies, Duncan is quick to point out the value and the weight of such decisions as “studies repeatedly document that the single biggest influence on student academic growth is the quality of the teacher—not socioeconomic status, nor family background, but the quality of the teacher.”¹⁹⁷

Like Hellman et al., Berry quickly distinguished between “High-Quality Alternative Routes” and other options. This author recommends that policymakers address incongruities in alternative certification routes by adopting uniformly “high standards.” Berry contends that these

¹⁹⁴ Daniel S Hellman, Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani, “A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure,” 79, 84.

¹⁹⁵ Arne Duncan, “TEACHER PREPARATION: REFORMING THE UNCERTAIN PROFESSION.” *The Education digest* 75 no. 6 (01, 2010): 16, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/teacher-preparation/docview/1933127735/se2>.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16, 19.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

approaches are, when successful, to be emulated.¹⁹⁸ The author also cautioned against such initiatives when they are lacking in sufficient depth or duration. According to Berry, “. . . because of their limited content, duration, and rigor, many more alternative licensure programs inherently devalue those kinds of knowledge and needs.”¹⁹⁹ In contrast, the “effective alternative preparation and licensure programs last from 9 to 15 months and stage the entry into the profession for the novice.”²⁰⁰

Additionally, as with Hellman et al., Berry stressed the premise that content knowledge is not always conducive to pedagogical prowess. The author asserted that “no evidence suggests that possessing content knowledge is sufficient for effective teaching.”²⁰¹ In response to these observations, Berry hypothesized that “those who promote substandard teacher education preparation and licensure are either not willing to pay for the expense of better preparing teachers or against educating all students equitably.”²⁰²

In contrast to the previously examined assertions supporting standardization and uniformity in licensing procedures, Henry provided a starkly different viewpoint. According to the author, “while uniform teacher certification procedures, as called for by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986), the Holmes Group (1986), and the Gallegos (1978), may seem accommodating to teachers, the diversity of school settings and student populations among the states necessitates variety in certification practices.”²⁰³ Certification procedures

¹⁹⁸ Barnett Berry, “No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers,” 34-35.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁰³ Michele Henry, “An Analysis of Certification Practices,” 47.

should, therefore, function as a byproduct of an educational or cultural environment rather than as an instrument of institutional bias and Euro-Centric conformity.

NASM Accreditation

The NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) handbook voiced several claims that seem to, at surface level, endorse the innovative, forward-looking, and inclusive strategies of higher education bluegrass and roots music initiatives. Among these organizational “aims and objectives,” NASM expressed a commitment “to establish[ing] threshold standards of achievement without restricting an administration or school in its freedom to develop new ideas, to experiment, or to expand its program.”²⁰⁴ At the same time, the organization emphasizes the premise “that inspired, creative teaching may rightly lead to new content, methodologies, and results.”²⁰⁵

Additionally, in the organization’s “Standards and Guidelines statements, NASM reaffirmed its special commitment to those principles of voluntary accreditation that encourage diversity among institutions and respect for operational integrity.”²⁰⁶ According to NASM, “the Standards and Guidelines are . . . intended to provide the public at large with a comprehensive document outlining the attributes of education and training programs in music.”²⁰⁷ Furthermore, readers are reminded that “these attributes are presented as a framework within which each institution develops the specifics of its unique program,” and these “standards and guidelines”

²⁰⁴ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK,” 2022-23,” 1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

are not to “. . . be construed as indicating standardization.”²⁰⁸ Given these assertions, stakeholders may tend to infer that NASM supports broad-ranging pedagogy and experimentation.

Significantly, NASM also stressed educational inclusion and diversity concepts in its handbook. The organization seeks “to establish that the prime objective of all educational programs in music is to provide opportunities for every music student to develop individual potentialities to the utmost.”²⁰⁹ Additionally, the NASM “Constitution” expresses the organization’s intent “to establish and maintain threshold standards for the education of musicians, while encouraging both diversity and excellence.”²¹⁰ To be sure, the researcher would neither question nor dissuade these objectives in current pedagogical frameworks—educational landscapes riddled with short-sighted Euro-Centric biases, inequity, and transformational resistance.

Ironically, in direct contrast to the assertions mentioned above, NASM also contends that “certain subjects, learning processes, and approaches to creativity are common to all baccalaureate programs in music.”²¹¹ In particular, NASM emphasizes music students’ ability to read notation. They claim that “musicianship begins with the acquisition of fundamental competencies, such as oral and rhythmic skills, the reading of notation, and the use of musical terminologies.”²¹² Per NASM policy, “assessments of musical skills used to determine admission

²⁰⁸ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK,” 2022-23,” 54.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 89.

to curricula leading to an undergraduate degree in music must indicate . . . capabilities to relate musical sound to notation and terminology at a level sufficient to undertake basic musicianship studies in the freshman year, or . . . the potential to develop such capabilities within the first year of study.”²¹³

From the perspective of bluegrass and roots music professionals, NASM’s assertions may also be regarded as troubling or misguided. In this framework, all music students must possess “an understanding of and the ability to read and realize musical notation” to gain a NASM-accredited liberal arts degree.²¹⁴ However, given the worldwide range of musical styles not delivered via musical notation, these assertions also come across as single-minded, dismissive, and exclusionary.

Beyond these demands, NASM emphasizes an additional range of practices of minimal relevance to other vernacular music traditions. The organization also stresses “content of traditional coursework and musicianship such as sight-singing, ear-training, harmony, keyboard harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, conducting, and music literature”—assertions reflective of Euro-Centric musical precedents.²¹⁵ Additionally, in the framework of professional baccalaureate degrees, students “must” acquire “keyboard competency” and “the ability to take aural dictation.”²¹⁶ They “must” also participate in “ensembles . . . [that are] varied in size and nature.”²¹⁷ However, it is interesting to note that these requirements are primarily associated with

²¹³ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK,” 2022-23,” 95.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 101.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 90.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 104-105.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 104-105.

classical traditions. As ensemble sizes vary radically in different genres, it is also logical to assume that the latter assertion is entirely open to interpretation.

Given the above observations, it appears that NASM's stances are decidedly insensitive and inadequate to the needs and preferences of diverse constituencies. After all, many beloved musical forms and traditions do not require or even allow for keyboard instruments, and many styles of music do not employ conductors. Furthermore, many musical styles do not embrace or even allow for highly varied ensemble sizes. Thus, these NASM requirements serve as a hallmark of singularly focused pedagogy—a reminder of European art music models that have systematically silenced all other voices in the American music education system.

Future Projections

In the future, musical constituents may view music education through a lens of cultural appreciation rather than cultural appropriation. They may perceive music coursework as a unifying force rather than a driver of marginalization or division. Finally, musicians of all persuasions may be allowed to practice and share the music that best aligns with their experiences, tastes, and culture. The following paragraphs offer support for these optimistic projections.

Olson offered compelling observations relating to pedagogical choices and inclusivity in his dissertation study of three cases of folk music integration in higher learning. According to Olson, “pedagogical processes communicate values, they reinforce ideologies and perpetuate cultural norms, they reveal underlying beliefs and convictions, both stated and unstated.”²¹⁸ Olson reinforced his position by referencing Rice's 2003 ethnomusicological study. Rice

²¹⁸ Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education,” 7.

theorized that “the relationship of music to other domains of culture and its role . . . in the maintenance or change of social systems” is not entirely a manifestation of culture and musical activity—pedagogical practices, for instance.²¹⁹ Nonetheless, per Rice’s “third dimension” of musical experience, “beliefs about the fundamental nature of music [may be] expressed in metaphors.”²²⁰ As such, “these beliefs . . . [can] become the basis for discourses about musical behaviors (including all aspects of creativity, reception, performance, and institutionalization), and strategies for deploying these beliefs and behaviors [pedagogy] in self-interested ways.”²²¹ Thus, inferences are made that culture may be endorsed and reinforced through musical interaction, and these occurrences can be contingent upon pedagogical preferences.

Olson acknowledged numerous benefits of vernacular music in higher education while cautioning readers about the variability of potential outcomes.²²² In support of such claims, he referenced Berry’s “four acculturation strategies” that tend to emerge when cultures collide: “assimilation,” “separation,” “integration,” and “marginalization.”²²³ According to Berry, integration allows for “some degree of cultural integrity [to be] maintained, while at the same seeking, as a member of an ethnographic group, to participate as an integral part of the evolving larger social network.”²²⁴ However, “. . . integration can only be ‘freely’ chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its

²¹⁹ Timothy Rice, “Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography,” *Ethnomusicology* 47, no. 2 (Spring-Summer, 2003): 151, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3113916>.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

²²² Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education,” 8.

²²³ J.W. Berry, “Globalisation and acculturation,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no.4 (July, 2008): 331, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.001>.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 331.

orientation towards cultural diversity.”²²⁵ Most importantly, integration “involve[es] the acceptance of both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples.”²²⁶

Berry’s study highlighted numerous outcomes relating to acculturation and globalization processes. In contrast to other frequent assessments of “globalisation as a process,” Berry concluded “that cultural loss and homogenization . . . do not inevitably occur.”²²⁷ According to Berry, “. . . the studies [also] reveal[ed] that cultural loss and individual assimilation, while evident, are not the most common outcomes of a high degree of contact and domination.”²²⁸ Given these observations, it would seem logical to predict that disparate music traditions—bluegrass or roots music and formalized Euro-centric musical traditions—can peacefully coexist in the confines of higher education institutions to the mutual benefit of all.

An Inclusive Calling

To counter colonialist and racist pedagogical biases, Good-Perkins advocates for “epistemic travel.” According to the author, “the epistemic traveler explores unfamiliar musical ways of knowing and in doing so, interrogates that which she had assumed to be musically universal.”²²⁹ Good-Perkins argued that educators should retool musical pedagogy toward the recognition and promotion of each student’s unique experiences. Through related interviews, she discovered that students’ “family and life experiences were interlinked with their musical

²²⁵ J.W. Berry, “Globalisation and acculturation,” 331.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 331.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 335.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 335-336.

²²⁹ Emily Good-Perkins, “Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel,” 48, 50.

expression as a cohesive whole.”²³⁰ Good-Perkins also cautioned that “students for whom a Eurocentric musical epistemology is not meaningful receive and internalize an implicit message, based on the absence of their own musical epistemologies in the music classroom, or the implication that their musical epistemologies are inappropriate for this particular musical setting.”²³¹ In contrast to the stifling effects of Euro-centric biases and misdirected “uniform[ity],” educators can cultivate equitable learning and by providing culturally relevant coursework for all—a “culturally sustaining pedagogy.”²³²

In an article addressing colonialism relating to bluegrass and old-time music pedagogy in formal institutions, Stimeling and Enriquez, stress the inherent duty of these institutions to counter the effects of such tendencies. They argue that such decolonial indigenous music programs can lead to increased inclusivity and social equity. As such, “decoloniality and decolonial pedagogy” may enable “marginalized communities to create their own pedagogical and participatory musical space through collaboration.”²³³ Stimeling and Enriquez consider community relations to be critical to these objectives, and they offer specific solutions adhering to this strategy. To avoid “replicating . . . colonial attitudes,” the authors recommend that non-traditional ensembles “. . . work diligently to respond constructively to . . . [localized] critiques, because they offer valuable insight into local ways of knowing and placed the power representation in the hands of the people being represented.”²³⁴ They also remind readers that “. . .

²³⁰ Emily Good-Perkins, “Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel,” 62.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

²³² *Ibid.*, 56, 58.

²³³ Travis D. Stimeling, and Sophia M. Enriquez, “BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS,” 62, 68.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

. intentional and personal relationships with local churches, public schools, and community service organizations not only acknowledge connections to land and place but serve the overall purpose of the public institution to return resources to, rather than extract from, local populations.”²³⁵

In addition, Stimeling and Enriquez strongly advocate for student participation in a familiar vernacular music ritual known as the “jam session.” These authors assert that institutions can “. . . cultivate decoloniality through relationships . . . in jam sessions”²³⁶ Significantly, “. . . through regular engagements with individuals at jam sessions, students are able to learn the textures of places in the communities that call them home, to develop an understanding of the dynamics of local life, and to cultivate a respect for the individual and the community that ultimately resists exploitation.”²³⁷

Summary

The available body of literature does much to substantiate the uses, demand, and need for culturally relevant pedagogy, including bluegrass and roots music studies. Authors have recognized significant biases that threaten the greater proliferation of such initiatives and offered recommendations to combat such unfortunate tendencies. Significantly, educators will usher in a new era of educational inclusivity and productivity by addressing the demands for more culturally relevant and immediately useful coursework—a decidedly praxial strategy. As Regelski observed, regardless of prevailing aesthetic justifications for current pedagogy, “. . . musics of all kinds continue to this day to perform their praxial functions in ways that are defining of society

²³⁵ Travis D. Stimeling, and Sophia M. Enriquez, “BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS,” 64.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

and the culture of daily life.”²³⁸ Therefore, the educator should embrace music’s functionality and individuality in the classroom.

Fortunately, there are indicators that such approaches are currently coming to fruition. Many other vernacular forms have surfaced following the widespread integration of jazz studies in universities. These groundbreaking initiatives are also being met with varying degrees of skepticism and embrace. However, it does appear that roots music programs are here to stay. Given these impetuses toward greater inclusivity and the educational precedents established by jazz studies in higher education, it may only be a matter of time till state music licensure opportunities open up to bluegrass and roots music studies majors. In the interim, students may consider the wide range of alternative licensure options that are currently available.

²³⁸ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music*,” 27.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study focuses on potential pathways that may enable formally trained bluegrass and roots professionals to pursue music education licensure in Tennessee. In the execution of the project, the researcher adhered to relatively standard research design formats. However, the unique nature of the subject matter, the scarcity of similar resources, and the unprecedented triangulation of such data points establish the relevancy and define the unique character of this study.

Initial research proceedings began with a series of questions and hypotheses. Next, the researcher conducted an in-depth literature review and a correlative interview campaign. The researcher then followed this phase via comprehensive data analysis and triangulation—qualitative research endeavors that hinged upon the researcher’s unique experience sets and expertise. Chapter three characterizes the processes enabling these interpretations and the rationales through which they are justified. Within this process, the researcher addressed a wide range of essential research variables, including research questions and hypotheses, participant selection, research settings, instrumentation, research procedures, and data analysis.

Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

The following research questions drive this study. Significantly, each path of inquiry is interrelated, correlating to the historical and sociological variables identified throughout this study.

Main Research Question

What circumstances could potentially enable college students majoring in bluegrass or roots music studies to pursue Tennessee licensure in music education licensure?

Secondary Research Question

What are the potential benefits of education licensure for bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education?

Sub Question One

What are the potential impediments to enabling college-level bluegrass or roots music students to pursue Tennessee music education licensure?

Sub Question Two

What are the alternative licensure routes available to college-level bluegrass or roots music students seeking Tennessee music education licensure?

Hypotheses

The researcher presented the following hypotheses at the onset of this study. Each example is rooted in the researcher's initial interest in further occupational opportunities for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals.

Hypothesis One

Circumstances that could potentially enable college students majoring in bluegrass or roots music studies to pursue Tennessee licensure in music education include alternative licensure approaches, adaptations in coursework per NASM guidelines, and aggressive advocacy campaigns directed toward decision-makers.

Hypothesis Two

Potential benefits of education licensure for bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education include expanded employment opportunities, enhanced cultural relevancy, and increased enrollment.

Research Design

The researcher authored a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological design linked to educational and sociological trends continually dominating pedagogical discourses. A critical component of this research, these trends were cross-referenced or triangulated with procedural impediments identified in the literature processes: bias, classism, and the marginalization of related demographics. When considered in tandem, these phenomena may indicate pedagogical or sociological achievement, predictors of future progress, or a lack thereof. Dibley, Dickerson, Duffy, and Vandermause offered support to this premise in their suggestion that “. . . we can use signposts in our literature review that point towards what might come.”²³⁹

In addition to assessing historical trends and precedents relating to the study’s main research topic, this researcher drew upon the unique merits of his personal experiences and a noted characteristic of hermeneutic phenomenological studies. As Dibley et al. pointed out, “unlike post-positivist/quantitative research, and descriptive phenomenology where the influence of the researcher is designed out of the study, the hermeneutic researcher is an integral part of study design and essential to its success, whilst also risking exerting an unwanted influence.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 3: Exemplar Case,” in *Doing Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2020): <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529799583>.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., “Ch. 8: Chapter Overview.”

Thus, “the interpretation is, itself, a result” and “it is the product and purpose of the study.”²⁴¹ In keeping with these observations, “. . . the aim of the researcher should be to use whichever approach is best suited to addressing the question, and demonstrating quality.”²⁴² Given his experiences as a university bluegrass instructor exceeding a decade, the researcher recognizes qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological strategies as an optimal focus for this study.

As with any research strategy, there are, of course, limitations associated with the approach. While this researcher is unaware of specific biases or preconceptions threatening the objectivity of his interpretations or data analysis, he would point out that these phenomena are unavoidable to a certain extent. Therefore, the researcher must be mindful of the potential for any preconceptions or prejudice to impact the study. They must also be resolute in their commitment to self-assessment and objectivity. Referring to such demands, Dibley et al. speculated that “the core technique for management of this prejudiced relationship is reflexivity and, done well, it enhances the rigour of the study.”²⁴³ In such scenarios, “. . . the reflexive hermeneutic researcher is constantly asking themselves: What is it about me that helps or hinders the project, and what, if anything, do I need to do about it?”²⁴⁴

In addition to these concerns, the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher must strive to earn the scientific community’s support by framing research findings to minimize ambiguities associated with the process. Dibley et al. observed that hermeneutic phenomenology is sometimes referred to “as ‘the black hole of methods,’” and “. . . there are no particular rules for

²⁴¹ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 9: Presenting hermeneutic findings.”

²⁴² Ibid., “Ch. 8: Explanatory Box: Cartesian Dualism.”

²⁴³ Ibid., “Ch. 8: Exemplar Case.”

²⁴⁴ Ibid., “Ch. 8: Reflexivity Throughout the Research Process.”

the ways in which results are rendered”²⁴⁵ In this framework, “. . . the [researcher’s] wording of patterns and themes, accompanied by exemplars, requires an ability to craft a tangible result that resonates in a community of science or a group of stakeholders associated with the phenomenon of interest.”²⁴⁶ Inasmuch, the researcher is compelled to “. . . adapt to the needs of their audience”²⁴⁷

Beyond the previously examined limitations for hermeneutic phenomenological research, the researcher has discovered deficits in applying these research strategies in the context of licensure revisions affecting formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals. It is also evident that researchers have occasionally addressed the independent variables and impediments diagnosed within this study. However, a comprehensive or conclusive analysis of cumulative ramifications for these issues does not currently exist.

Among the potential variables impacting these licensing practices, the researcher considered the role of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry in formal and informal pedagogical scenarios, including an informal get-together known as a jam and improvisatory performance practices. In a related study of childhood musical tendencies toward “attunement and bodily dialogue,” Fink-Jensen speculated that “scientific knowledge” could be gained through a “hermeneutic process . . . of applying notions”—interpretive reflections of the researchers’ experiences.²⁴⁸ Randles, Jimenez, Agostini, Balic, and Dodson also delved into the spiritual aspects of “an informal activity [a prominent bluegrass and roots music ritual] where

²⁴⁵ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 9: Chapter Overview.”

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Kirsten Fink-Jensen, “Attunement and Bodily Dialogues in Music Education,” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 15, no. 1 (Mar., 2007): 54, 61, 66.

musicians play improvised songs and chord progressions for fun”—the jam session.²⁴⁹ On an additional note, De Bruin applied similar research strategies to facilitate the conclusion that improvisers learn through formal and informal methods, and these processes are frequently impacted by a learner’s social sphere and personal experiences.²⁵⁰

Participants

The researcher selected interviewees from a diverse yet notably finite pool of educators: individuals with current or previous appointments teaching bluegrass or roots music courses in higher education. As a result, the interviewees will showcase broad-ranging and exceedingly diverse educational backgrounds. For instance, they may have received formal musical training or acquired expertise primarily in informal music mentorships and communal gatherings. The interviewees frequently displayed bluegrass and roots music skillsets and credentials reflecting formalized and informal pedagogical traditions.

Significantly, though it is common practice—perhaps standard practice—for universities to require faculty to have attained an advanced degree within their occupational discipline, this mandate is not entirely applicable in college-level bluegrass and roots employment. Bluegrass and roots music instructors’ educational credentials can range from non-high school diploma earners to a terminal degree. For example, a recent East Tennessee State University job posting showcased the following “Required Qualifications”: “Professional bluegrass, old-time, or roots

²⁴⁹ Clint Randles, Roberto Jimenez, Dominick Agostini, Adam Balic, and Gretchen Dodson, “The experience of musical jamming: Testing the fit of a model of hermeneutic phenomenology of spirituality in music education,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 44 no. 1 (Oct., 2021): 260, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X211038844>.

²⁵⁰ Leon R. de Bruin, “Expert improvisers’ formal, informal and situated influences on learning, motivation and self- efficacy: a qualitative study,” *Music Educator Research* 21, no.1 (Sept., 2018): 99, 102-103, 111, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2018.1516746>.

music performing artist with outstanding professional attainments, creative accomplishments, and recognition in their field.”²⁵¹ Furthermore, private and institutional teaching experiences were sought as “Preferred Qualifications,” while academic credentials were notably absent.²⁵² On a similar note, ETSU’s recent Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies adjunct recruitment posting characterized “formal academic degrees or qualifications in related fields” as “advantageous” and “recommended,” but not necessarily as “Required Qualifications.”²⁵³

The above-mentioned observations do much to highlight the diversity of experiences and credentials held by bluegrass and roots music educators. It is neither the function nor the intention of this study to criticize or critique such practices. However, the researcher recognizes the importance of acknowledging the broadness and depth of participants’ experiences while seeking to replicate patterns in recruiting interviewee candidates. It is, after all, the unique nature of these educators’ backgrounds that define bluegrass and roots music pedagogy and performance practices. In assessing these measures, the researcher would also point out that the institutional practice of substituting professional prowess and achievement for academic credentials is not unprecedented in academia—nor is it exclusively restricted to the realm of bluegrass and roots music studies. In the organization’s current accrediting guidelines, NASM asserted that “faculty members (including part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants, as

²⁵¹ “Artist in Residence in Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies: East Tennessee State University,” HigherEdJobs, accessed on April 16th, 2023, <https://www.higheredjobs.com/faculty/details.cfm?JobCode=178283945>.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ “Adjunct Instructors - Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies,” East Tennessee State University: eJobs, accessed on April 16th, 2023, <https://jobs.etsu.edu/postings/14622>.

applicable) shall be qualified by earned degrees and/or professional experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence for the subjects and levels they teach.”²⁵⁴

Sampling Size

The researcher weighed relevant themes identified in this study’s literature review to determine an appropriate interviewee sampling size. These examples showcased numerous factors impacting the prospects for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to acquire state-level music education licensure. The researcher recognizes these emerging themes as critical fuel for further inquiry and a grounding point for a more expansive, first-hand data inquiry approach—the interview process.

A critical first step in planning such processes, the research must determine a practical and acceptable interviewee sampling size—though the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher may find it challenging to arrive at an infallible, or even concrete, sampling formula. Indeed, Dibley et al. asserted that “. . . sample sizes . . . cannot be calculated” in the context of hermeneutical phenomenological research.²⁵⁵ Quantitative methodologies, where researchers are prone to search for “a definitive answer to a precise question,” may warrant a decidedly large participant sampling pool. Inversely, hermeneutic phenomenological researchers are encouraged to design their research sampling in the framework of the following “consideration[s]”: “the overall purpose of the research,” “the relationship between rarity of topic and sample size,” “the depth and completeness of data being collected,” and “the method of analysis being used.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK 2022-23,” 66.

²⁵⁵ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 4: Sample Size.”

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

Beyond these observations, the astute researcher will recognize a “relationship between information power and sample size in qualitative research.”²⁵⁷ According to Dibley et al., “the more advanced/interpretive the analysis method, the smaller the sample size.”²⁵⁸ In keeping with this principle, the researcher opted for an interviewee pool of five to ten participants.

Recruitment Plan

Per hermeneutic phenomenological research philosophies, the researcher will rely upon his unique experiences—as an insider in bluegrass pedagogical and performance-driven traditions—to recruit interviewee participants of optimal qualifications and insight. To accomplish this, the researcher must strive for “purposive sampling.” In the words of Dibley et al., “. . . it is essential that participants have had the experience of interest so that they can provide relevant data.”²⁵⁹ In keeping with these objectives, “. . . the researcher [also] deliberately seeks out those who can address the research question.”²⁶⁰ Specifically, the researcher will seek interviewees with substantive experiences and expertise in college-level bluegrass and roots music studies. The researcher will enlist participants via standard recruitment letters delivered by the researcher or through email.

Researcher Positionality

As a lifelong participant in the vernacular musical traditions of East Tennessee, the researcher is thoroughly familiar with the advantages and detriments of institutionalized bluegrass and roots music studies. These phenomena seem to ebb and flow alongside political

²⁵⁷ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 4: The method of analysis being used.”

²⁵⁸ Ibid., “Ch. 4: The method of analysis being used.”

²⁵⁹ Ibid., “Ch. 4: Sampling Method.”

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

and sociological trends in vogue during a given educational season. As an educator working in this environment, my curiosity has often been piqued when pondering the question of why formally trained bluegrass and roots music students are, in the context of today's increasingly diverse and forward-looking educational landscape, denied occupational opportunities specifically afforded to their classically trained counterparts—specifically, the lack of consistently navigable pathways for the latter to pursue Tennessee music education licensure. From a research standpoint, I would seek to understand such phenomena by interpreting wide-ranging data yielded through in-depth literature review and interview processes.

Under this research objective, I will triangulate thematic data acquired via literature review, interview process, and personal experiences to substantiate or repudiate my initial hypotheses. Ideally, these findings will help establish and contribute to ongoing dialogues concerning licensure revisions and alternative pathways. I will also rely upon the specificity and individuality of interviewee responses to uncover relevant situational variables unique to each participant's individual experiences and insight—a noted reflection of hermeneutic phenomenological research. Fink-Jensen pointed out that, “in a phenomenological-hermeneutic paradigm, . . . the aim [of researchers] is to understand what becomes meaningful to persons in actions and events in a given situation.”²⁶¹

Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives

To fully appreciate data yielded through hermeneutic phenomenological research, the researcher sought to examine and account for his ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions—perspectives that are, to some degree, inseparable from one's research approach

²⁶¹ Kirsten Fink-Jensen, "Attunement and Bodily Dialogues in Music Education," 54.

and method of interpretation. In this regard, Neubauer, Witkop, and Varpio asserted that “understanding the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning these [transcendental and hermeneutic] approaches is essential for successfully conducting phenomenological research.”²⁶²

While some educators adhere to a one-sided, realist ontological approach to pedagogy, this researcher is drawn to an ontology of interpretivism—a philosophy rooted in the broader recognition, acceptance, and dissemination of diverse musical forms. According to Clarke, interpretivism is “a form of social analysis which represents profound s[k]epticism towards claims to objectivity and a privileged access to knowledge.” Interpretivists are motivated by an “ontological conviction that the world can be viewed from a multiplicity of perspectives” and a “normative commitment to according them [diverse perspectives] equal respect.”²⁶³

From the researcher’s perspective, it is interesting to recognize the correlative nature between epistemological and ontological thought. Goldkuhl postulated that “ontology and epistemology are intertwined because knowledge . . . is so essential in the ontological assumptions of the constitution of the world.”²⁶⁴ Goldkuhl also highlighted two entirely distinct disparate “epistemological orientations”: interpretivism and pragmatism. Interestingly, Goldkuhl emphasized the usefulness of each philosophy and the notion that “the two research paradigms could . . . be combined.”²⁶⁵ Thus, interpretivism may lead to greater “understanding,” while

²⁶² Rian E. Neubauer, Catherine Witkop, and Lara Varpio, “How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others,” *Perspectives on Medical Education* 8, no.2 (Apr., 2019): 90, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>.

²⁶³ Chris Clarke, “Paths between Positivism and Interpretivism: An Appraisal of Hay’s Via Media,” *Politics* 29, no. 1 (Feb., 2009): 32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2008.01335.x>.

²⁶⁴ Göran Goldkuhl, “Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research,” *European Journal of Information Systems* 21, no. 2 (2012): 138, <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2011.54>.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 142, 144.

pragmatism serves as a stimulant for “action.”²⁶⁶ Given these observations, the researcher supports such hybridized epistemological approaches as they are both relevant to his praxial learning commitments.

In keeping with praxial approaches, the researcher also asserts that music education must work to the benefit and empowerment of all demographics. These axiological assumptions correlate with Regelski’s premise that music education may be regarded “as an essentially ethical endeavor.”²⁶⁷ Like Regelski, I would propose that pedagogical decisions be rooted in “pragmatism,” “consequentialism,” musical freedom, and inclusivity.²⁶⁸

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized several research instruments in this qualitative study, including an in-depth literature review and a series of related interviews. In each process, he recognized themes relevant to the research objectives. Of significant importance to the study, the researcher recognizes and appreciates his role and responsibility as a data interpreter. Indeed, Dibley et al. asserted that, for the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher, “. . . data analysis . . . must be considered as a dynamic activity that leads somewhere else,” and “the act of interpretation . . . becomes the rendering that is given as a result of the project.”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Göran Goldkuhl, “Pragmatism vs interpretivism,” 144.

²⁶⁷ Thomas A. Regelski, “Musicianism and the Ethics of School Music,” *Action, Criticism, & Theory for Music Education* 11, no. 1 (Mar., 2012): 29, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=74314931&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=liberty&authtype=ip,shib>.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 27-29.

²⁶⁹ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 7: Chapter Overview.”

Qualitative Data Collection Plan

This study relies upon two primary methods of data collection: literature review and interviews. These processes are of particular importance to this study. When combined, they provide a more comprehensive framework for analysis and interpretation. As Knopf pointed out, numerous “benefits” can be gained through the literature review process. A literature review can provide individuals with a “general overview” of other researchers’ contributions. Researchers can learn about “what has already been done well” while avoiding propensities for “reinventing the wheel.”²⁷⁰ The literature review process can also stimulate “new ideas” and identify “problems or flaws in existing research.”²⁷¹ Additionally, these practices can help researchers to contextualize their work in a larger framework of related research.²⁷²

Question-Based Protocol

Researchers may benefit significantly from the interview process. Doody and Noonan recognized the following potential benefits of interviewing: “uncovering the story behind a participant’s experiences,” “gain[ing] information about a topic,” “further explor[ing] responses or findings,” and “collect[ing] data to gain knowledge from individuals.”²⁷³ Accordingly, this study focuses on structured interview formats where participants are provided with open-ended questions highlighting the importance of individuality, individual experiences, and perspectives.

²⁷⁰ Jeffrey W. Knopf, “Doing a Literature Review,” *PS, Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 1 (Jan., 2006): 127, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/doing-literature-review/docview/224895969/se-2>.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷³ Owen Doody, and Maria Noonan, “Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data,” *Nurse Researcher (through 2013)* 20, no. 5 (May, 2013): 28, 32, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/preparing-conducting-interviews-collect-data/docview/1443469489/se-2>.

Doody and Noonan supported such approaches asserting that “questions in qualitative interviews are open-ended, clear, neutral and sensitive in nature.”²⁷⁴

Additionally, the researcher recognizes and appreciates the risks associated with “why questions.” “Why” questions can “cause participants to feel defensive.” Nonetheless, the researcher is convinced that these risks are, in this instance, entirely appropriate and acceptable.²⁷⁵ Each participant possesses unique insight concerning college-level bluegrass and roots music studies—information vital to this project. Follow-up “why” questions have, therefore, been included in interview schedules whenever they are applicable.

The researcher also opted for a structured interview format emphasizing uniformity in delivery and content. A central tenet of the structured interview process is the interviewer’s adherence to “the same set of questions” in each interview.²⁷⁶ According to Farago, Zide, and Shahani-Denning, “. . . past research has shown that structured interviews . . . have much greater criterion-related validity.”²⁷⁷ Additionally, Arsel, Dahl, Fischer, Johar, and Morwitz cautioned that “fully unstructured dialogues with your participants, where you let their experiences unfold as they will [in absentia of interviewer direction or guidance], remains a romantic myth”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Owen Doody, and Maria Noonan, "Preparing and conducting interviews," 30.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 31.

²⁷⁶ Bonnie Farago, Julie S Zide, and Comila Shahani-Denning, “Selection Interviews: Role of Interviewer Warmth, Interview Structure, and Interview Outcome in Applicants’ Perceptions of Organizations,” *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 65, no. 3 (2013): 225, https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc=UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Selection%20interviews:%20Role%20of%20interviewer%20warmth,%20interview%20structure,%20and%20interview%20outcome%20in%20applicants%E2%80%99%20perceptions%20of%20organizations&rft.jtitle=Consulting%20psychology%20journal&rft.au=Farago,%20Bonnie&rft.au=Zide,%20Julie%20S&rft.t.au=Shahani-Denning,%20Comila&rft.date=2013-09-01&rft.pub=Educational%20Publishing%20Foundation&rft.issn=1065-9293&rft.eissn=1939-0149&rft.volume=65&rft.issue=3&rft.spage=224&rft.epage=239&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.1037%2Fa0034300¶mdict=en-US.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.,” 225.

The researcher will pose various questions to uncover interviewee experiences and perspectives relating to exclusionary educational practices that deny bluegrass and roots music studies majors prospects for Tennessee music education licensure. These questions must be distinct from the study's central research questions. As Arsel et al. pointed out, ". . . though they [research questions and interview questions] are connected, research questions and interview questions are not the same thing."²⁷⁹ Through the interview process, the researcher "seek[s] to understand lay and subjective articulations of these [central research] concepts"—a strategy that can potentially strengthen the researcher's "theoretical claims."²⁸⁰ The following interview questions showcase the researcher's commitment to these objectives.

Interview Question One

Are college-level bluegrass and roots music students and educators afforded the same opportunities or the same levels of respect as their classical music contemporaries? Why do you believe this to be the case?

This question emphasizes the impact of marginalization on prospective formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals. In addressing the phenomenon's root causes, participants introduce vital perspectives and data to current dialogues relating to educational equity. Bluegrass and roots music educators frequently benefit from culturally immersive

²⁷⁸ Zeynep Arsel, Darren Dahl, Eileen Fischer, Gita Johar, and Vicki Morwitz, "Asking Questions with Reflexive Focus: A Tutorial on Designing and Conducting Interviews," *The Journal of Consumer Research* 44, no. 4 (2017): 939. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialsolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Asking%20Questions%20with%20Reflexive%20Focus:%20A%20Tutorial%20on%20Designing%20and%20Conducting%20Interviews&rft.jtitle=The%20Journal%20of%20consumer%20research&rft.au=Arsel,%20Zeynep&rft.date=2017-12-01&rft.pub=University%20of%20Chicago%20Press&rft.issn=0093-5301&rft.eissn=1537-5277&rft.volume=44&rft.issue=4&rft.page=939&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.1093%2Fjcr%2Fucx096&rft.externalDocID=A518235747¶mdict=en-US

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 942-943.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 943.

approaches. The educators' musical skills were often initiated in such environments. Burton further highlighted the pedagogical merits of cultural immersion in her statement that, "as the world becomes as the world becomes increasingly connected, helping preservice music teachers obtain the necessary cultural and curricular competencies to break the recurrent cycle of 'teaching as one has been taught,' creating the intercultural partnerships that are needed to initiate and develop these competencies, and establishing the policies needed to support these partnerships are imperative for the reconceptualization of music teacher education."²⁸¹

Interview Question Two

What societal benefits could be gained if public school music educators were required to teach students about the unique vernacular music of their region?

This question draws upon interviewees' unique experiences and expertise to predict the benefits of licensure revisions enabling the inclusion of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals. There are, indeed, many societal benefits that correlate with the application of culturally relevant pedagogy. According to Good-Perkins, through careful adherence to issues of cultural relevancy, educators can ". . . create an environment in which students find their voice and feel empowered to musically express who they are."²⁸²

Interview Question Three

Would K-12 vernacular music coursework have aided you in your quest to become a professional bluegrass roots music educator or performer? Why, or why not?

²⁸¹ Suzanne L. Burton, "Perspective Consciousness and Cultural Relevancy: Partnership Considerations for the Re-Conceptualization of Music Teacher Preparation," *Arts Education Policy Review* 112, no. 3 (2011): 127-128, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2011.566082>.

²⁸² Emily Good-Perkins, "Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel," 58.

Bluegrass and roots music educators' pedagogical skillsets and philosophies are often intrinsically linked to informal learning practices. These educators might have benefited from more formal educational experiences if these courses had been available. However, in most instances, this was not the case., The seasoned educator may, nonetheless, speculate about the value of such course offerings and the effects of missed opportunities when they are not made available. In a study of 344 high school students participating in music courses, Kelly discovered that 22.09 percent of survey participants would be interested in enrolling in “Bluegrass Ensemble[s]” if that option were available.²⁸³

Interview Question Four

In terms of college preparation, what advantages would bluegrass and roots music studies students gain if public schools explored these traditions in grades K-12 music classes?

Undoubtedly, prospective college-level bluegrass and roots music students could benefit from increased training opportunities. In correlation with increased opportunities to study music, these students may acquire a more diverse range of skill sets—an inherent advantage for musical employment. This depth of experience is frequently evident in non-traditional university music instructors. These demands are further supported by Gee and Yeow's assertion that “musical careers are multifaceted entities requiring a multitude of skills, far more than the professional expertise of being able to play an instrument to an expert and professional level.”²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Steven Nelson Kelly, and Kenna Veronee, “High School Students' Perceptions of Nontraditional Music Classes,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 219 (Winter, 2019): 81, 84, <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.219.0077>.

²⁸⁴ Kate Gee and Pamela Yeow, “A hard day's night,” 343.

Interview Question Five

What benefits might the bluegrass community and society as a whole gain if formally trained bluegrass music professionals were granted access to Tennessee music education licensure?

This path of inquiry addresses perceived opportunities for societal and organizational improvement through licensure revision. Interviewees are encouraged to draw upon experiences, achievements, and objectives to speculate on the potential benefits of such revisions. From the interviewee's perspective, these benefits will likely be observed through lenses of educational practice, training, or employability. Significantly, given the "growing teacher shortages" referenced by Henry in his discussion of alternative certification routes, it is logical to assume that more inclusive certification requirements may impact the abovementioned labor shortage.²⁸⁵ Thus, a broader licensure pool translates into an expanded pool of employee candidates.

Interview Question Six

What impediments currently prevent formally trained bluegrass and roots music studies professionals from pursuing Tennessee music education licensure?

This study examines numerous obstacles that currently prevent formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from pursuing Tennessee music education licensure, including Euro-centric biases, classism, and the marginalization of said demographics. These impediments can be detrimental to students' progress and, as such, they must be addressed. As Good-Perkins pointed out, "school music values, rooted in colonialism and European bourgeois ideals, delineate the [self-perceived] 'appropriate' way to listen to music, experience music, and make music," and ". . . these values [have] clashed with the students' own 'ways of knowing' [music] .

²⁸⁵ Michele Henry, "An Analysis of Certification Practices," 52.

. . .”²⁸⁶ By integrating the experiences and opinions of multiple educators, this study seeks to expand upon current discussions relating to these sociological issues. As such, interviewees may recognize these obstacles in a different light, or they may offer solutions to the dilemmas that the researcher has yet to consider.

Interview Question Seven

Can you think of any pedagogical or procedural revisions that could strengthen the case for these professional musicians to be granted access to Tennessee music education licensure?

As a follow-up to question six, this question further addresses remedies for the previously highlighted impediments: Euro-centric biases, classism, and marginalization. These discussions may uncover new possibilities for multicultural music education advocates. They may stimulate unique philosophies and new degrees of acceptance. They may also lead music education in a more hybridized direction where musical forms coalesce and expand. In the view of many educators, these occurrences are synonymous with inclusive, artistic progress. Significantly, Walker observed a new emphasis “on multiculturalism” in modern educational philosophy. He also concluded that “the way forward for a philosophy of music education is to accept the blurring of genres (or disciplines) over the last few decades, and go further than simply accentuating the social situatedness of today’s students.” In response to this practice, “. . . the student . . . [may] rise above . . . [their] own social situation” and contribute to a “larger [musical] culture.”²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Emily Good-Perkins, “Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel,” 56.

²⁸⁷ Robert Walker, “The Rise and Fall of Philosophies of Music Education: Looking backwards in order to see ahead,” *Research Studies in Music Education* 17, no. 1 (Dec., 2001): 3, 6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X010170010201>.

Interview Question Eight

Do you feel that it is important for bluegrass or roots music studies majors to learn to read standard notation? Why, or why not?

A philosophical disparity exists between music educators concerning the relevancy of reading music in bluegrass and roots music studies. It is critically important to have ongoing dialogues about licensure for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals and consider the viewpoints and justifications of all educational constituencies. After all, the impact of such decisions can be rather profound. In his dissertation case study of university bluegrass or related music programs, Olson presented interview narratives detailing NASM's (the National Association of Schools of Music) refusal to accredit one particular program on the grounds of pedagogical incongruencies. Foremost among these issues was the institution's objection to requirements for site reading for its students and related measurable competencies.²⁸⁸

Interview Question Nine

In the event that formally trained bluegrass music professionals were granted access to state Tennessee music education licensure, what percentage of your students would you estimate to be interested in this opportunity?

Interview question nine relies exclusively on the experiences and expertise of participants—individuals currently or previously employed to teach bluegrass or roots music courses at an institution of higher learning. Per the recommendations of Dibley et al., the “sampling” approach was systematic and intentional. In these scenarios, “. . . purposive sampling is the method of choice precisely because it selects people who have had the experience of

²⁸⁸ Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education,” 283-286.

interest, those are who are most able to provide insight into the particular phenomenon and therefore most likely to provide data which addresses the research question.”²⁸⁹

Interview Question Ten

Do you believe that formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals will be granted access to Tennessee music education licensure at some point in the near or distant future? Why, or why not?

As with previous examples, question ten emphasizes participants’ unique insight into the phenomenon of institutional bluegrass and roots music studies. The open-ended format of this question leaves ample room for extensive speculation and conjecture. Most importantly, the interviewee and interviewer’s input “. . . become a fusion of horizons between the interpreter and the participants.”²⁹⁰

Interview Transcriptions

The researcher transcribed interviews verbatim with the aid of Microsoft Word’s Dictate function. Through this process, he will also increase his familiarity with the interviewees’ stances. Ideally, in response to the considerable emphasis placed on interview content, the researcher will arrive at a more thorough, more-informed informed analysis and interpretation. Halcomb and Davidson reinforced this premise in their assertion that, “in research underpinned by theoretical frameworks such as phenomenology, grounded theory, feminism, and ethnography, closeness between researchers and the text is critical to the research design and philosophical tenets of the methodology.” In this context, the authors also surmised that “. . . a

²⁸⁹ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 4: Sampling Method.”

²⁹⁰ Ibid., “Ch. 7: Philosophical Underpinnings of Heidegger and Gadamer.”

verbatim record of the interview is clearly beneficial in facilitating data analysis by bringing researchers closer to their data.”²⁹¹

In addition to these decisions, the researcher recognizes the importance of data security and participant confidentiality. Given this consideration, he will organize and store interview recordings on a password-protected computer system accessed exclusively by the researchers. Participants will also be assigned pseudo names in the reporting of findings and the interpretation of data.

Data Saturation

In the interview process, it is critically important for researchers to strive for an optimal sampling size. Qualitative researchers frequently assess sample sizes by delving into the concept of data saturation. For example, Guest, Namey, and Chen recognized “saturation” as “the point during data analysis at which incoming data points (interviews) produce little or no new useful information relative to the study objectives.”²⁹²

To ensure appropriate data saturation, the researcher will apply the relevant assessment formulas recommended by Guest et al. Specifically, the researcher will compare “base themes” uncovered in an initial run of four interviews with “new themes” that emerge in successive interviews. Then, per the recommendations of Guest et al., the number of “base themes” will be divided by the number of “new themes” in a related assessment exercise. The remaining quotient will reflect the degree of thematic data saturation. In Guest et al.’s “propose[d]” model,

²⁹¹ Elizabeth J. Halcomb and Patricia M. Davidson, “Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary?,” *Applied Nursing Research*, 19, no. 1 (2006): 42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2005.06.001>.

²⁹² Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, “A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research,” *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 5 (May, 2020): Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076>.

“accept[able] . . . saturation has been reached at a given point in data collection” when “new information” constitutes zero to five percent of observable thematic data.²⁹³

Procedures

To proceed with this project, the researcher petitioned for approval for Liberty University’s IRB (Internal Review Board) on March 24th, 2023. Upon attaining IRB approval on May 1st, 2023, the researcher enlisted interview participants by inquiring amongst his colleagues in higher education bluegrass and roots music studies and emailing candidates recommended by insiders from the discipline.

Data Collection

The following narratives deliver detailed descriptions of the data collection steps employed in this project:

Step One:

Step one of this process involved the review of numerous literature examples relevant to the prospects for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals acquiring Tennessee music education licensure.

Step Two

Next, the researcher emailed or, when practical, personally contacted potential interviewees—individuals with current or previous higher education appointments involving the teaching of bluegrass or roots-based musical forms.

²⁹³ Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, “A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation,” *Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation, Application of the approach.*

Step Three

After consenting to participate in this study, the researcher scheduled interviewees for Zoom or in-person interviews.

Step Four

The researcher recorded interviews digitally via cell phone or Zoom-based recording technologies.

Step Five

Upon completion of the interviews, digital files were transferred, when applicable, and stored on the researcher's password-protected, private-access computer system.

Coding

The researcher will achieve qualitative analysis by comparing this study's literature review and interview data. He will employ standard coding techniques to substantiate, augment, or disallow relevant themes identified in this study's literature review. Locke, Feldman, and Golden-Biddle highlighted the merits of such processes in their statement that "coding entails the work of scrutinizing, pondering, and organizing collected observations and relating them to theoretically relevant abstract features, possible relationships, and research questions."²⁹⁴

Frequently, thematic data coding processes are reduced into analytical rounds or stages. For example, in "Level 1 coding," researchers take their "first formal analytic pass through" applicable data.²⁹⁵ This stage is often referred to as "initial coding or open coding."²⁹⁶ During

²⁹⁴ Karen Locke, Martha Feldman, and Karen Golden-Biddle, "Coding Practices and Iterativity: Beyond Templates for Analyzing Qualitative Data," *Organizational Research Methods* 25, no. 2 (2022): 264, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120948600>.

²⁹⁵ Christopher Hahn, *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer* (London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2008): Chapter 6: Introduction to the code document, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857024411>.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1: Qualitative coding terms.

this analytical stage, “. . . codes are clustered together according to similarity and regularity, patterns are born, and you can begin to analyze the connections between them.”²⁹⁷ Remarkably, at the conclusion of this phase of the coding process, an inductive research coder may arrive at “a list of 50-70 initial codes.”²⁹⁸

While numerous techniques apply to research-based data analysis, the researcher opted for inductive coding approaches. Inductive coding procedures are particularly “relevant when doing an exploratory study or when no theoretical concepts are immediately available to help you grasp the phenomenon being studied.”²⁹⁹ Thus, the researcher recognizes and endorses inductive data coding as an ideal analytical methodology for this study.

The researcher will organize thematic interview data in the format of a digital codebook format via Dedoose software. The researcher opted for this technology-driven approach with the objective of increased efficiency and reliability. This strategy is supported by Hahn’s hypothesis that “the researcher can more productively analyze data and write better conclusions if he or she intelligently uses the every-day technologies that have become available in the last few years.”³⁰⁰

During the second coding round, the researcher pursues a greater analytical focus while engaging in informed discernment. This stage of the coding process is often referred to as

²⁹⁷ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, “Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice,” *Qualitative research journal* 19, no. 3 (July, 2019): 266, https://liberty.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNptkE1LAzEQhoNUsFbvHhc8r80k2WziTYqfFETRc0h2Z2tKu9smu4X-e9P2JHh7B95nhnkuyajtWiTkBugdAFXTj8-3HFjOKKicUmBnZAxCPkwVHR0zz7VS_IJcxriktCi4EmNSzrrat4tsO9iV723vd5jVtrf3mc3ivu1_MPqYLQZ_bKUxa7udr_CKnDd2FfGajPow4IR8Pz1-zV7y-fvz6-xhnlDCQZ-XDYWm5K5h2lW6rq2TXLmq5BoLqyqHhSwaDkxwZEJKL SWWNS rmtKQA4PiE3J72bkK3HTD2ZtkNoU2XDWNciPQ56NSip1YVuhgDNmYT_NqGvQFqDnZMsmOAm YMdc7CTkOkJwTUGu6r_I_745L9-tGZQ.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 263.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 263.

³⁰⁰ Christopher Hahn, *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer*, Chapter 1: Qualitative methods are diverse.

“focused coding or category development.”³⁰¹ According to Linneberg and Korsgaard, “. . . in deductive coding a higher level of abstraction can be reached in the second cycle, but it may also be useful to explore differences within codes if the deductive codes contain interesting sub-themes and variation.”³⁰² Per these demands, the researcher will revisit critical research themes identified during this study’s literature review and apply these narratives to the organization of interviewee themes—a process yielding increased categorization and compartmentalization of thematic data elements.

Post-Coding Analysis

As in any research study, thematic data synthesis and systematic analysis are critical to the applicability of this study’s findings. Coding represents an important step in the initial analysis process. However, as is often the case, the researcher’s organization of data is not necessarily conducive to the discovery or advancement of knowledge. Beyond identifying “themes and subthemes, the researchers must interpret the meaning [of data] within the context of the research questions.”³⁰³ The hermeneutic phenomenological researcher must draw upon individualized skillsets and experiences during each phase of the analytical process: initialization, construction, reification, and finalization.

Proper data analysis can often be rooted in optimal data coding procedures. Linneberg and Korsgaard pointed out that these practices can bring “structure and depth to the analytical

³⁰¹ Christopher Hahn, *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer*, Chapter 1: Qualitative coding terms.

³⁰² Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, “Coding qualitative data,” 265.

³⁰³ Wendy C. Coates, Jaime Jordan, and Samuel O. Clarke, “A practical guide for conducting qualitative research in medical education: Part 2—Coding and thematic analysis,” *AEM Education and Training: A GLOBAL JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY CARE* 5, no. 4 (Aug., 2021): 5, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8457700/>.

process.”³⁰⁴ However, beneficial data coding also requires “artful and creative interpretation and analysis of the data.”³⁰⁵ To fully capitalize on the benefits of data coding, the researcher will engage in thorough, theoretically informed deliberation, systematic qualitative analysis, and the triangulation of data yielded via each of the study’s principal research instruments: literature review, interviews, and the researcher’s informed interpretation.

First and foremost, in constructing the analytical plan, the researcher sought to establish accessibility, viability, and useability for data. Being “driven by the quest to discover the objective and subjective reality of the phenomena being studied without the explicit objective of developing theory,” the researcher capitalized on the flexible nature, the practicality, and the inherent usefulness of phenomenological processes.³⁰⁶ In response to demands for continued data accessibility and useability, the researcher sought to replicate Coates et al.’s noted commitment to “answer[ing] ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions to lend guidance to educators and researchers to optimize the learning environment and to generate ideas for topics of study by quantitative analysis.”³⁰⁷

Beyond such data formatting considerations, the researcher fully recognizes and acknowledges the precarious nature of the qualitative researcher’s task of reification. It is an innately challenging task for researchers to reassign or recontextualize abstract data points into a more concrete or definitive framework. As Hahn asserted, “. . . qualitative researchers have a

³⁰⁴ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, “Coding qualitative data,” 268.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 261.

³⁰⁶ Christopher Hahn, *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer*, Chapter 1: Qualitative methods are diverse.

³⁰⁷ Wendy C. Coates, Jaime Jordan, and Samuel O. Clarke, “A practical guide for conducting qualitative research,” 5.

special challenge because of the nebulous nature of their raw data.”³⁰⁸ In spite, however, of these impediments, the researcher is convinced of the merits of such arduous research. There is, after all, “a great deal of knowledge and wisdom . . . enmeshed in the stories of elders, open-ended interviews, field observations, folk art, pictures, and artifacts collected by qualitative researchers.”³⁰⁹

Then, to effectively finalize the study’s results, the researcher followed Hahn’s sound recommendation to “choose the method that works best for [thei]r project.”³¹⁰ The researcher acknowledges that narrative discussions and comparisons can offer a thorough and effective information delivery format. However, given the specifics of this study, the researcher has opted for a varied and more comprehensive approach—a combination of written narratives and graphic representations. This strategy complies with Linneberg and Korsgaard’s assertion that “visual display eases the reading and increases the understanding of scientific text.”³¹¹

Setting

The researcher freely acknowledges his acquaintanceships with prospective interviewees and his connections to the regional setting of this study. Additionally, he fully recognizes and embraces the inherent advantages of working in these surroundings. The study occurs in the rural southeastern portions of the United States—regions characterized as “hotbeds of the driving string-band styles that formed the roots of bluegrass music.” According to Bartenstein, this labeling is particularly relevant to southeastern Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama,

³⁰⁸ Christopher Hahn, *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer*, Chapter 1: Introduction, Coding Terminology, and the Big Picture.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1: Introduction, Coding Terminology, and the Big Picture.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1: Qualitative coding terms.

³¹¹ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, “Coding qualitative data,” 267.

and South Carolinas.³¹² Bluegrass historians will also recognize Kentucky as the birthplace of its progenitor, Bill Monroe,³¹³ and the impetus for the genre's moniker.³¹⁴ Given the rich culture and heritage of such localities, in tandem with the researcher's connectivity to the region, it is evident that East Tennessee serves as an ideal setting for such research. Likewise, being a lifelong member of this "bluegrass community" and having served in the bluegrass and roots music education field for over a decade, the researcher is apparently in an ideal position to pursue this research. He is also ideally poised to recruit highly qualified interviewees.

Significantly, a majority of the interviews will occur in Johnson City, TN region. Per participants' preferences, these interviews may occur online or in person. In-person interviews will be video recorded via the researcher's cell phone and transferred to a password-protected computer system. The researcher will record online interviews in real time and store the respective files on a password-protected computer system.

Data Analysis

The researcher must consider numerous concerns to establish the viability and relevancy of this study. Most importantly, he must present the data in a manner instilling confidence and support from all constituents—readers and reviewers alike. To accomplish these objectives, the researcher must address various issues relating to research findings, including credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and other ethical considerations.

³¹² Josh Graves and Neil Rosenberg, "1927–1942, A Tennessee Childhood," in *Bluegrass Bluesman: A Memoir*, ed. Fred Bartenstein (University of Illinois Press, 2012): 1, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt3fh4wf.6>.

³¹³ Tom Ewing, *Bill Monroe: The Life and Music of the Blue Grass Man*, 7.

³¹⁴ Kip Lornell, *Exploring American Folk Music*, 106.

The researcher took numerous precautions to ensure validity and credibility within this research. These research strategies generally complied with Dibley et al.'s recommendations concerning the establishment of research credibility. According to Dibley et al., "techniques for achieving credibility include the transparent description of data collection and analysis process, the use of verbatim quotes from participants to support the findings being presented, and the demonstration of shared as well as varied experience amongst participants."³¹⁵ Under such recommendations, the researcher recruited interviewees from a diverse pool of educators showcasing wide-ranging occupational credentials and experiences. The researcher also strove to maintain transparency in the generation and interpretation of interview coding data. Within these preventative actions, the researcher sought to avoid any inclining to redirect interviewee comments in favor of his beliefs or projected hypotheses. Additionally, the researcher sought to emphasize objectivity and open-mindedness in his analysis and interpretation of research data—an objective conducive to the systematic, data-driven coding approach. As Linneberg and Korsgaard observed, "engaging in coding allows the researcher to provide transparency for others and oneself in relation to how existing concepts are reflected in the empirical material, but also where there might be novel insights and possibilities for theoretical development."³¹⁶

Another critical aspect of the study's legitimization, the researcher followed strategies conforming to Dibley et al.'s research assertions that transferability is highlighted in "a demonstration of the relationship of the findings to the wider literature."³¹⁷ First, the researcher compared interview data with themes prevalent in this study's literature review. Then, in keeping

³¹⁵ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, "Ch. 8: Credibility."

³¹⁶ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, "Coding qualitative data," 268.

³¹⁷ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, "Ch. 8: Transferability."

with hermeneutic phenomenological strategies, the researcher cross-referenced the resultant data through the lenses of his pedagogical experiences and research-informed interpretations.

In addition to being credible and transferable, researchers must establish the dependability of their findings. In general terms, “dependability . . . reflects the notion of reliability, which refers to the extent to which a study is repeatable.”³¹⁸ It should also, however, be noted that the “replicability of findings” is not an exclusive standard of research dependability. For example, in qualitative research, the researcher “cannot produce the same findings, and . . . [they are] not trying to”³¹⁹ Thus, the qualitative researcher may establish dependability by enlisting “participants who have had the same experience as those in the original study, to produce findings which resonate with the existing qualitative knowledge about that experience.”³²⁰ Significantly, given the absence of comparable studies to this research project, studies confirming “that the study participants match those of previous iterations of the same study,” the researcher sought to establish dependability in identifying reoccurring pedagogical, sociological, and ideological themes.³²¹

Yet another factor impacting the reception of this research, the researcher identified the concept of confirmability. To establish confirmability, “. . . researchers must be able to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not purely from their own presuppositions.”³²² Confirmability can also be reinforced through “robust descriptions of data

³¹⁸ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 8: Dependability.”

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid., “Ch. 8: Confirmability.”

analysis procedures, acknowledgment of any bias or prejudice, and verbatim extracts from the raw data, which enable the reader to see evidence of the interpretation.”³²³ When feasible, the researcher closely adhered to these guidelines in the processes of research and research design, particularly in the delivery of data in verbatim quotations.

As with any research endeavor, there were also a variety of ethical considerations to weigh in the creation of this qualitative study design. Among these, the researcher is tasked with demonstrating the overall trustworthiness of data findings. As previously discussed, Linneberg and Korsgaard recognized a correlation between responsible coding practices, research transparency, and trustworthiness. According to Linneberg and Korsgaard, “an important tool in the process of turning the raw qualitative data into a communicative and trustworthy ‘story’ is coding.”³²⁴

Beyond such concerns as transparency and trustworthiness, the ethical researcher must address critical sociological concerns. As such, Farrugia equated “ethical decision-making [research] needs” with “principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice.”³²⁵ The author posited that “respecting research participants, involves addressing issues related to informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality while also reflecting on the researcher’s impact on the participant and the research context while the research is carried out and also when the research is disseminated.”³²⁶ In keeping with these recommendations, the researcher provided

³²³ Lesley Dibley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause, “Ch. 8: Confirmability.”

³²⁴ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, “Coding qualitative data,” 259, 268.

³²⁵ Lorleen Farrugia, “WASP (Write a Scientific Paper): The Ongoing Process of Ethical Decision-Making in Qualitative Research: Ethical Principles and their application to the research process,” *Early human development*, 133 (2019): 48, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S037837821930180X?via%3Dihub>.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

interviewees with a detailed consent form prior to participation, and he opted for non-identifying pseudo-names in the sharing of research findings.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Introduction

Throughout the higher education bluegrass and roots music movement's approximately five decades of existence, institutions have encouraged, enabled, and, at times, dissuaded instructors from sharing vernacular music with students. During the literature review, this study identified numerous stimuli and impediments to such processes while highlighting the increasing impact of societal and scholarly support on these initiatives. Within these activities, precedents were also uncovered for the integration of vernacular music in formal educational institutions. When analyzed collectively, these factors were deemed correlative to social equity and inclusivity.

Interview Results

This study included interviews with educators experienced in higher education bluegrass or roots music studies. Through these interviews, the researcher substantiated a majority of the literature review themes, particularly the impediments facing higher education bluegrass and roots music studies and the propensities for these strategies to disseminate in K-12 educational settings. With each successive interview, it became increasingly apparent that Euro-Centric pedagogical biases, classism, and marginalization allegations were accurate and warranted. On an alternative note, the interviews also revealed noted assertions of optimism as participants attested to potentialities for bluegrass and roots music studies to inform and transform K-12 education.

Thematic Data Saturation

Numerous variables were considered in the planning and execution of the interviews. As is often the case with such projects, the researcher sought to complete this research phase

promptly and efficiently. Interviewee recruitment and scheduling were also subject to the participants' unique schedules and preferences. Importantly, as bluegrass and roots music professionals are also prone to avoid teaching during summer months in favor of touring and performing, the interviews were also frequently impeded by the seasonality of participants' occupations.

Foremost among variables impacting this project's interview component, a need was established to arrive at an optimal data sampling. Using Guest et al.'s saturation model as a blueprint, the researcher settled on a data saturation projection of five percent or less. In Guest et al.'s example, "base size" interviewee samplings ranged from four to six, yielding a thematic data saturation ratio of five percent or less.³²⁷

This study proceeded with an initial base sampling of four interviewees. After coding the interviews, the researcher identified ninety-three unique yet interrelated themes. Then, a "new themes" category was created with the addition of two interviews. Per Guest et al.'s saturation formula, these "new themes" were divided by the sum of the "base themes" to determine the extent of thematic data saturation (see table 1), a process reflecting approximately fifteen percent saturation (see table 2).³²⁸ Given these results, additional interviews were recruited to continue the process.

³²⁷ Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, "A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation," *Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation*.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation*, *Methods: Application of the approach*.

Table 1. The Emergence of New Themes During Interview Run #1

Measure	Bass Size	New Interviewee 1	New Interviewee 2
Interview Number	1-4	5	6
Themes Per Number of Interviewees	125	138	144
Newly Emerging Themes	NA	13	6

Sources: Interviewees One-Nine, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Table 2. Initial Interview Run Saturation Ratio

Measure	Interview Run #1 Results
New Themes Total (Interviews 5-6)	19
Bass Size Theme Total (Interviewees 1-4)	125
Thematic Saturation Ratio	15%

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Per Guest et al.'s model, the base sampling size was revised from four to five participants, and an additional interviewee was recruited during the second interview "run" (see table 3).³²⁹ As a result of this process, the data saturation ratio was reduced from fifteen to fourteen percent (see table 4), an indicator of progress falling short of the study's proposed saturation objectives. Thus, the interviewee recruitment process continued. Interestingly, during

³²⁹ Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, "A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation," *Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation*, *Methods: Application of the approach*.

this unique interviewing phase, the researcher also noted the emergence of a new thematic pattern—a growth in thematic data returns (rather than the typical reduction trend) from six newly emerging themes to thirteen. However, given the inherent disparities in interviewee backgrounds, this variance was recognized as a statistical outlier rather than an indicator of ensuing trends.

Table 3. The Emergence of New Themes in the Second Interview Run

Measure	Bass Size	New Interviewee 1	New Interviewee 2
Interview Number	1-5	6	7
Themes Per Number of Interviewees	138	144	157
Newly Emerging Themes	NA	6	13

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Table 4. The Second Interview Run Saturation Ratio

Measure	Interview Run #2 Results
New Themes Total (Interviews 6-7)	19
Bass Size Theme Total (Interviewees 1-5)	138
Thematic Saturation Ratio	14%

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

In the third run of the interview project, an additional interviewee (interviewee eight) joined the proceedings. The base sampling size was also adjusted from five to six (see table 5). In response to these additions, data saturation rates were reduced from fourteen percent to twelve

percent (see table 6), an indicator of further progress but not completion. The interviewee recruitment process continued because the original data saturation objectives were not achieved.

Table 5. The Emergence of New Themes in the Third Interview Run

Measure	Bass Size	New Interviewee 1	New Interviewee 2
Interview Number	1-6	7	8
Themes Per Number of Interviewees	144	157	161
Newly Emerging Themes	NA	13	4

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Table 6. The Third Interview Run Saturation Ratio

Measure	Interview Run #3 Results
New Themes Total (Interviews 7-8)	17
Bass Size Theme Total (Interviewees 1-6)	144
Thematic Saturation Ratio	12%

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

During the fourth round of interviews, the researcher realized his data saturation objectives (see table 7). Modeling after the Guest et al. example, a thematic data saturation ratio

of approximately five percent (5.096) was identified (see table 8).³³⁰ As a result, the researcher was convinced that an acceptable, perhaps even optimal, saturation rate had been achieved.

Table 7. The Emergence of New Themes in the Fourth Interview Run

Measure	Bass Size	New Interviewee 1	New Interviewee 2
Interview Number	1-7	8	9
Themes Per Number of Interviewees	157	161	165
Newly Emerging Themes	NA	4	4

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Table 8. The Fourth Interview Run Saturation Ratio

Measure	Interview Run #4 Results
New Themes Total (Interviews 8-9)	8
Bass Size Theme Total (Interviewees 1-7)	157
Thematic Saturation Ratio	5%

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Interview Data Analysis

During this project's early stages, it would have been helpful if the researcher could have located and built upon similar studies. However, no such resources were identified in response to

³³⁰ Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, "A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation," *Methods: An alternative approach and method to calculating and reporting saturation, Methods: Application of the approach.*

an intensive research campaign. Such resources are, therefore, presumed to be nonexistent. Per the literature review, the researcher did, however, uncover substantial evidence of the factors—both benefits and impediments—that do seem to impact, if not define, the phenomenological focus of this study: the exclusion of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from state-level music education licensure opportunities.

The factors mentioned above were further scrutinized in the context of interview data. Interviewees offered important information and meaningful insight concerning the literature review themes. They also provided additional information that bridged the gap between scholarly discourse and real-world, experience-driven pedagogy.

In addition, as an adjunct to the literature review and interview-driven information, the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher drew upon his unique insights and experiences (as a professional bluegrass educator) to triangulate the data. Therefore, the final analysis reflected this tripartite research approach relying upon each resource mentioned above (see Figure 1).

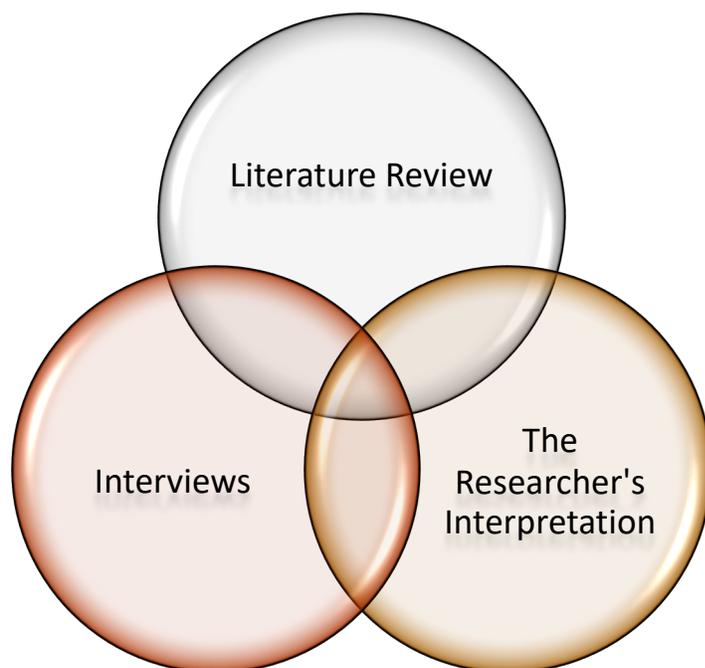


Figure 1. The Triangulation of Research Approaches Defining this Study

Analytical Organization

Upon completing the interviews, the researcher proceeded to the arduous tasks of data classification, organization, and extrapolation. The themes were organized in terms of context, intended direction, and usage, leading to the identification of various data intersections. In response to this study's phenomenological focus, interviewees often offered similar observations, such as a lack of understanding, lack of respect, or the inequitable distribution of opportunities. A clearer picture of interviewee perspectives was established by comparing the frequency of the themes in individual interview settings and the entirety of the (nine) interviews.

This process drew particular attention to the ambiguity and multidimensionality of interviewee responses. For example, interviewees recognized resistance to change as a potential impediment to K-12 vernacular music initiatives and higher education bluegrass and roots music programs. Interviewee seven responded to a question concerning "impediments currently prevent formally trained bluegrass and roots music studies professionals from pursuing Tennessee music education licensure" by speculating that "music education . . . is a very conservative field, and it's one that has a long tradition of doing things a certain way."³³¹ Therefore, there will be "a lot of resistance to changing things" in this context.³³² On the other hand, interviewee two contextualized resistance to change "from the perspective of like a broader old-time music community."³³³ According to interviewee two, in this context, there can be "a real resistance to the institutionalization of traditional music, and so sometimes that can also contribute to this sense of less respect or disrespect or skepticism about how we take this traditional music that's

³³¹ Interviewee Seven, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 16th, 2023.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

really rooted in an oral tradition and . . . what it means to have that exist, to teach it in an institution of higher learning.”³³⁴

In response to these incongruities, this study adopted a hierarchical data coding system contingent upon the theme’s context, intended direction, and potential usage. These divisions are highlighted in the following illustrations and charts. In each of these examples, data is organized to reflect the interconnected nature of the themes.

Phenomena Favoring K-12 Vernacular Music Studies

Interviewees generally expressed optimism and support for K-12 vernacular music education licensure initiatives. They also shared observations relating to the proposition, including student benefits derived from vernacular music acceptance and support, benefits from K-12 vernacular music licensure, arguments for Tennessee music education licensure for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals, and alternatives to K-12 bluegrass and roots music studies beyond licensure (see Figure 2).

³³⁴ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

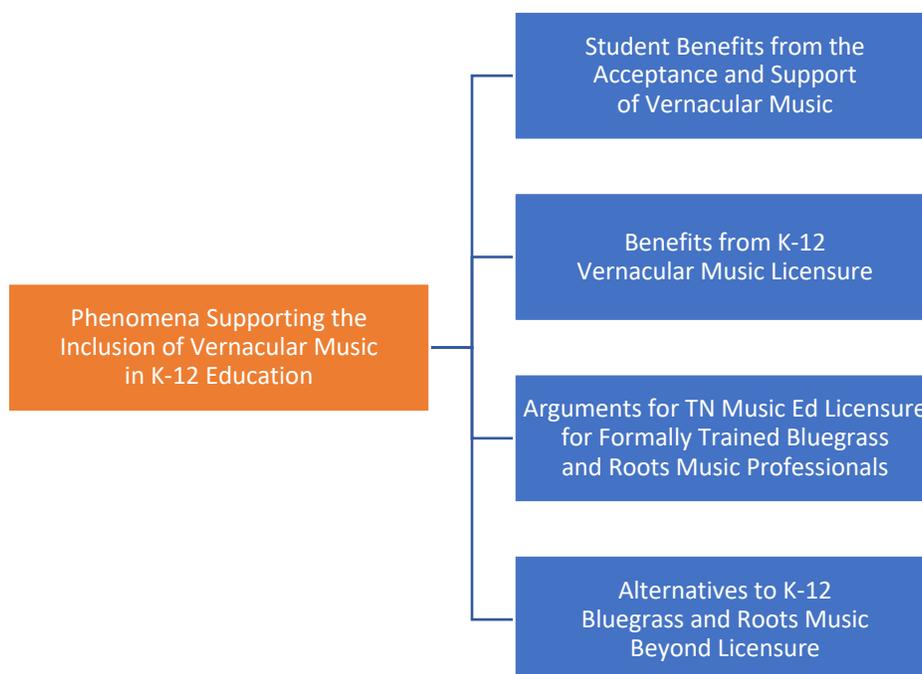


Figure 2. Organizational Approach for “Phenomena Supporting Vernacular Music in K-12 Ed.”
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

When considering this data, it is interesting to note that each thematic category focuses on a different context for vernacular music licensure advocacy. These categories also are frequently interrelated.

Student Benefits from Acceptance and Support for Vernacular Music

Participants stressed student benefits from vernacular music acceptance and support within the interviewees. Two of the interviewees referenced propensities for these approaches to instill confidence. Interviewee five observed that “. . . it [acceptance and support for vernacular music] brings you a lot of confidence,” and “it brings people confidence that they can make themselves happy . . .”³³⁵ Likewise, interview one discussed an instance when their K-12 music

³³⁵ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

teacher offered encouragement and support by showcasing their vernacular musical expertise in school music events. In the words of this interviewee, “that gave me a lot of confidence—even that degree of just recognizing the value of what I was doing.”³³⁶ Significantly, in these assertions, the interviewees recognized the benefits of cultural acceptance and support.

Benefits of K-12 Vernacular Music Licensure

The interview participants proposed numerous benefits relating to K-12 vernacular music licensure. These themes were often, in the interest of efficiency and accuracy, assigned to subcategories such as College Preparation Benefits from K-12 Vernacular Music Studies, Potential Benefits of K-12 Licensure for the Bluegrass Community, and Societal Benefits if Public Schools Taught Vernacular Music. Within this process, several thematic categories stood out in terms of frequency: Promoting Lifelong Musical Practice and Access, Promoting Diversity, Promoting Cultural Recognition/Appreciation, Increased Regional Appreciation, and Practicality/Accessibility/Feasibility for Smaller Schools. When viewed comprehensively, these themes reflect a cumulative process—a pedagogical cycle progressing from recognition to cultivation to the lifelong utilization of diverse musical resources (see Figure 3).

³³⁶ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

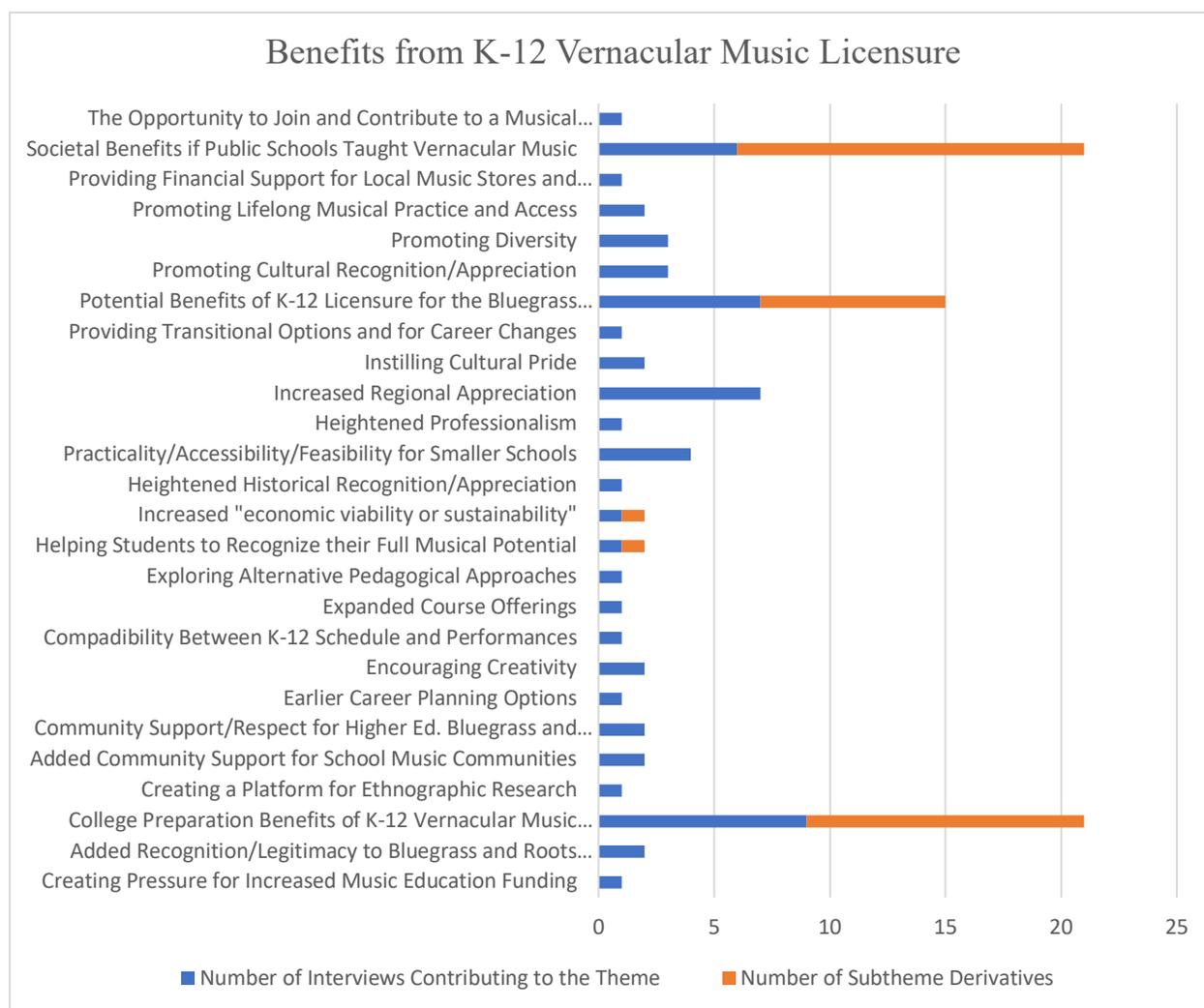


Figure 3. Benefits from K-12 Vernacular Music Licensure

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Arguments Supporting Licensure for Vernacular Music Educators

Interviewees also provided broad-ranging arguments for including formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals in state-level licensure proceedings. Foremost among these assertions, approximately thirty-three percent of these interviewees recognized the proliferation of higher education bluegrass and roots music programs as an argument for vernacular music licensure. In addition, approximately thirty-three percent of participants contributed to the Various Indicators of Interest in K-12 Vernacular Music Studies thematic

category, while approximately twenty-two percent proposed arguments corresponding with The Recognition and Appreciation of Vernacular Musics and Expanded Opportunities (see Figure 4).

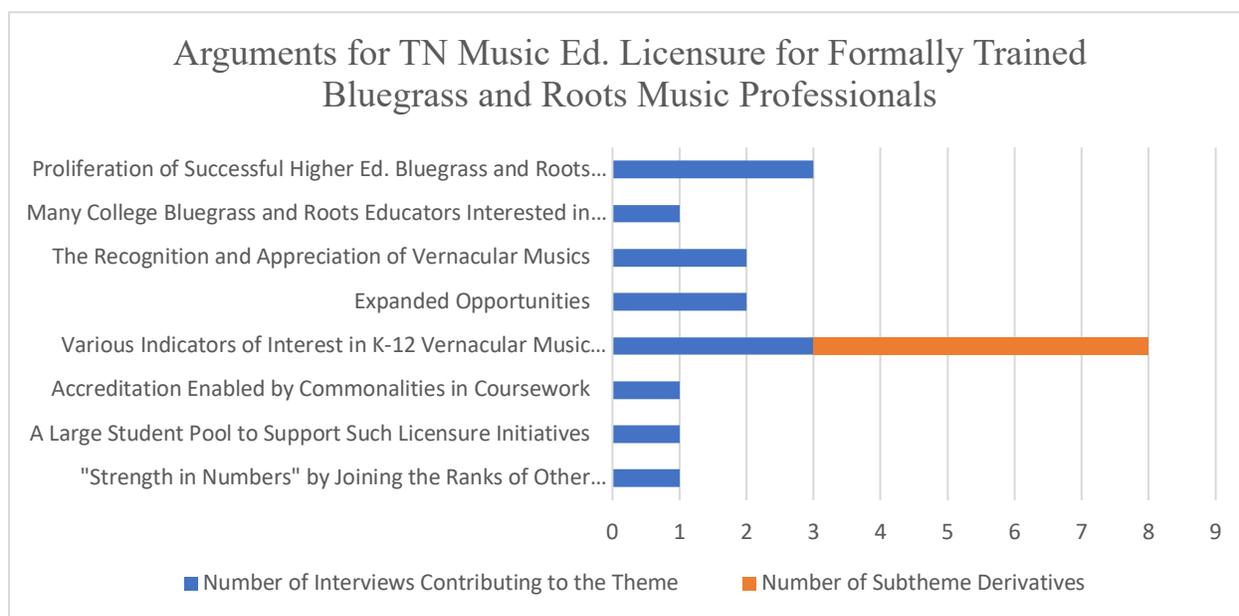


Figure 4. Arguments for TN Music Ed. Licensure for Formally Trained Bluegrass and Roots Music Professionals

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Significantly, to introduce further depth and detail to this unique coding phase, the researcher also created the subthemes to the Various Indicators of Interest in K-12 Vernacular Music Studies category: College-Level Bluegrass and Roots Music Students' Interest in Licensure, Community Interest in Such Licensure Revisions, Considerable Interest in Regionalism and State History Among TN. Residents, Institutional Higher Ed. Interest in Bluegrass and Roots Music Licensure, and Current K-12 Roots Music Initiatives. These arguments were further augmented by interviewees' fervent optimism for this proposition. In the words of interviewee three, ". . .

there's lots of opportunities there and . . . whoever just, you know, good at taking advantage of those opportunities will figure out that this is the way to do it."³³⁷

Indicators of Interest in K-12 Vernacular Music Studies

In addition to expressing their personal and professional interests in establishing K-12 vernacular music licensing pathways, interviewees cited numerous indicators of support for such objectives. They spoke of college-level bluegrass and roots music students' interest in licensure, community interest in licensure revision, Tennessee residents' interest in regionalism and local history, higher education institutions' interest in bluegrass and roots music licensure, and current K-12 roots music initiatives (see Figure 5).

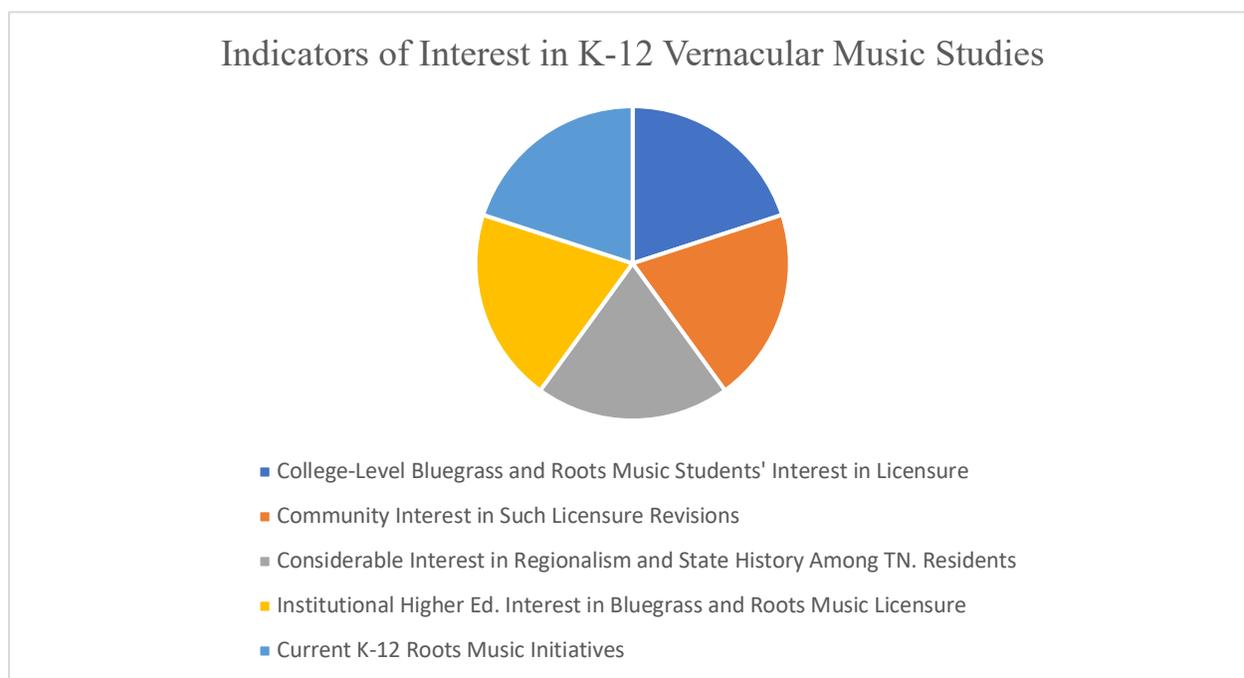


Figure 5. Indicators of Interest in K-12 Vernacular Music Studies

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

³³⁷ Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

In keeping with these assertions, interviewee three posited that “. . . we also have communities that are becoming more interested in exactly what you’re talking about and tapping into the music that’s sort of embedded in the culture or the regions where they live”³³⁸ Additionally, interview two stated that “like I know that enough of my students are thinking about, obviously thinking about their future, and recognize that making a living in bluegrass full-time in roots music can be really challenging, and for some even impossible”³³⁹ Consequently, “. . . they’re already trying to think creatively about their future and how roots music intersects with that, and I think if they knew pursuing music education licensure was an option, that . . . they would totally add that to their list of possibilities.”³⁴⁰

Alternatives to K-12 Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies: Beyond Licensure

Not surprisingly, there were also instances when the interviewees asserted elements of skepticism in response to the phenomenological focus of this study. At times, these educators seemed to advocate for a middle-of-the-road, compromising pedagogical approach or, in one instance, a genre-specific strategy of musical separation. As an example of such approaches, interviewee one highlighted the role of high school “bluegrass clubs,” surmising that this is “an easy way for that to happen [the integration of bluegrass and roots music studies in K-12 education]” (see Figure 6).³⁴¹

³³⁸ Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

³³⁹ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

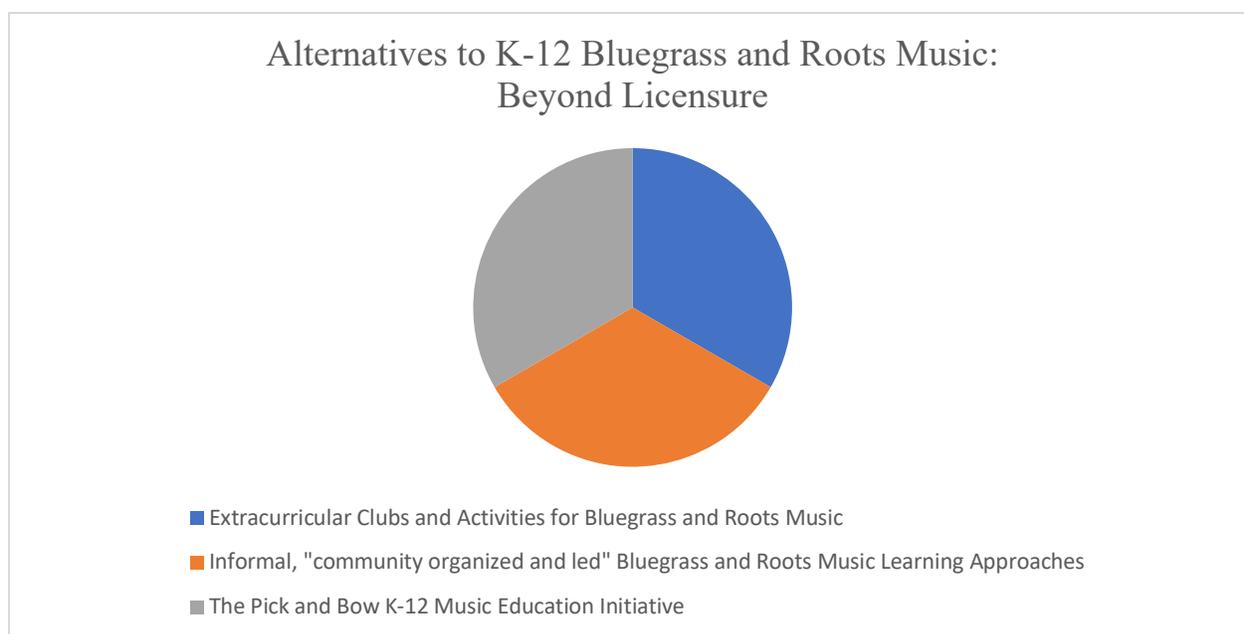


Figure 6. Alternatives to K-12 Bluegrass and Roots Music: Beyond Licensure
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

The interviewee also questioned the viability of exclusive vernacular music models stating, “so, I don’t know that bluegrass/old-time/roots music can stand on its own unless it’s as an extracurricular thing, but it absolutely should be included as part of the broader musical experience, along with other styles of folk music, particularly when you talk about regions.”³⁴² Additionally, on a more pessimistic note, interview five voiced the following concerns for K-12 vernacular music studies: “so, you know, sometimes, Jeremy, I wonder if it’s just not to be fit into a formal education setting anymore—if it just needs to be community organized and led everywhere because the state has no idea, and they just, it’s just too much, too big.”³⁴³

Interviewees expressed skepticism concerning K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure in the scenarios described above. However, it should also be noted that these individuals were

³⁴²Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

³⁴³ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

neither entirely averse to the proposition nor were they convinced that it could not be implemented. To the contrary, interviewee one concluded the interview by stating, “. . . I think that, if we are very focused, it could happen” and “I hope it does.”³⁴⁴ Also, interviewee five declared that “. . . we do need to [work toward state-level music education licensure for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals], [and] I’m glad you’re asking the questions, Jeremy.”³⁴⁵ Logically, one can assume that the interviewee would not have urged further inquiry or research if they deemed the proposition of K-12 vernacular licensure impossible. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that, within these notably skeptical assertions, these interviewees were not trying to discourage inquiry or impede progress. They were simply concerned about certain fallacies and impediments inherent to the current educational system—issues they would like resolved.

Factors Supporting Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies

Through careful analysis of K-12 vernacular music integration themes, it became apparent that K-12 and higher education issues are not necessarily disjointed. Interviewees referenced several factors supporting bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education that seemed to correlate or even mirror the Phenomena Favoring K-12 Vernacular Music Studies category. Among the recognized phenomena favoring higher education bluegrass and roots music initiatives, participants stressed the support of prominent trade organizations, the proliferation of higher education jazz programs, the proliferation of higher education bluegrass

³⁴⁴ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

³⁴⁵ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

and roots music programs, and the prominence of employment opportunities in comparison to classical music specialists (see Figure 7).

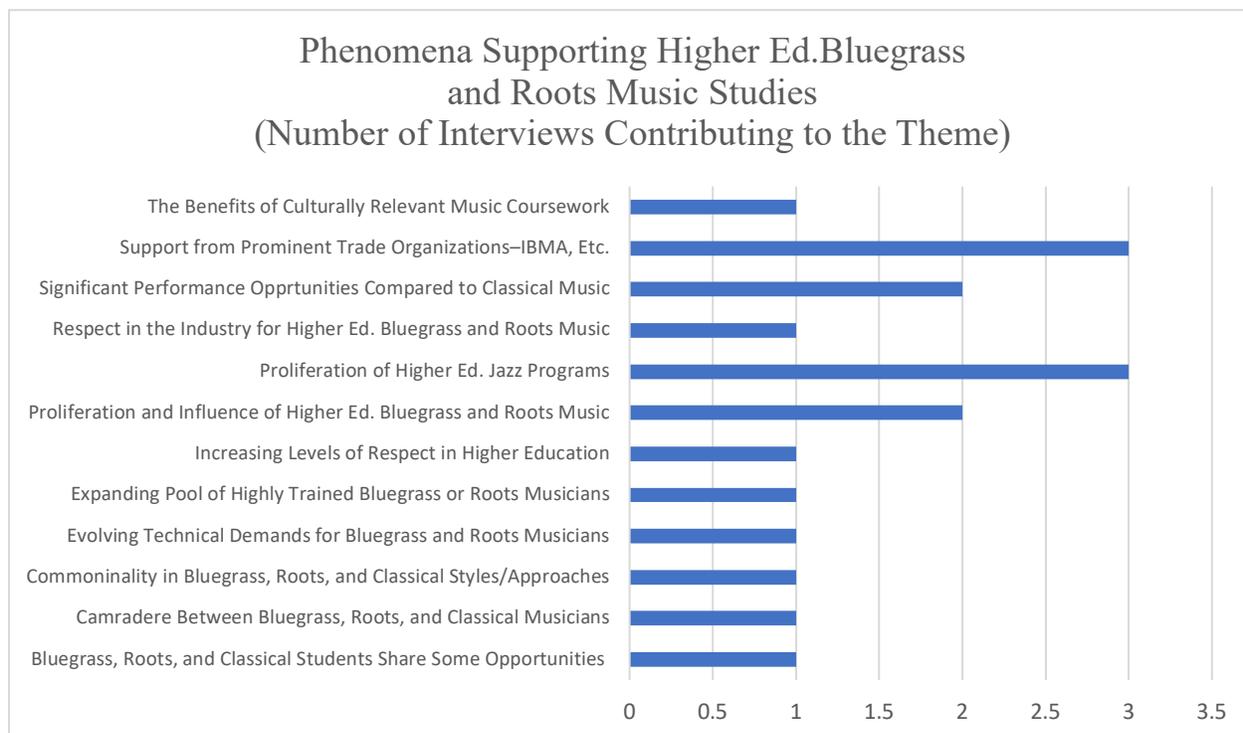


Figure 7. Phenomena Supporting Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

One notable correlation between the Phenomena Favoring K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and the Factors Supporting Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies category can be observed in terms of college preparation benefits. As a result of K-12 vernacular music studies, interviewees predicted that students would enter into related college programs with heightened musical exposure, greater understanding of history and concepts relating to bluegrass and other roots forms, expanded proficiency with basic musical concepts and theory, expanded ear training prowess, increased productivity in college music courses, and greater general preparedness for the unique challenges of institutionalized vernacular music education (see Figure 8).

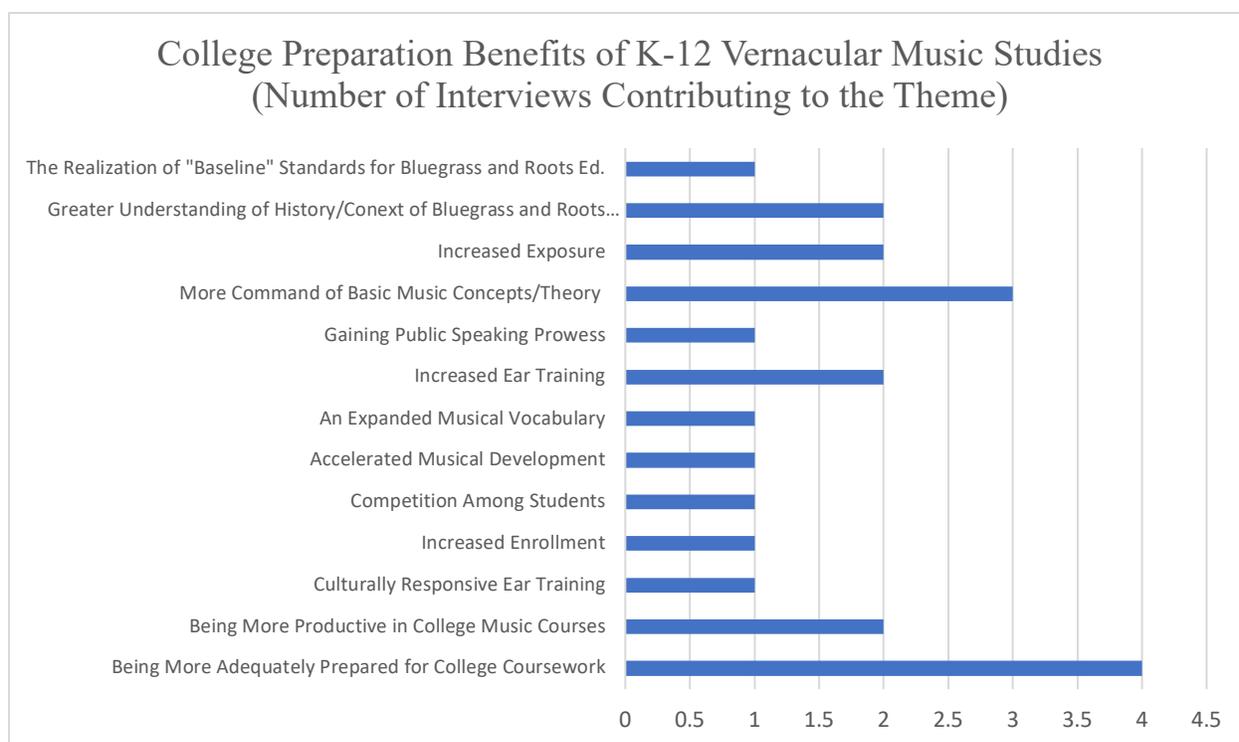


Figure 8. College Preparation Benefits of K-12 Vernacular Music Studies
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Interviewee nine assessed this scenario in the following manner: “. . . the more preparation and experience somebody comes into college with, you know, I think the better prepared they are to kind of hit the ground running, and . . . there’s. . . less catch up, you know, that they’re going to have to do in terms of learning about the tradition and important individuals and music figures along the way”³⁴⁶

Impediments to K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and Licensure

A significant portion of this study was dedicated to identifying and understanding impediments precluding formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from pursuing K-12 music licensure, particularly in the state of Tennessee. In the early stages of the research

³⁴⁶ Interviewee Nine, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 27th, 2023.

project, likely culprits or impediments for the phenomenological focus were identified, including euro-centric biases, classism, the marginalization of related demographics, and a correlative state of pedagogical implacability. During the interviews, participants attested to the presence and impact of each of these factors while expanding upon previous narratives concerning vernacular music licensure.

In analyzing these responses, a clear yet notably broad pattern emerged relating to multiple contexts of understanding (see Figure 9).

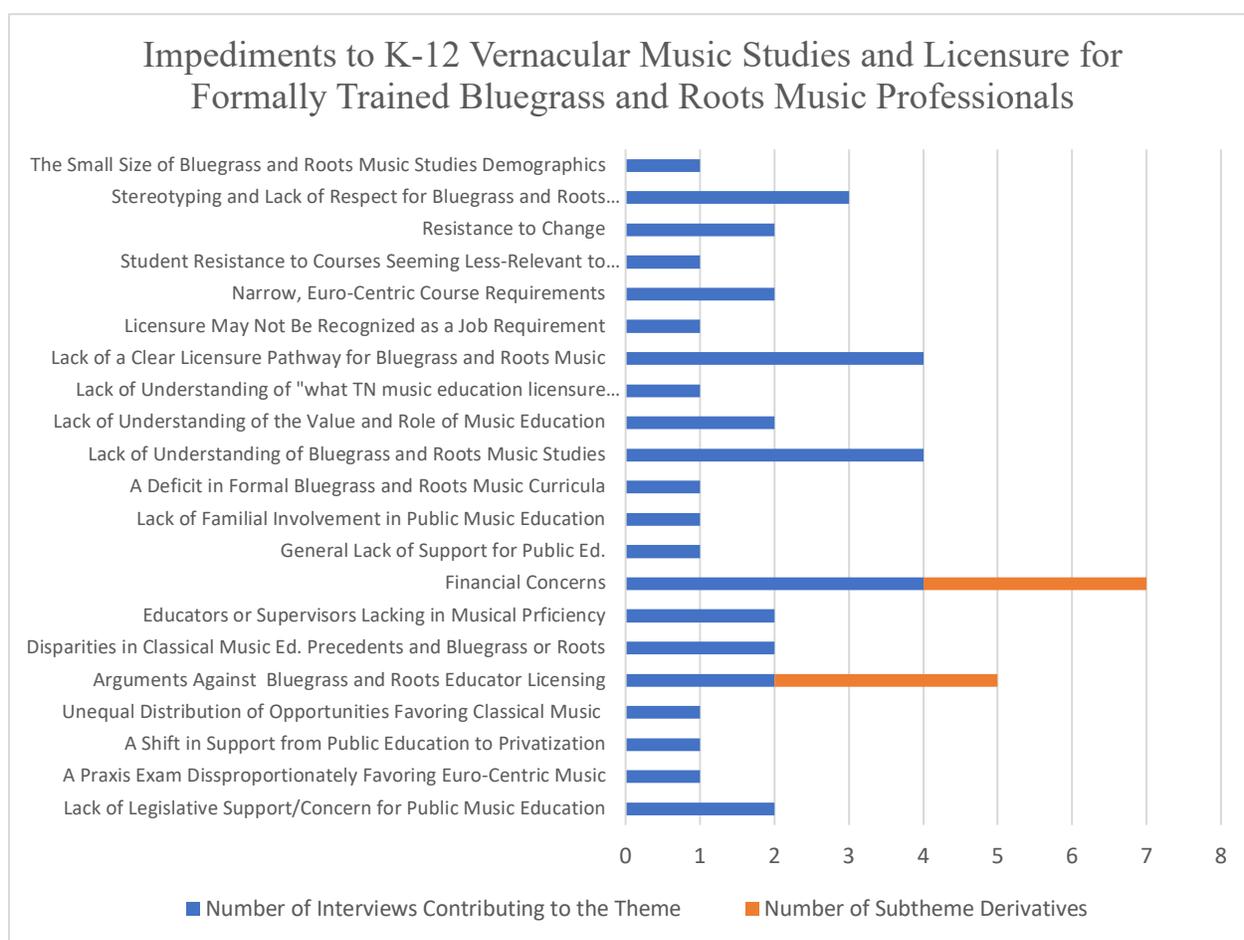


Figure 9. Impediments to K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and Licensure for Formally Trained Bluegrass and Roots Music Professionals

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

As such, approximately forty-four percent of the interview participants referenced a lack of understanding among educational stakeholders regarding bluegrass and roots music studies, while approximately twenty-two percent attested to a lack of understanding of music education's general value and function—factors that can impede nearly all avenues of modern educational reform, including pedagogical issues. Significantly, interviewee two attributed the phenomenological focus of this project—a deficit in vernacular music education licensing opportunities—to stakeholders' lack of understanding of “what TN music education licensure means and what it requires.”³⁴⁷

Additionally, approximately forty-four percent of interviewees attributed this study's phenomenological focus to the deficit of clear pathways for bluegrass and roots music educational licensure. There are, however, many connotations of the term “clear” to be considered in such discussions. Among these, interviewees may refer to clarity in a manner conducive to understanding. In this context, these references to a clear path may also be construed as endorsements for a clearly understood path. Additional connotations of the term may revolve around clearly navigable or replicable pathways to K-12 music education licensure.

Financial Concerns

Approximately forty-four percent of interviewees cited financial concerns as potential impediments to K-12 vernacular music licensure. The interviewees speculated as to the ramifications of several financial issues, including reductions in funding for arts and music education, the expenses of training individuals for licensure, and the costs of overhauling curricula in terms of capital and time commitments (see Figure 10).

³⁴⁷ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

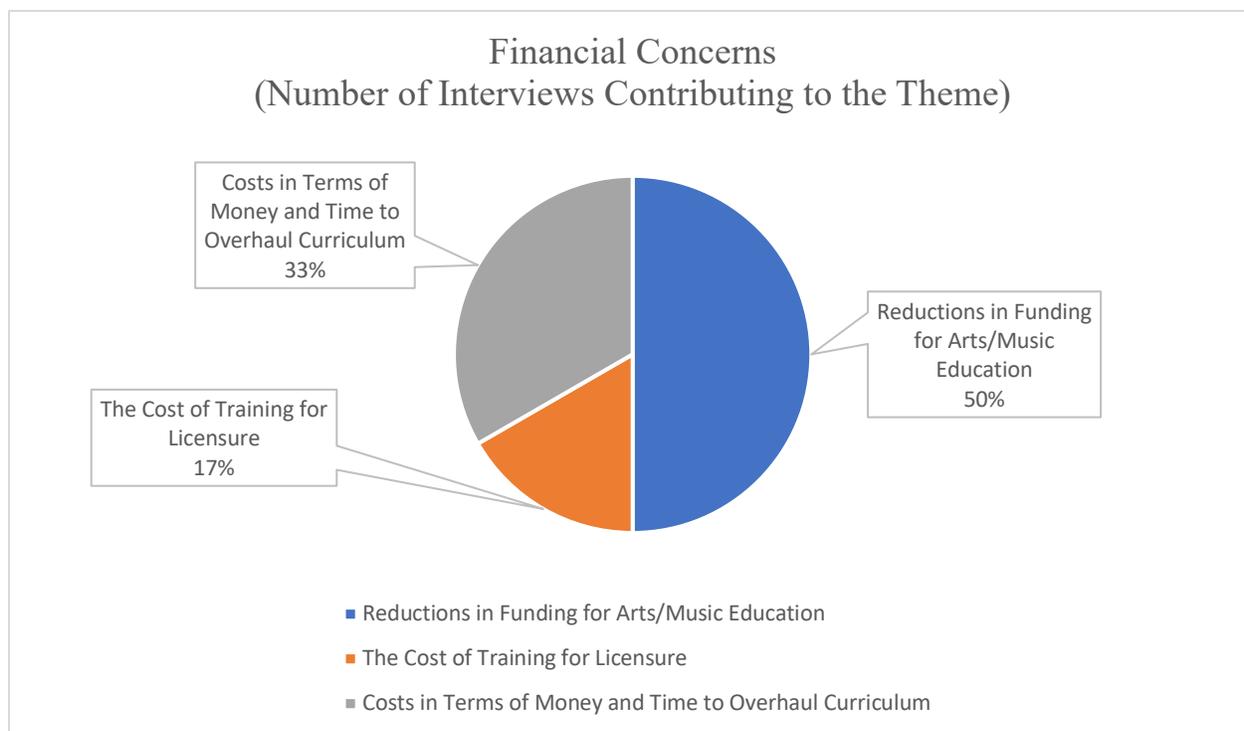


Figure 10. Financial Concerns

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Beyond these assertions, the interviewees called attention to correlations between financial stress and other noted impediments to vernacular music licensure, particularly marginalization. According to Cattaneo et al., “scholarship has documented the challenges that face college students of marginalized economic backgrounds”³⁴⁸ Clearly, financial concerns can impact pedagogical revision. They may also impede other components of K-12 vernacular music advocacy.

³⁴⁸ Lauren B. Cattaneo, Wing Yi Chan, Rachel Shor, Kris T Gebhard, and Nour H Elshabassi, “Elaborating the Connection,” 476.

Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies

Several interviews attributed deficits in K-12 vernacular music coursework to a general lack of understanding of bluegrass and roots music studies. In these assertions, interviewees often displayed cynicism or mistrust for educational administrators and an overall skepticism for their abilities. Thus, interview six speculated that “. . . looking at it as a state legislator, educational advisor or anything, they’re probably looking at it mostly as, ‘oh, this just a folk, hillbilly music, it’s not formal, you know, there’s not a lot of study went into it,’ so it’s kind of frowned upon.”³⁴⁹ Likewise, interview five attributed such shortcomings to “ignorance about [what] music reality is, and what it’s going to serve, because there’s only a certain amount of orchestras in the world that can afford to pay somebody what they want to be paid to play in an orchestra for a living, and then, other than that, you know, it’s being an entrepreneur.”³⁵⁰

In contrast to these notably one-sided assertions, interviewee two attributed some lack of understanding to stakeholders working within the discipline of bluegrass and roots music studies—individuals who are, in the view of interviewee two, to make their own case for pedagogical reform. Inasmuch, interviewee two declared that “. . . we [bluegrass and roots music educators] just need to remind people to like reconnect with the mission of public arts education, but I suspect that, you know, yeah, I just, I feel like a more clearly articulated, like, mission, and vision, and values, and goals related to music education would be useful.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Interviewee Six, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 6th, 2023.

³⁵⁰ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

³⁵¹ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

Various Arguments Against Bluegrass and Roots Music Licensing

Interviewees were generally supportive of propositions for K-12 vernacular music licensure and optimistic about the movement’s prospects for implementation. Some interviewees, however, also expressed misgivings about the initiative. Among these concerns, participants questioned whether bluegrass curricula could be broad enough to meet more extensive public education requirements. According to interviewee one, if educators were to state that “. . . we’re only going to do bluegrass, that . . . [would be] a red flag to people who design curriculum or approve curriculum.” The interviewee went on to add that “. . . music educators should have a broad knowledge of many types of music, and . . . share it with a broad range of students within a classroom” (see Figure 11).³⁵²

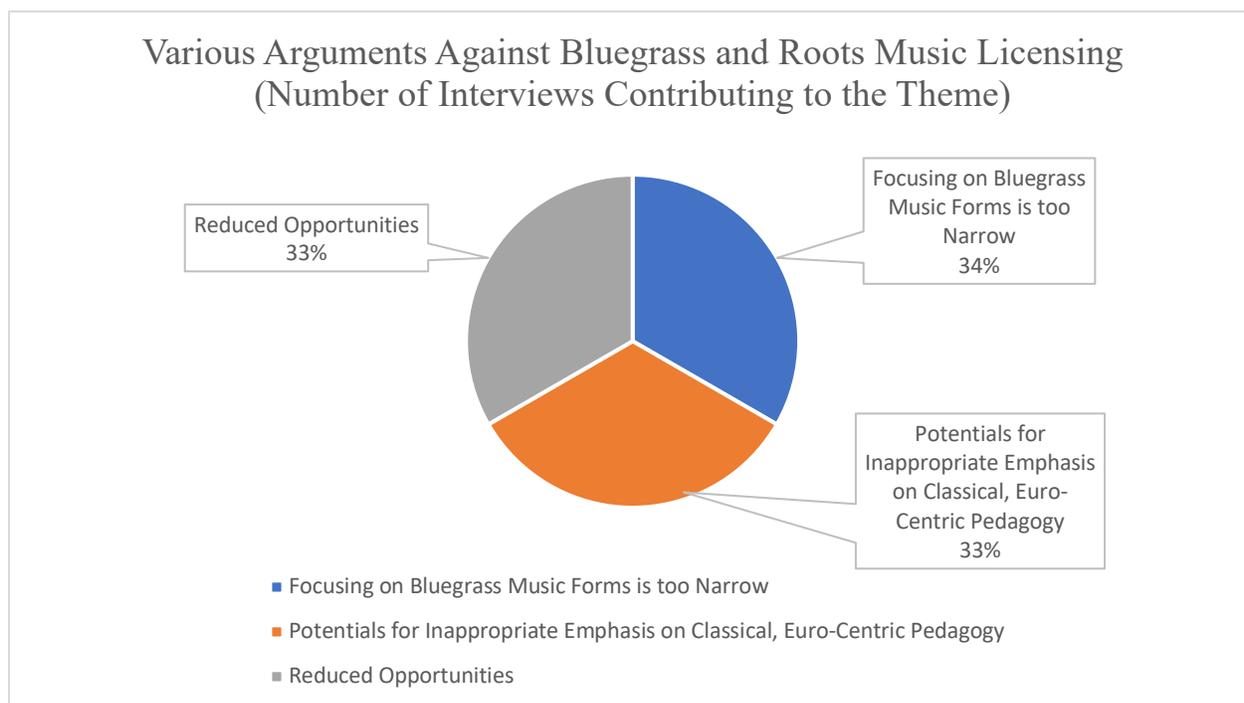


Figure 11. Arguments Against Bluegrass and Roots Music Licensing

Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

³⁵² Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

Another interviewee expressed concerns about the potentialities for vernacular music-based licensure revisions to propagate misaligned or misinformed pedagogical emphases—disproportionate musical standards favoring Euro-Centric classical approaches over vernacular traditions. As such, interviewee four cautioned that these processes could, in effect, reduce opportunities. In the words of this interviewee educator, “. . . if you’re not careful with the licensure process, it can close a lot of doors, and what the worst thing that could happen to us, Jeremy, is to end up with a bunch of people with a lot of paper and a lot of good intentions that know nothing about our music, and they got the job through the licensure process, or they got the job through the interview process”³⁵³

Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies

As with the previously examined interview themes, the analysis revealed an overlapping quality or an inter-relatability between K-12 vernacular music licensure impediment themes and corresponding higher education bluegrass and roots music impediments. Chief among the impediments facing the latter, interviewees cited a lack of understanding of bluegrass and roots music studies and pedagogy, requirements from accrediting organizations, deficits in resources and funding, and a deficit in educational precedents for formal bluegrass and roots music studies (see Figure 12).

³⁵³ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

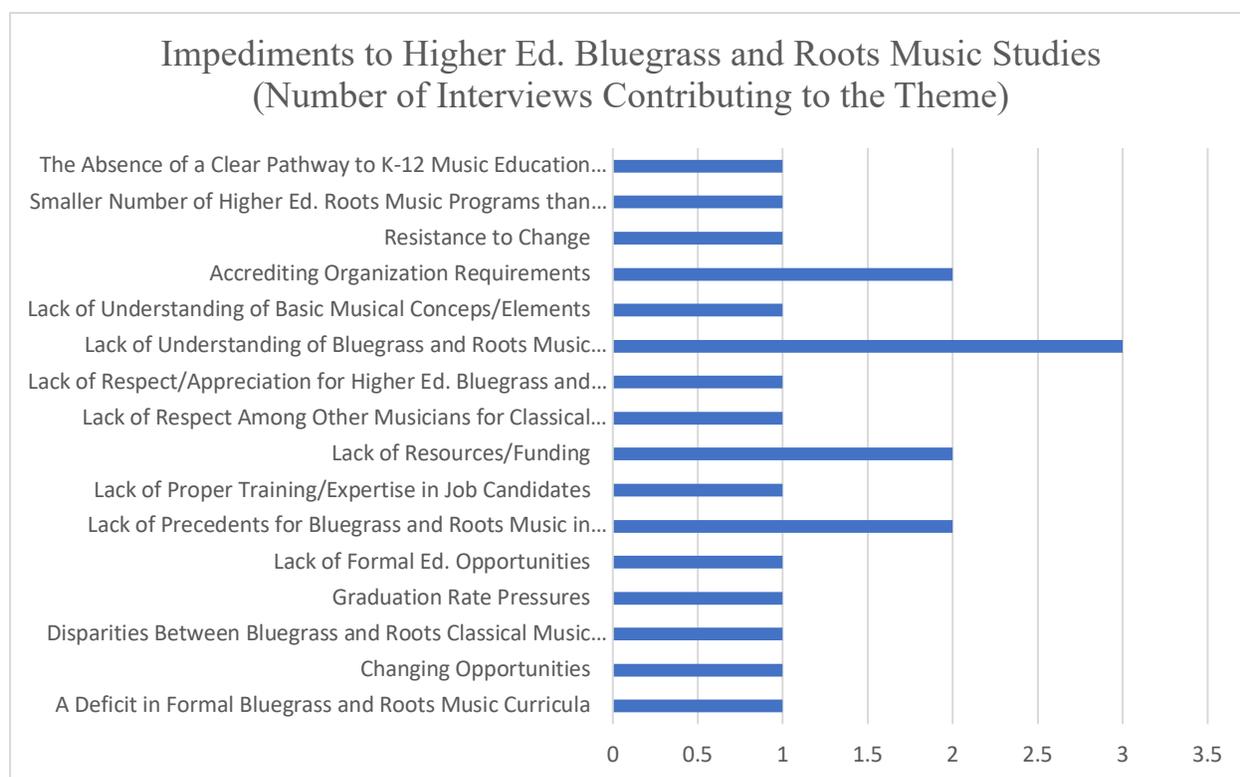


Figure 12. Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

In their most prominent assertions, the interviewees gave credence to the concept of understanding. Thus, approximately thirty-three percent of the interviewees referred to deficits in understanding bluegrass and roots music studies pedagogy in the framework of higher education bluegrass and roots music impediments. Significantly, one interview also referred to a deficit in stakeholders' understanding of basic musical concepts and elements as an impediment to higher education bluegrass and roots music studies.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

Multidimensional Impediments: A Comparative Analysis

This researcher revealed several correlations between the “Impediments to K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and Licensure” and “Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies” categories of interviewee assertions. Beyond their noted emphases on varying contexts of understanding, these interviewees referred to deficits in respect and stereotyping aimed at formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals. They also implied that these shortcomings are neither one-sided nor are they one-dimensional. In light of such concerns, interviewee six posited that “. . . it still seems like folk music, just in general, and any sort of folk music is often looked at as lesser,” and “it doesn’t have a place in formal education.”³⁵⁵ Interviewee nine seemed to offer further support to this premise, suggesting that “contexts where . . . those musicians [college-level bluegrass and roots music students and educators] are, perhaps, not thought of as being as knowledgeable as someone who was . . . [a] classical violin major.”³⁵⁶

Additionally, illustrating the multidimensionality of interview themes, some interviewees highlighted stereotypical views within the bluegrass and roots music community. Of the phenomenon, interviewee nine declared that “. . . I still run into musicians who talk about how they only read music . . . enough so that it doesn’t hurt their playing or something, you know, things like that.”³⁵⁷ They proceeded to speculate that “. . . I think there’s still kind of even a stigma among those musicians that if you’re too smart or something, you know, you’re not gonna have the authentic street cred[entials] to play . . . or something kind of silly like that.”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Interviewee Six, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 6th, 2023.

³⁵⁶ Interviewee Nine, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 27th, 2023.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

On a similar note, interview two attested to skepticism among vernacular musicians and a lack of appreciation for formalized educational processes. Significantly, the interviewee also cautioned that “the institutionalization of traditional music . . . can also contribute to this sense of less respect or disrespect or skepticism about how we take the traditional music that’s really rooted in an oral tradition and, like, what it means to have that exist”³⁵⁹

Beyond these considerations, interviewees highlighted the unequal distribution of music education resources and opportunities, entrenched Euro-Centric pedagogical precedents, resistance to change among educational stakeholders, deficits in formal bluegrass music curricula, and tendencies to marginalize bluegrass and roots music stakeholders due to their relatively small population. They also cited a deficit of licensure pathways as a clear impediment to K-12 and college-level bluegrass and roots music studies—an additional indicator of the multidimensionality and a reminder that ramifications from these factors do extend beyond the confines of K-12 music education.

The Future

Considerable evidence was uncovered during this research project supporting the need for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to be included in state-level music licensure opportunities. To substantiate and expound upon this data, the researcher collected and collated the impressions, experiences, and recommendations of nine educators experienced in college-level bluegrass or roots music studies. These testimonials generally showcased support and optimism for vernacular music studies’ increasingly diverse and inclusive potentialities. There were also instances when the interviewees hinted at the inevitability of such opportunities.

³⁵⁹ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

In the words of interviewee four, “I just don’t think there’s a lot of opposition to it.”³⁶⁰ The interviewee also asked, “what could be wrong with it if everybody gets together and agrees on what the licensure process is.”³⁶¹ In further support of this premise, interviewee three declared,

Yeah, I mean, I think this is kind of inevitable in the music that we play, and I think the reason why is because we have a few programs that are successful at training musicians in this music, and we also have communities that are becoming more interested in exactly what you’re talking about and tapping into the music that’s sort of embedded in the culture of the regions where they live, and so I think that there are going to be more and more people that want to do this kind of thing³⁶²

Alternatively, some participants expressed reluctance or caution in their predictions concerning K-12 vernacular licensing. As such, interviewee two speculated that,

I feel like it’s more in the distant future than the near future when I think about the changes that need to take place to improve public education in general, and then, by the time we get to like developing a more nuanced understanding of music education in our schools, it just feels like there’s a long way to go to building understanding about the impact that music has on our young people, . . . to developing a greater sense of importance for that within our legislative bodies and the people that control what education can be, that control funding right and that control decision making around who gets to deliver education and what kind of education they get to deliver.³⁶³

Jazz Education: A Precedence for Reform

Educational stakeholders frequently recognize the proliferation of higher education jazz studies as a model for pedagogical innovation and revision. Approximately thirty-three percent of the interviewees recognized correlations between this phenomenon and the proliferation of bluegrass and roots music studies. In the words of interviewee eight, “jazz and blues and other

³⁶⁰ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

³⁶³ Ibid.

styles of music have kind of gone through this same process that we're going through."³⁶⁴

Likewise, interviewee nine posited that,

If you just look at history, you know, you can see that more and more programs are being developed at more and more institutions, and so, eventually, I think it [bluegrass and roots music studies] will be, in some form or another, woven into the fabric of, you know, of institutional music curriculum, . . . at the post-secondary level, in a similar way that jazz programs, you know, a half-century ago, were starting to be developed in institutions and, to the point where it's an expected part of the curriculum and in most places, and a musician who comes out of a jazz program is not considered any less competent to be a music educator than . . . someone who studied classical music . . .³⁶⁵

Licensure Alternatives

It is interesting to note that interviewees did not generally advocate for alternative licensure initiatives. However, they did, in certain instances, reference alternative approaches for sharing bluegrass and roots music with K-12 students. Regarding this objective, interviewee one stated, "so I don't know that bluegrass/old-time/roots music can stand on its own unless it's as an extracurricular thing, but it absolutely should be included as part of the broader musical experience, along with other styles of folk music, particularly when you talk about regions."³⁶⁶ The interviewee also called attention to the "bluegrass clubs in high schools and things like that," proposing that "that's an easy way for that to happen."³⁶⁷

Compared to the assertions above, interviewee five shared a more radical assessment of the dilemma, implying that bluegrass and roots music studies may need to distance themselves from formal educational settings. In support of this premise, interviewee five offered the

³⁶⁴ Interviewee Eight, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 22nd, 2023.

³⁶⁵ Interviewee Nine, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 27th, 2023.

³⁶⁶ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

following commentary: “so, you know, sometimes Jeremy, I wonder if it’s just not to be fit into a formal education setting anymore [or] if it just needs to be community organized and led everywhere because the state has no idea and they just, it’s just too much, too big.”³⁶⁸

Summary

In this research stage, interviewees reaffirmed previously identified themes while delivering new thematic assertions to the discussion. They attested to impediments to this study’s phenomenological focus, including financial concerns, a lack of understanding of bluegrass and roots music studies, the lack of a clear licensure pathway for bluegrass and roots music, stereotyping, and lack of respect for bluegrass and roots music professionals. Beyond these emphases, interviewees spoke of the various contexts of understanding or a lack thereof.

Interviewees also speculated as to the benefits of K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure. Among these phenomena, they stressed the prospects for these initiatives to prepare students for college-level bluegrass and roots music coursework. Interviewees also emphasized propensities for K-12 vernacular music studies to promote regional awareness and appreciation, and they highlighted the movements’ practicality, accessibility, and feasibility for smaller schools. Significantly, the interviewees predicted that these benefits would be extensive, impacting the bluegrass music community and society as a whole.

Beyond the factors mentioned above, interviewees offered numerous predictions concerning this study’s phenomenological focus. They generally greeted the proposition of K-12 vernacular music education licensure with optimism and support. Inasmuch, this study found that approximately sixty-seven percent of interviewees viewed K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure as a distinct possibility. At the same time, approximately twenty-two were convinced

³⁶⁸ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

that the proposition would be realized. Also, an additional interviewee, interviewee five, could not speculate about the likelihood of the occurrence.³⁶⁹

As indicators of changes to come, interviewees also highlighted the pedagogical precedents established by the jazz studies and bluegrass and roots music programs in higher education. Significantly, they did not directly criticize the institutionalized evolution of jazz music, but they did stress the importance of pedagogical practices that are specific to the culture and authentic. In the words of interviewee one, “. . . I think that the pedagogy has to reflect the reality of the way the music is inherently transmitted.”³⁷⁰

The interviewees also exposed another critical impediment to K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure in their discussions concerning accreditation requirements. Approximately twenty-two percent of the interviewees recognized accrediting organization requirements as impediments to higher education bluegrass and roots music initiatives. In light of these findings, it would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that, in denying university bluegrass and roots music programs accrediting opportunities, accreditation organizations are also, in effect, diminishing the likelihood of similar K-12 initiatives.

Finally, a definitive analysis of interview themes revealed the viability and usability of most interviewees’ assertions. On the other hand, there were also instances when one assertion appeared to contradict another from the same interviewee. These occurrences were rare, and, to a degree, they were expected—as reflections of the natural flow of data. In a similar process to vernacular music sharing, interviewees were prone to deliver their information in impromptu stories—an approach that yielded remarkably detailed and authentic information. When collated,

³⁶⁹ Interviewee Five, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 3rd, 2023.

³⁷⁰ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

this data painted a portrait of educational landscapes flawed by established miss-assertions but notably fertile for inclusive pedagogical revisions likely to materialize.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Summary of Study

More than three decades after the Housewright Declaration proposed that “all music has a place in the curriculum,” it appears that educators are finally on the precipice of a pedagogical revolution rooted in cultural relevancy.³⁷¹ Per literature review and interview-based research, this study sought to identify the culprits and, at the same time, discover a clearly defined solution to the phenomenological focus of this study: the exclusion of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from K-12 music education licensure opportunities afforded to their classically trained counterparts. Significantly, within these efforts, a smoking gun solution was not discovered. Rather, a variety of factors were recognized—precedents, impediments, and potential benefits—as supports or impediments to the realization of K-12 vernacular music licensure.

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

Per an extensive literature review, the researcher sought to uncover comparable studies relating to bluegrass or roots music licensure. No relevant examples were discovered—a testament to the unique merits of this project. On the other hand, the literature review revealed numerous factors—educational precedents, impediments, and perceived benefits relating to this study’s phenomenological focus: the exclusion of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals from state-level K-12 music education licensure opportunities afforded to individuals trained in Euro-Centric traditions.

³⁷¹ Michael L. Mark and Patrice Madura, *Contemporary Music Education, Fourth Edition* (Boston: Schirmer, 2014): 34, 40.

The literature review highlighted numerous philosophical and sociological justifications for licensure reform, including praxial learning philosophy, cultural relevancy, inclusivity demands, and classism or Euro-Centric biases pervading the modern educational landscape. Significantly, Elliott and Regelski recognized praxial learning approaches as an impetus for further inclusivity. In effect, both philosophers advocated for a music-for-all approach.^{372 373} According to Regelski, “. . . its [music’s] value is not its inaccessibility to all but a ‘cultivated’ few, it is seen in the many forms by which music praxis is readily accessible to all people”³⁷⁴ It is also important to note that praxial learning philosophies are not merely conducive to universal access. They are also concerned with propositions of universal relevancy and usefulness. Thus, the praxial music educator is tasked with the delivery of coursework mirroring real-life experiences. In the words of Elliott, “. . . music listening ought to be taught and learned in classroom situations that music teachers deliberately designed to approximate actual musical experiences.”³⁷⁵

Beyond the justifications mentioned above, the literature review revealed numerous impediments to the process. This study highlighted the writings of Templeton, Bates, and Cattaneo et al. in an examination of educational precedents favoring Euro-Centric approaches, pedagogical biases, classism, and the marginalization of related demographics. In part, the researcher attributes the phenomenological focus of this study to these impediments. These

³⁷² David James Elliott, *Music Matters*, 32.

³⁷³ Thomas A. Regelski, *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education*, 6-7.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁷⁵ David James Elliott, *Music Matters*, 101-102.

discussions were further augmented with the inclusion of Thomas and Enders' case study of bluegrass musicians—a notable example of bias in an academic setting.³⁷⁶

The above impediments provide further context to this study's phenomenological focus. They remind stakeholders that deep-seated pedagogical and sociological biases can impact policy. On the other hand, there are also sociological movements in place that facilitate progress. Scholars have cited cultural relevancy's important role and merits among these initiatives. In recognition of this topic, the literature review highlighted scholarly writings by Ray and Sarath, Myers, and Campbell. These authors advocated for cultural relevancy, implying that promoting and adopting culturally relevant curricula is an educator's responsibility.^{377 378} Additionally, Sarath et al. stressed promoting creativity in music education as a correlative process to cultural relevancy, declaring "when contact with diverse cultures informs and is informed by the emergent creative voice, it can open students to deep celebration and embrace."³⁷⁹

Beyond these observations, stakeholders may recognize the proliferation of jazz studies and the emergence of bluegrass and roots music in higher education as indicators of progress—symbolic precedents ushering in a new era of pedagogical inclusivity and cultural relevance. Examining the writings of Riley, Krikun, Luty, Spencer, Tanner, and Marquis, the researcher was able to identify several correlations between the earlier jazz-based initiatives and the recent explosion of higher education bluegrass and roots music programs, a pattern recognized by Riley in her thesis case study of university old-time music programs.³⁸⁰ Among the numerous

³⁷⁶ Jeannie B. Thomas and Doug Enders, "Bluegrass and 'White Trash,'" 24, 25, 28, 34, 38-39, 41.

³⁷⁷ Sarah M. Ray, "Teaching Case—Applications of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," 68.

³⁷⁸ E. Sarath, D. Myers, and P. Campbell, *Redefining Music Studies*, ix-x, 60, 63.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁸⁰ Holly Bugg Riley, "Community in the Academy," 9.

correlations between these higher education movements, jazz studies stakeholders, like bluegrass or related roots music students, have sometimes been marginalized.³⁸¹ For example, Tanner noted a lack of administrative support for jazz music in the discipline's formative years.³⁸² Significantly, interviewee one shared a similar story concerning the origins of an established college-level bluegrass and roots music program:

[The program's progenitor] . . . used to say something, of course, . . . [the program's progenitor's] a little bit of a cynic, . . . would say, you know, 'there were people who were supportive of our program, but weren't particularly helpful through years,' and, you know, it's one thing to be supportive and say 'we want you to do what you're doing,' and it's another thing to send resources your way.³⁸³

Additionally, in these noted correlations between higher education bluegrass and jazz studies, the study also revealed messages of caution. As such, Marquis identified a tendency for the latter initiative to conform to its environment.³⁸⁴ This tendency contradicts the preferences and convictions of bluegrass and roots musicians. In the words of interviewee one, a noted bluegrass and roots music educator, "what I'm saying is the pedagogy needs to match the methodology of that community, of that tradition."³⁸⁵

The literature review also highlighted the writings by Elpus, May et al., Koziel, and Prichard, who offered valuable insight into issues associated with traditional educational licensure. These authors attested to various disparities in the system and a lack of consistency

³⁸¹ Gabriel Solis, "Ethnomusicology Scholarship and Teaching," Abstract.

³⁸² Paul Tanner, "Jazz Goes to College: Part I," *Music Educators Journal* 57, no. 7 (Mar., 1971): 113, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3393808>.

³⁸³ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

³⁸⁴ Alice Goldfarb Marquis, "Forum: Jazz Goes to College," 121.

³⁸⁵ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

between states.^{386 387 388} May et al., Koziel, and Prichard also recognized a trend toward increased assessment in processes leading to educational licensure.^{389 390 391} On the other hand, Prichard provided a cautionary analysis, positing that overassessment may also serve as a detriment to licensure proceedings.³⁹²

The proposition of alternative licensure was also considered during the literature review process. Hellman et al., Duncan, Berry, and Henry offered important insights about this burgeoning movement in teacher education, including the realization that these practices are becoming increasingly commonplace in certain educational environments.³⁹³ On the other hand, these opportunities were also unequal and inequitable in scope, quality, and nature. Among the many shortcomings of alternative licensure approaches, educators have highlighted the inherent fallacy of suggestions that content knowledge or even content mastery is equivalent to

³⁸⁶ Kenneth Elpus, "Music Teacher Licensure Candidates," 315.

³⁸⁷ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, "An Analysis of State Music Education Certification," 65.

³⁸⁸ Stephanie Prichard, "A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices," 103.

³⁸⁹ Brittany Nixon May, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson, "An Analysis of State Music Education Certification," 68.

³⁹⁰ Ellen B. Koziel, "Are We Lovin' It?" 1.

³⁹¹ Stephanie Prichard, "A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices," 99.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁹³ Daniel S Hellman, Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani, "A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure," 79.

pedagogical prowess.^{394 395} Additionally, scholars have identified noted disparities and an overall lack of consistency in these initiatives, particularly regarding their depth and quality.^{396 397}

Literature Review and Interview Comparisons

The literature review uncovered numerous themes relating to the phenomenological focus of this study, including Euro-Centric pedagogical biases, classism, and the marginalization of related demographics. Upon completing this project phase, the researcher conducted a series of interviews. Nine highly qualified educators were enlisted with experiences in higher education bluegrass or roots music studies. Beyond these qualifications, these interviewees showcased considerable diversity of thought. However, these disparities were unsurprising given that their educational appointments were also divided amongst four higher education institutions in three states.

Per interview findings, additional themes were brought into the discussions. Interviewees highlighted the importance of understanding, exposure, credibility, legitimacy, accreditation, and advocacy in pursuing K-12 vernacular music licensure. They also attested to the impact of established traditions and the reluctance of stakeholders to change—phenomena this study characterizes as the power of precedence.

³⁹⁴ Daniel S Hellman, Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani, “A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure,” 84.

³⁹⁵ Barnett Berry, “No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers,” 33.

³⁹⁶ Arne Duncan, “TEACHER PREPARATION,” 16.

³⁹⁷ Barnett Berry, “No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers,” 34.

The Power of Precedence

Within this study, educational precedents, especially those precedents associated with Euro-Centricity, have continually resurfaced as a theme of interest. These themes were recognized on multiple occasions during the literature review process, leading to the identification of a reoccurring pedagogical cycle—a seemingly unbreachable pattern of self-perpetuation amongst music educators. Following this pattern, educators emphasize Euro-Centric pedagogical preferences over other available options. They also promote the ideals of the past in lieu of more inclusive, culturally relevant pedagogical models. Good-Perkins recognized a similar “Eurocentric paradigm” as an educational “status quo” dominating educational landscapes.³⁹⁸ Significantly, these premises were reaffirmed during this study’s interview phase.

Interviewees frequently acknowledged the role of historical and precedents in crafting educational procedures. To this end, approximately thirty-three percent of the interviewees referenced traditions and precedents as impactors of K-12 and college-level pedagogy (see Figure 13).

³⁹⁸ Emily Good-Perkins, “Culturally Sustaining Education and Epistemic Travel,” 49.

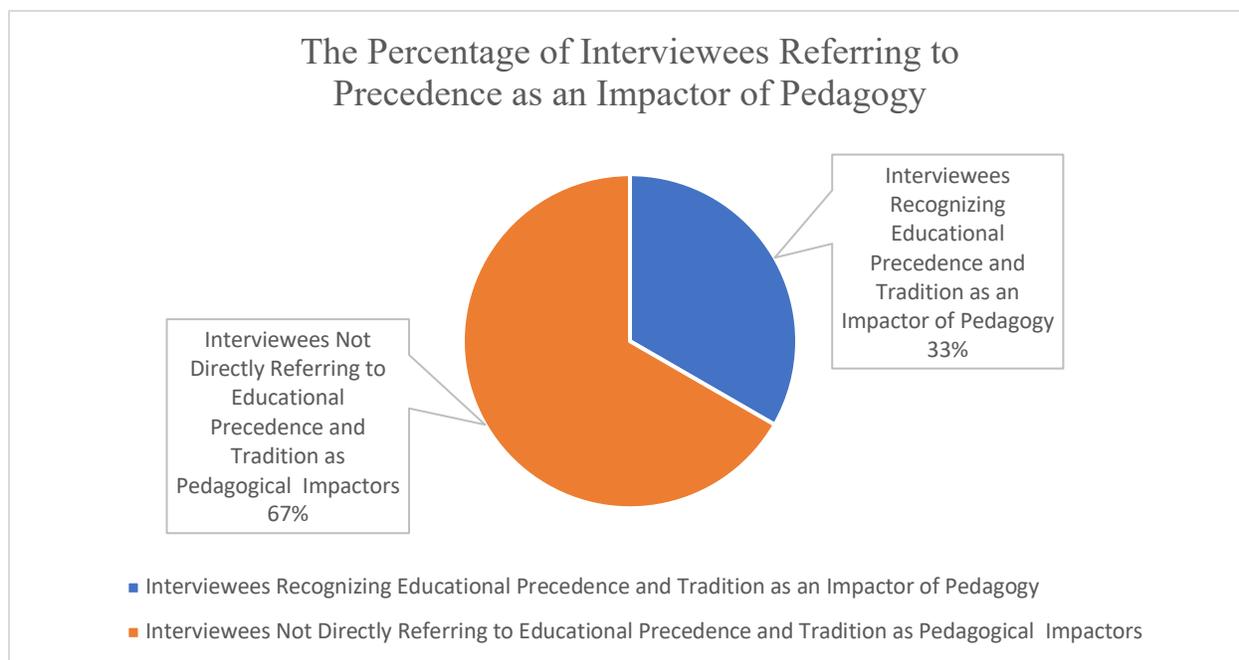


Figure 13: The percentage of interviewees referring to precedence as an impactor of pedagogy
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

In this light, interviewee four attributed the deficit in K-12 bluegrass and roots music coursework to “the sheer age of the education that’s been offered over the years” compared to “bluegrass being born basically in 1946.”³⁹⁹ Likewise, interviewee two attested to disparities between vernacular music in higher education and more established classical traditions in the following statement:

We just don’t have that narrative as dominant, historically speaking, in the public, like in public understanding, so because of that, I would say there’s far less understanding, and therefore, maybe also sometimes less respect for bluegrass old-time and roots music as a professional endeavor than classical music musicians receive, but I think that depends, like, it depends on the audience, right?⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

⁴⁰⁰ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

Euro-Centric Biases, Classism, and Marginalization

As previously discussed, some individuals attribute deficiencies in music education, particularly exclusionary tendencies, to Euro-Centric biases, classism, and marginalist tendencies. These factors were highlighted in the literature review phase of this project and expounded upon during interviews. As a reflection of these phenomena, the study directed readers' attention to the writings of Stimeling and Enriquez, who cited pedagogical patterns leading to the "colonization" and "marginalization" of related demographics.⁴⁰¹

Interviewees further attested to the existence and prevalence of the above-listed impediments, and they also provided valuable insight concerning the origins and potential remedies for such issues. Among their responses, the interviewees referenced wide-ranging educational disparities and inequities. According to interviewee three,

. . . [bluegrass or roots music] educators, you know, they have to work a lot harder to create opportunities, I think, that are kind of more accessible to classical music educators, and that really kind of centers around . . . the public-school operation, and how teacher licensure works around that, and . . . I think there's opportunities there, but right now . . . it's definitely not equal.⁴⁰²

Additionally, interviewee two referred to "pre-existing stereotypes and assumptions about what public arts education means and what it should look like," as "a real limiting factor."⁴⁰³

Exposure is Critical

The interviews revealed various benefits associated with musical exposure. They also considered these benefits in multiple frameworks or contexts, as in the previously examined

⁴⁰¹ Travis D. Stimeling, and Sophia M. Enriquez, "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS," 62-63.

⁴⁰² Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

⁴⁰³ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

themes. As an example, interviewee two recognized K-12 vernacular music exposure as a noted benefit to the bluegrass community. They posited that “. . . it would benefit the bluegrass community because it would bring greater visibility to the music, and with more young people, and that, by extension, their families and their communities, their school communities.”⁴⁰⁴ On the other hand, there are also multiple ramifications to the interviewee’s assertion. According to the interviewee, the bluegrass community benefits from related styles disseminated through the youth to their families and surrounding communities—a mutually beneficial proposition relating to artistic growth and community enrichment.

On an alternative note, interviewees also recognized K-12 vernacular music exposure as a benefit to college-level bluegrass and roots studies. In the words of interviewee two,

I think that if more students . . . in general were exposed to information and experience related to bluegrass and roots music, that our program [an established bluegrass, old-time, and roots-based college program] would have even greater relevance to the broader community, and would probably benefit from, like that word respect that you brought up earlier, right, that . . . people would understand what it is and why it matters a little bit better.⁴⁰⁵

Likewise, interviewee eight posited that when a “. . . public school . . . has a roots program or a bluegrass program, as a core, as their music class, . . . and then there are the successes and, you know, people know about it, . . . I think others will follow.”⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, interview six attributed great significance to the spectacle of public exposure and recognition of student accomplishment by recommending that “ETSU students [should be dispatched] to the floor of

⁴⁰⁴ Interviewee Two, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 17th, 2023.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Interviewee Eight, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 22nd, 2023.

the house down in Nashville to perform for the legislators” to promote vernacular music licensing.⁴⁰⁷

Understanding is Critical

This study revealed several correlations in interviewees’ thematic contributions. In this analytical process, however, one theme seemed to tower over all others in frequency and emphasis: understanding, or a lack thereof. In many instances, interviewees framed understanding as a benefit of inclusivity, specifically the inclusion of vernacular music in K-12 coursework. From an alternative perspective, the interviewees also characterized a lack of understanding as a detriment to inclusive pedagogy and equity.

The researcher identified and coded the themes relating to understanding in multiple contexts (see Figure 14).

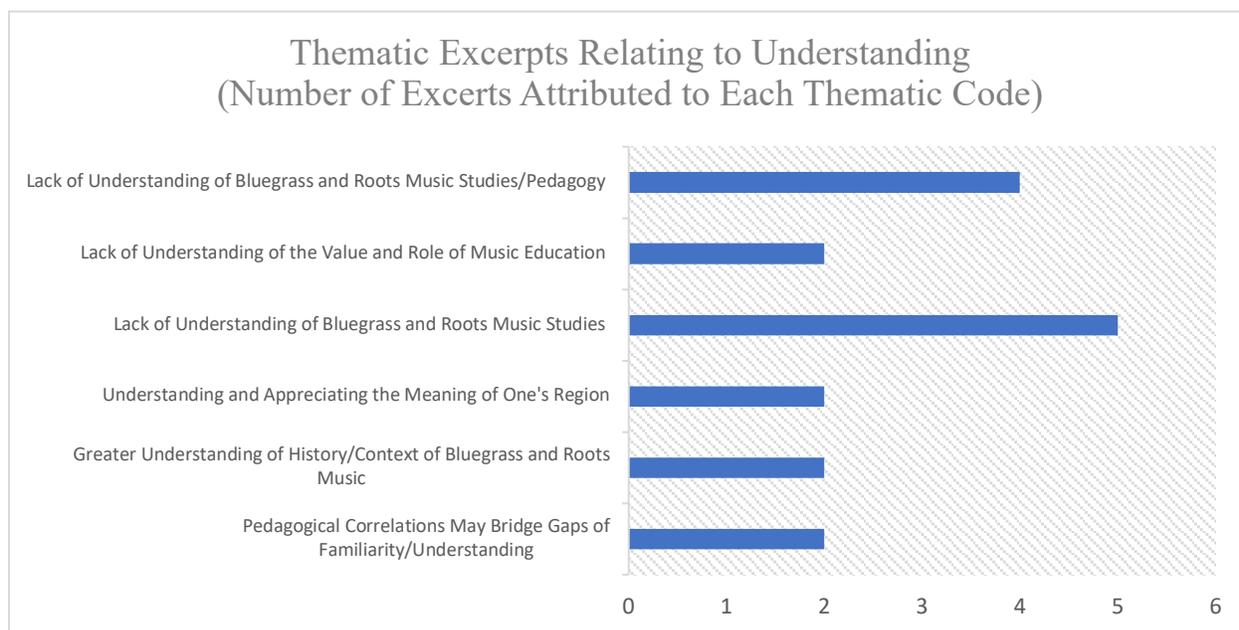


Figure 14: Thematic excerpts relating to understanding
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

⁴⁰⁷ Interviewee Six, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 6th, 2023.

In this process, 17 excerpts were identified, constituting approximately six percent of the study's coded excerpts. These assertions were also assigned to one of the following themes: Pedagogical Correlations May Bridge Gaps of Familiarity/Understanding, Greater Understanding of the History/Context of Bluegrass and Roots Music, Understanding and Appreciating the Meaning of One's Region, Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies, Lack of Understanding of the Value and Role of Music Education, and Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies/Pedagogy. As a result of this analytical approach, this study determined that approximately seventy-eight percent of the interviewees recognized "understanding" deficiencies as impediments to K-12 or college-level vernacular music studies (see Figure 15).

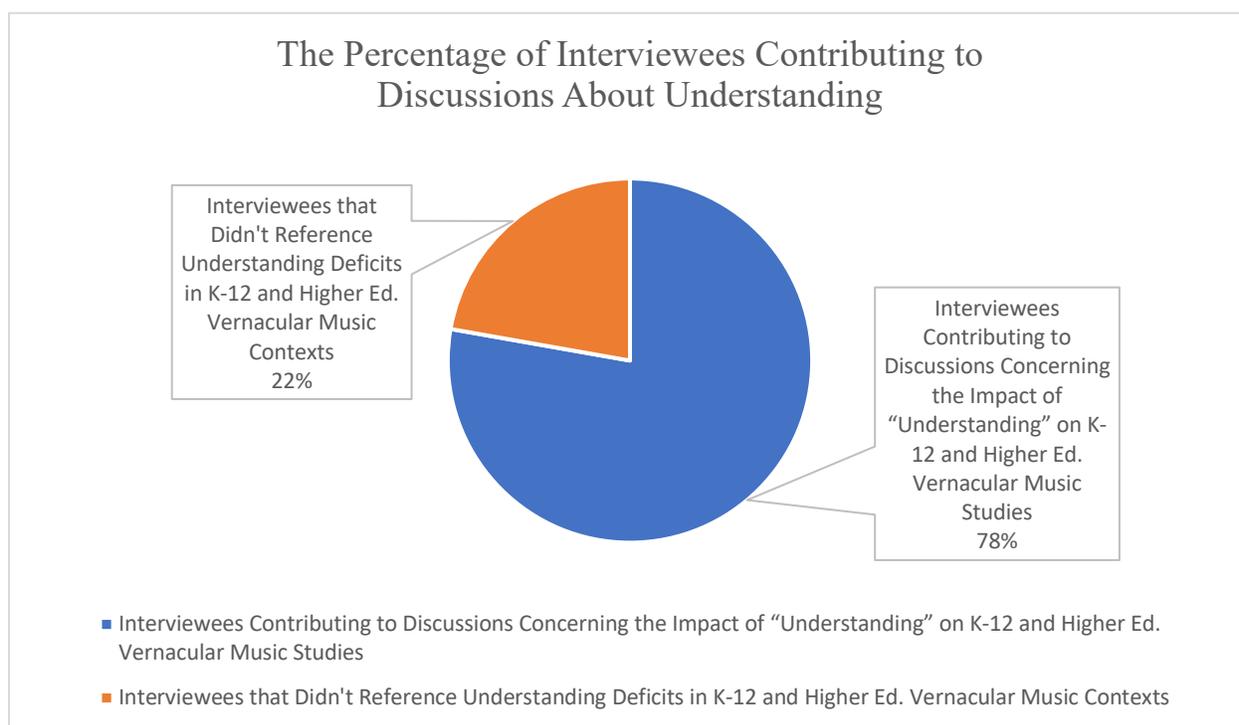


Figure 15. The percentage of interviewees contributing to discussions about understanding
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Legitimacy and Credibility are Critical

This study delivers evidence substantiating that formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals are sometimes subject to pedagogical biases and a general lack of respect. Among the many consequences of these issues, these professional musicians are denied access to opportunities afforded to other formally trained musicians, particularly musicians trained in Euro-Centric classical approaches. The project focuses on the numerous factors that contribute to this dilemma.

To optimize these efforts, educational stakeholders must establish credibility and legitimacy. Significantly, while several interviewees failed to call attention to legitimacy and credibility concerns, approximately thirty-three percent did stress these important qualities (see Figure 16).

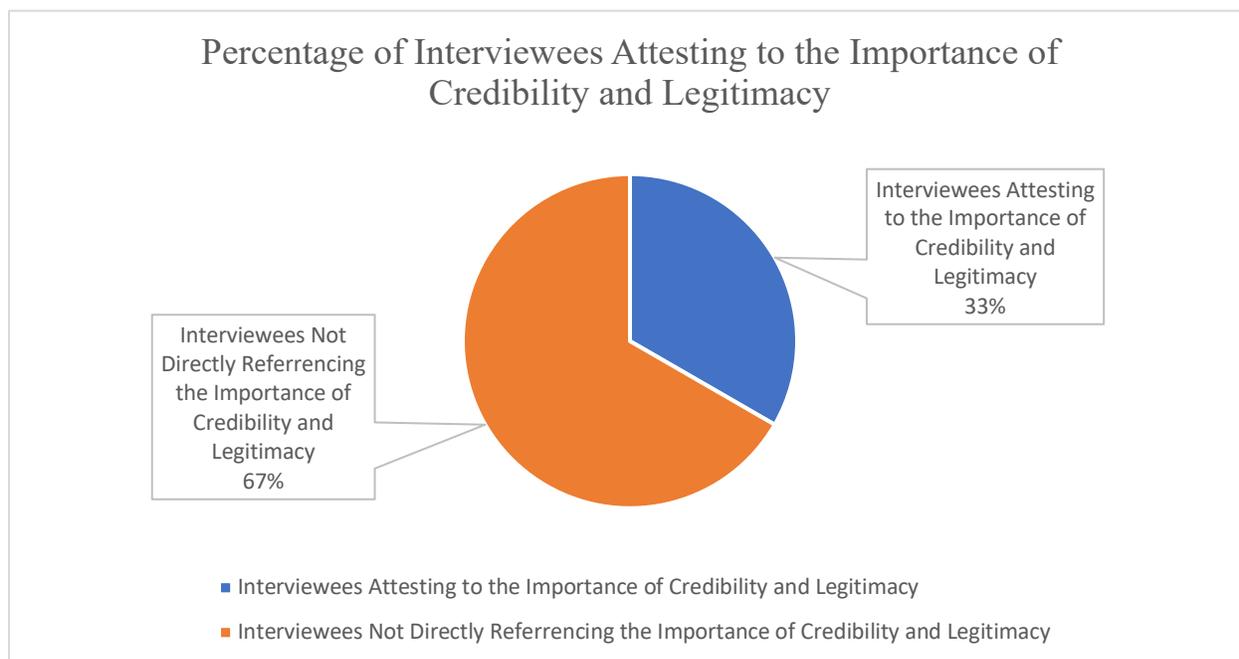


Figure 16. Percentage of interviewees attesting to the importance of credibility and legitimacy
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

In this light, interviewee one suggested that formal K-12 licensure options could extend “legitimacy” to the pursuits of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals.⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, interviewee seven speculated that K-12 vernacular music licensure “would suggest legitimacy and competency,”⁴⁰⁹ and interviewee four asserted that “any way that we can be recognized professionally is a benefit.”⁴¹⁰

The above observations speak to the importance of credibility and legitimacy in educational advocacy efforts. Fewer interview participants voiced their input regarding these issues. Nonetheless, the researcher attests to the merits of these qualities and proposes that a diminished response rate does not necessarily diminish the potency of such assertions. On the contrary, these attributes are of the utmost importance to educational planning, particularly advocacy, and they are inherently linked to other critical factors: acceptance and exposure (see Figure 17).

⁴⁰⁸ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

⁴⁰⁹ Interviewee Seven, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 16th, 2023.

⁴¹⁰ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

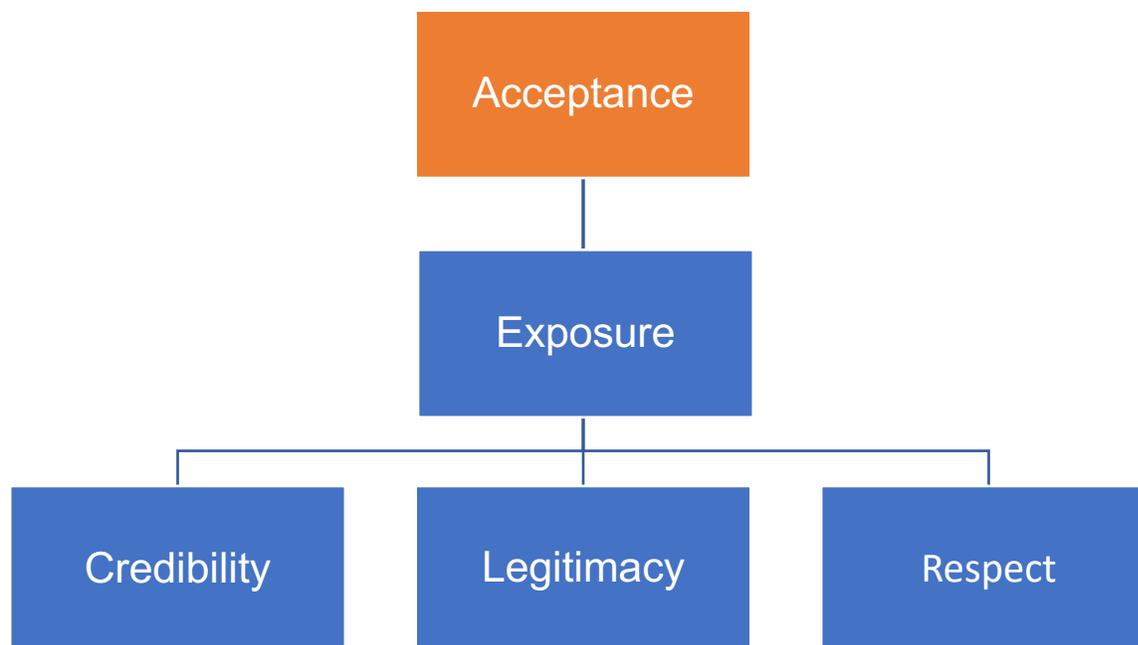


Figure 17. A Projected Cycle for the Adoption of State-Level Vernacular Music Licensure
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Accreditation May be Useful

Of all factors reflecting credibility and legitimacy, perhaps none are more potent or elusive, in the case of higher education bluegrass and roots music studies, than accreditation. Approximately twenty-two percent of interviewees emphasized the relationship between accreditation and this study’s phenomenological focus. At the forefront of accreditation objectives, NASM (the National Association of Schools of Music) exerts considerable influence on its member institutions and the industry. According to their handbook, “the National Association of Schools of Music has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as the agency responsible for the accreditation throughout the United States of free-standing institutions

that offer music-related programs (both degree-and non-degree-granting), including those offered via distance education.”⁴¹¹

NASM Policy: Ambiguity in Action

This study identified numerous examples of subjective or vague wordings within NASM’s declarations. In their recent handbook, the organization included such phrases as “appropriateness of the institution’s objectives,” “fulfilled to appropriate means,” “designed to allow considerable variation within broad principles applicable to degree programs,” “at a level sufficient to undertake basic musicianship studies,” and “must acquire a rudimentary capacity to create original or derivative music.”⁴¹² Given the phrasings’ ambiguous nature and general malleability, individuals may assume they were selected for their latitude and openness to interpretation. If so, the researcher does not question or dispute the merits of such approaches. On the other hand, the results of such practices do speak for themselves.

Per these practices, it is also apparent that NASM has denied institutional accreditation. They also seem to justify such decisions with subjective interpretations of decidedly ambiguous guidelines—assertions that appear to be rooted in Euro-Centric pedagogical bias. As Olson pointed out in his dissertation case study of universities offering bluegrass-related coursework, NASM may categorically deny accreditation to an educational institution for refusing to assimilate to Euro-Centric models. According to Olson, in the case of CSU (a pseudo-name), “the administrators at NASM seem[ed] to use language . . . to emphasize and articulate difference, to reinforce a deep ideology.”⁴¹³ Given these observations, tempered with the

⁴¹¹ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK,” 2022-23,” 1.

⁴¹² Ibid., 27, 29, 92, 105.

⁴¹³ Nathaniel Jay Olson, “The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education,” 283-287.

researcher's experiences in the field, it does appear that NASM's single-minded devotion to Euro-Centricity has continued to act as a dividing line between viable university music programs.

NASM Policy: Unintended Inequity

When assessed through diversity and equitable learning lenses, vernacular music stakeholders may find NASM policies troubling. In their noted efforts to allow for creative interpretation and flexibility, it appears that NASM has become decidedly inflexible. In desiring to inspire inclusivity, NASM offers exclusionary admittance guidelines. Ironically, these fallacies may be attributed to ambiguously worded organizational policies and the resultant interpretive latitude they facilitate. Intentional or not, the guidelines deliver broad interpretative freedom to a finite group of administrators or auditors—individuals who have, by virtue of their admittance, come to accept NASM's organizational preferences and objectives.

These approaches are, of course, counter to the optimal progression of music education. Like a never-ending Möbius loop, pedagogical traditions and preferences are interlocked into a Euro-Centric pattern—a seemingly endless cycle that can neither be broken nor fulfilled. A noted example of this phenomenon, NASM has asserted that accreditation processes should be peer-governed rather than functioning as a set of “rules and regulations.”⁴¹⁴ Given this claim, individuals may also wonder how educational institutions featuring bluegrass or roots music programs can be governed by commensurate peers when NASM is not open to admitting them.

As a result of the observations mentioned above, the researcher arrived at two additional questions relating to NASM policy: 1) Are the organization's narrowly crafted, exclusionary policies a reflection of deliberate biases and classism? 2) Could these policies be rooted in the

⁴¹⁴ “National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK 2022-23,” 54.

organization's lack of understanding and experience with vernacular musical forms? In either event, the results are the same. Formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals are denied the opportunities made available to their classically trained counterparts. In this case, they are deprived of the legitimacy, prestige, acceptance, and satisfaction that coincide with NASM accreditation.

Advocacy is Critical

Among many recommendations for the K-12 licensure of formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals, the interviewees placed considerable emphasis on advocacy. Regarding this topic, interviewee six speculated that formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals may be granted access to Tennessee music education licensure “if there’s enough of us that advocate.”⁴¹⁵ Likewise, interviewee four called for a large-scale advocacy campaign declaring that “if I were going to try to make that happen in Tennessee, I would get every industry professional I could get my hands on” and “I would probably go and get two or three stars, . . . somebody that believed in the aspect of education that would make that possible, and I would attack them with a full-frontal attack, and say this is needed.”⁴¹⁶ On the other hand, this interviewee warned stakeholders that, if “you dribble in with twos and threes and little suggestions, and whatever it’s not, I don’t know if it would happen,” but “I do think that [, with] enough of an outcry, that . . . they would make that happen.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Interviewee Six, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 6th, 2023.

⁴¹⁶ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

Beyond these assertions, interviewees made suggestions concerning scholarly approaches to licensure advocacy. According to interviewee seven, “. . . if it happens, it’s going to be because we’re able to tell the story well” and “we’re able to create a narrative that’s convincing, and find the right people.”⁴¹⁸ The interviewee further speculated that “. . . there’s evidence-based arguments that could be added in to talk about how more support for this kind of music helps us individually and societally.”⁴¹⁹ Interestingly, approximately twenty-two percent of interviewees also recognized this study as a potential tool for advocacy.

Significantly, data coding processes revealed yet another pattern in the above recommendations. Interviewees emphasized a broad range of factors that, when placed in the following order, highlighted a distinctive linear or cumulative progression of recommendations: exposure, understanding, legitimacy and credibility, and advocacy (see Figure 18).

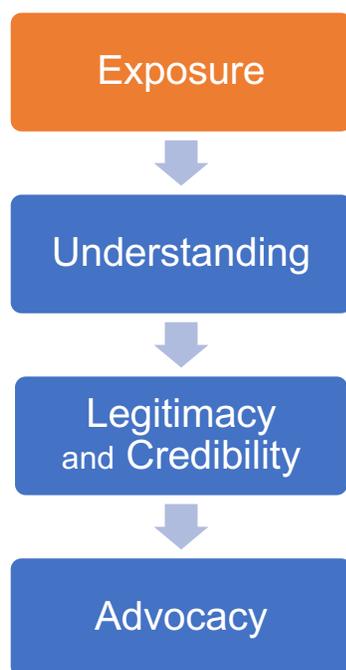


Figure 18. Pursuing K-12 Vernacular Music Licensure: A Cumulative Strategy for
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

⁴¹⁸ Interviewee Seven, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 16th, 2023.

⁴¹⁹ Interviewee Seven, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 16th, 2023.

Per this strategy, stakeholders may pursue K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure by facilitating increased musical exposure. This exposure will, in turn, lead to a heightened state of understanding and, perhaps, greater appreciation. Ideally, these factors will cultivate additional credibility and legitimacy. Upon achieving these qualities, stakeholders are ideally situated to advocate for new or revised opportunities—including K-12 vernacular music licensure.

Limitations

This study relied upon numerous scholarly resources pertaining to the phenomenological focus of the study. However, there is currently a void in comparable or even complementary material. Thus, the researcher was, in the context of the literature review, forced to rely on source material relating to the phenomenon in question rather than building onto or modeling after like resources—a limitation that ultimately contributed to the originality of the paper and the unique relevancy of its discoveries.

As is often the case in projects of this size and scope, the author found time and time management to be a factor. The projected timeline for this project allowed for a thorough literature review and multiple interviews with key educators from the field. On the other hand, there are important variables relating to the phenomenological focus of this study that are yet to be considered, and there is, undoubtedly, relevant data that is yet to be collected.

It should also be noted that the interviewing components of this study were fulfilled exclusively by educators entrenched in the discipline of bluegrass or roots music studies, some of which were also classically trained. The decision to recruit specialists from the field was intentional and advantageous, as evidenced by the quantity of codable data. On the other hand, additional perspectives and experiences must also be collated for stakeholders to fully understand the current licensure dilemma: the perspectives of educational administrators, higher education

music educators specializing in classical music, and current and prospective K-12 music educators.

Recommendations for Future Study

Ideally, this study will contribute new information and ideas to ongoing scholarly debates concerning inclusive licensure revision and institutionalized bluegrass and roots music studies. These interviews provide a range of diverse assessments and suggestions concerning the study's phenomenological focus. However, in the interests of comprehensive understanding, it would be useful and entirely warranted for individuals to interview other related stakeholders, including educational administrators, higher education music educators specializing in classical music, and current and prospective K-12 music educators.

Additionally, numerous quantitative analysis implications are associated with issues addressed in this study. For example, this study proved that bluegrass and roots musicians are often marginalized. Given the relative newness of higher education bluegrass and roots music programs and the likelihood of these initiatives attracting new college demographics, researchers may consider whether prospective higher education bluegrass or roots music students are especially likely to be first-generation college enrollees—a scenario that can also lead marginalization. As Cattaneo et al. noted, “these [first-generation college] students struggle disproportionately in the higher education context, threatening their ability to succeed, and their experiences of classism on campus are a significant contributor to these struggles.”⁴²⁰

Additionally, this researcher urges patience and diligence for stakeholders interested in pursuing K-12 vernacular licensure. This paper establishes a need for licensure revision while

⁴²⁰ Lauren B. Cattaneo, Wing Yi Chan, Rachel Shor, Kris T Gebhard, and Nour H Elshabassi, “Elaborating the Connection,” 477.

reflecting the demand for further research and analysis. In pursuit of these objectives, one interviewee offered a particularly insightful and compelling recommendation: creating a diverse task force or committee devoted to studying and pursuing a national bluegrass and roots music licensure process. This task force would be comprised of experienced educators, administrators, and nationally renowned performers.⁴²¹

Implications for Practice

The implications of this study are notably wide-ranging. During these research processes, numerous factors were identified relating to the potentiality of state-level music education licensure for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals. Among stakeholders, these phenomena reflect a growing hunger for change and a willingness to embrace the diversity permeating through all avenues of modern education.

Interviewees identified numerous impediments to K-12 vernacular music education and related propositions for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to acquire state-level licensure. To further contextualize this data, this study compared impediments to K-12 vernacular music studies and licensure with impediments facing similar college-level initiatives. A noted correlation was discovered between the impediments mentioned above and those attributed to higher education bluegrass or roots music initiatives. Approximately sixty-seven percent of the Impediments to K-12 vernacular Music Studies and Licensure for Formally Trained Bluegrass and Roots Music Educators themes were found to correlate with Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies. Inversely, approximately eighty-one percent of the latter thematic category lined up with comparable assertions from the former (see Figure 19).

⁴²¹ Interviewee Four, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 22nd, 2023.

Impediments to K-12 Vernacular Music Studies and Licensure for Formally Trained Bluegrass and Roots Music Educators	Impediments to Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies
A Deficit in Formal Bluegrass and Roots Music Curricula	Accrediting Organization Requirements
A Praxis Exam Disproportionately Favoring Euro-Centric Music	A Deficit in Formal Bluegrass and Roots Music Curricula
Arguments Against Bluegrass and Roots Educator Licensing	Changing Opportunities
A Shift in Support from Public Education to Privatization	Disparities Between Bluegrass and Roots Classical Music Opportunities
Disparities in Classical Music Ed. Precedents and Bluegrass or Roots	Graduation Rate Pressures
Educators or Supervisors Lacking in Musical Proficiency	Lack of Formal Ed. Opportunities
Financial Concerns	Lack of Precedents for Bluegrass and Roots Music in Formal Ed.
General Lack of Support for Public Ed.	Lack of Proper Training/Expertise in Job Candidates
Lack of a Clear Licensure Pathway for Bluegrass and Roots Music	Lack of Resources/Funding
Lack of Familial Involvement in Public Music Education	Lack of Respect Among Other Musicians for Classical Music Approaches
Lack of Legislative Support/Concern for Public Music Education	Lack of Respect/Appreciation for Higher Ed. Bluegrass and Roots Music
Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies	Lack of Understanding of Basic Musical Concepts/Elements
Lack of Understanding of the Value and Role of Music Education	Lack of Understanding of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies/Pedagogy
Lack of Understanding of "what TN music education licensure means"	Resistance to Change
Licensure May Not Be Recognized as a Job Requirement	Smaller Number of Higher Ed. Roots Music Programs than Classical Music
Narrow, Euro-Centric Course Requirements	The Absence of a Clear Pathway to K-12 Music Education Licensure
Resistance to Change	
Stereotyping and Lack of Respect for Bluegrass and Roots Professionals	
Student Resistance to Courses Seeming Less-Relevant to Vernacular Music	
The Small Size of Bluegrass and Roots Music Studies Demographics	
Unequal Distribution of Opportunities Favoring Classical Music	

Figure 19. Color-Coded Comparison of Impediments to K-12 and Higher Ed. Vernacular Music
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

Given these similarities, stakeholders may question whether the impediments facing higher education bluegrass and roots music programs might be resolved, or at least diminished, if K-12 licensure were achieved. On an inverse yet correlative note, approximately thirty-three percent of this study's interviewees did assert that the continued proliferation of higher education bluegrass and roots music initiatives is likely to strengthen the case for K-12 vernacular music licensure.

Upon identifying these commonalities, a new paradoxical pattern and a related question emerged. The researcher began to wonder which of the above impediments were, in effect, culprits and which were the symptoms in this pattern. Ultimately, he concluded that both factors are symptoms and culprits in a continuing cycle of interrelated pedagogical adversities—a philosophical and pedagogical interchange comparable to the complex give-and-take relationships inherent to twenty-first-century ecosystems. Indeed, as post-modern societies are forced to navigate between natural ecosystems and engineered environments steeped in modern luxury, twenty-first-century vernacular music educators must engage in give-and-take pedagogical discourses. These individuals must uphold their core principles and never compromise on authenticity issues or their mission. They must also strive for equilibrium with their surroundings.

In practice, this principle may require bluegrass and roots music programs to adopt more broad-ranging coursework if state-level vernacular licensure is to be achieved. Regarding this potentiality, interviewee one remarked, “. . . I suspect they would probably need to learn more about other styles of music if they're going to do that”⁴²² More specifically, this study highlighted the relative immovability of NASM stances on musical notation. On the other hand, approximately sixty-seven percent of the interviewees asserted that it is important, in certain

⁴²² Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

contexts, for bluegrass and roots music studies majors to learn to read standard notation. Also, approximately twenty-two percent of the interviewees posited that it is unequivocally important for these individuals to read this notational format (see Figure 20).

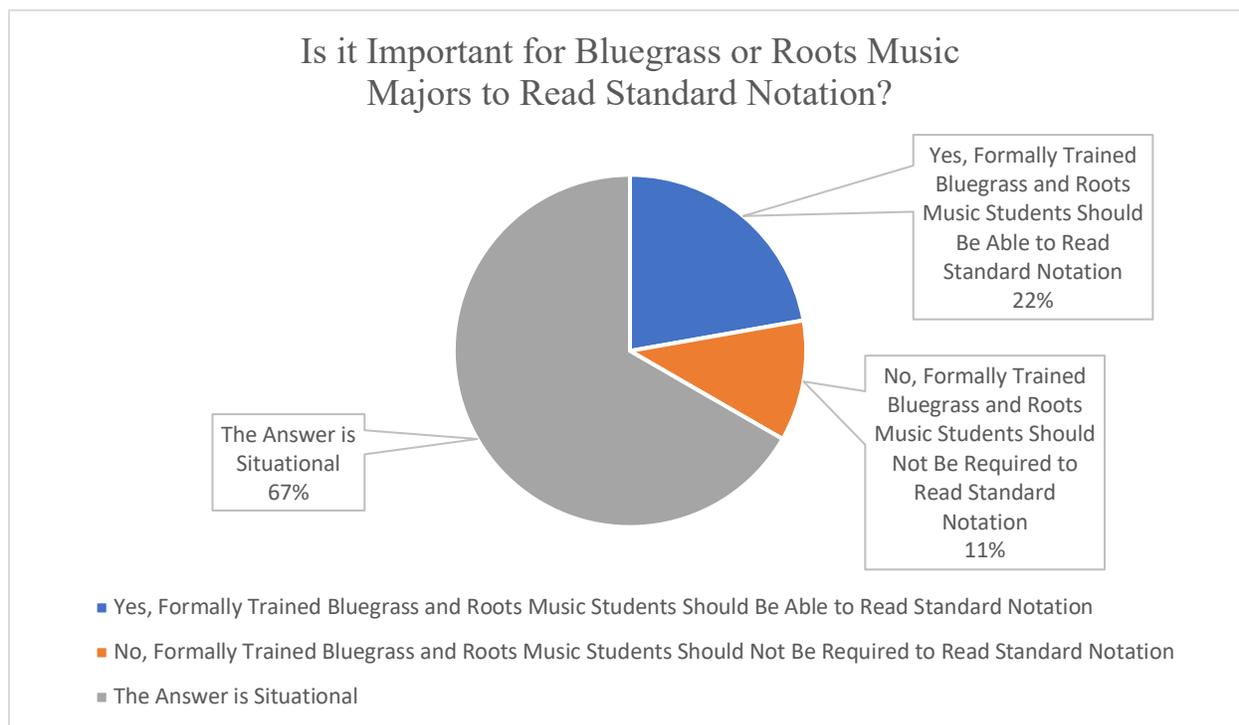


Figure 20. Is it Important for Bluegrass or Roots Music Majors to Read Standard Notation?
Sources: Interviewee One et al., Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th-June 27th, 2023.

These assertions may indicate that bluegrass and roots studies professionals are open-minded and willing to compromise when such actions do not undermine the music's authenticity or credibility.

In addition to the compromises noted above, educational stakeholders must clarify their goals and strategies. Further degrees of standardization may also be required if formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals are to realize licensure objectives. These premises are supported by interviewees' recommendations for standard curricula, relevant educator competencies standards, and a standardized yet stylistically appropriate praxis exam. In pursuit

of these objectives, interviewee eight advocated for “working within the expectations of an educational institution or a governing power . . . [to] creat[e] a curriculum for a high school music teacher that works, that uses these instruments, . . . having the curriculum, writing it up, presenting it, getting it approved, following through, and, actually, schools being willing to take a chance on it”⁴²³

Additionally, interviewee three stressed the merits of educational competencies standards. In the words of this educator, “. . . I think if we did have some established standards around what makes a good educator in this music, and if we had some kind of assessment tool that we could use to do that, so yeah, I think that’s it.”⁴²⁴ Significantly, interviewee three also called for the creation of “a praxis exam that does . . . kind of target a teacher’s ability and capacity and, you know, their strengths.”⁴²⁵ Alternatively, interviewee four cautioned that standardized vernacular licensing approaches may inspire individuals to declare, “I’m going to lead with my title, and then I’ll make myself fit because that’s the licensure requirement.”⁴²⁶

In the end, however, it may be inferred that the above-mentioned strategies can contribute to an arduous yet beneficial transformation. Nonetheless, if true progress is to be achieved and maintained, it is also evident that all stakeholders, individuals from all sides of the pedagogical spectrum, must find common ground. Additionally, these constituencies must each approach their concerns with mutual respect, specificity, and objectivity.

⁴²³ Interviewee Eight, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 22nd, 2023.

⁴²⁴ Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

The researcher searched for a smoking-gun solution or a definitive remedy in response to the pedagogical disparities highlighted in this study. Instead, he uncovered evidence showing that the related demographics, specifically bluegrass and roots music professionals, are often marginalized and treated inequitably. These research processes also lead to the identification of other various impediments to K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure—impediments offset by prospective benefits from inclusion, cultural relevancy, and artistic enrichment.

Ultimately, it appears as though there are no smoking-gun solutions to this study's pedagogical focus. It would also seem that no unequivocal, or at least insurmountable, impediments are currently preventing the proposed revisions. Concerning these potentialities, interviewee three declared that “. . . we have already met with the education department here, and they've . . . talked with us about, you know, a path to do that”⁴²⁷ The interviewee elaborated that “. . . it's not that complicated,” and “. . . I think we will be able to make it happen.”⁴²⁸ Thus, an optimal pathway to culturally relevant licensure may be found in the will, and the willpower, of dedicated constituents. To succeed, these stakeholders must be blessed with a willingness to listen, a willingness to change, and a willingness to act.

Summary

This study established the importance of vernacular music traditions to musical stakeholders, communities, and the entirety of society. Numerous factors—precedents, benefits, and impediments—were recognized for their impact on the phenomenological focus of the project. Additionally, the study highlighted the merits of important educational and sociological philosophies, including praxialism, cultural relevancy, and inclusivity.

⁴²⁷ Interviewee Three, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 18th, 2023.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

While definitive answers or solutions to initial research questions were not always obtained, this study has, at a minimum, expanded upon these important discussions. In response to Sub Question #1, inquiring about potential impediments to enabling college-level bluegrass or roots music students to pursue Tennessee music education licensure, this study identified historical and educational precedents, elements of classism, Euro-Centric biases, and the marginalization of related demographics. The interviewees referenced additional impediments to the process, including financial concerns, a lack of understanding of bluegrass and roots music studies, the lack of a clear licensure pathway for bluegrass and roots music, stereotyping, and a lack of respect for bluegrass and roots music professionals. Significantly, in cross-referencing thematic codes relating to K-12 vernacular music licensure impediments, this study revealed an intriguing thematic correlation, a pattern hinging upon various contexts of understanding.

In response to the Secondary Research Question, inquiring about the potential benefits of licensure for bluegrass and roots music studies in higher education, the researcher engaged in a comparative analysis of potential K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure benefits. During the literature review, many justifications were discovered supporting the need for K-12 vernacular music education. Foremost among these arguments, culturally relevant music initiatives can help stakeholders facilitate inclusivity while calling attention to the perspectives of diverse musical constituencies. Additionally, the interviewees predicted that several benefits coinciding with K-12 vernacular musical licensure, including regional awareness and appreciation, an array of benefits specific to college preparation, and increased practicality, feasibility, and accessibility for music programs in smaller institutions. They also cited wide-ranging benefits for the bluegrass community and society. Among these, interviewees speculated that K-12 vernacular music licensure could facilitate increased musical exposure, expanded student bases, expanded

employee pools, other employment opportunities, cultural relevancy, individual empowerment, social unity, camaraderie, and personal health and happiness.

A topic of interest from the inception of this study, the researcher initially posed a question (Sub Question #2) asking, what are the alternative licensure routes available to college-level bluegrass or roots music students seeking Tennessee music education licensure? As evidenced in the literature review, prospectors K-12 are privy to a wide range of alternative licensure options. Some of these processes require a college degree, while others do not. Also, graduate school alternative education licensure programs are somewhat commonplace.

There are also alternative licensing programs geared to states' specific needs. In Tennessee, prospective K-12 educators may pursue the Practitioner Teacher License, the Practitioner Occupation License, or, via the Emergency Credentials permits, they may be hired for a particular educational need unfulfilled by a licensed educator. Regarding each alternative licensure approach, this researcher asserts that these opportunities do not represent equal opportunity. Alternative licensing opportunities are frequently met with disrespect and skepticism. Also, some of these opportunities are only provided on a temporary basis.

In the early stage of this project, the researcher hypothesized that East Tennessee would provide ideal settings for this research—a prediction substantiated by the successful recruitment of interviewees. Interestingly, there is also evidence that this state could be ideally suited to successive phases of this research. As an example, Tennessee's educational policies showcase an openness to provisional certification and other occupational approaches. The Tennessee Practitioner Teacher License provides a pathway for individuals eighteen or above possessing "a bachelor's degree from a regionally-accredited college or university" who are also "enrolled in or have completed an approved educator preparation program, and . . . recommended for

licensure by the program provider,” compliant with “all professional assessment requirements as specified by the State Board of Education,” and compliant with “requirements in at least one area of endorsement.”⁴²⁹ The Practitioner Teacher License applicants must also provide the educational department with “official transcripts of all credits earned through an institution of higher learning.”⁴³⁰ Significantly, the Tennessee Department of Education offers another provisional license option not requiring college graduation (in any major): the Practitioner Occupational License. This pathway does, however, require applicants to “be enrolled in or have completed a state approve[d] educator preparation program,” “meet endorsement experience requirements,” and “meet industry certification requirements.”⁴³¹

In comparisons of Tennessee’s alternative licensing pathways, aspiring K-12 bluegrass and roots educators will likely find the Emergency Credentials permit to be most relevant. Through this provision, non-licensed educators can be hired “in the event that an appropriately licensed and endorsed educator cannot be recruited, and when all criteria are met.”⁴³² As with the Practitioner Teacher License, the Emergency Credentials initiated permits do also require some form of bachelor’s degree.⁴³³ This licensure option (like the Practitioner Teacher License) is also

⁴²⁹ “Practitioner Teacher License,” TN Department of Education: New to Education, accessed on July 16th, 2023, <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/educators/licensing/educator-licensure/new-to-education.html>.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ “Practitioner Occupational License,” TN Department of Education: New to Education, accessed on July 16th, 2023, <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/educators/licensing/educator-licensure/new-to-education.html>.

⁴³² *Educator Licensure: Educator Licensure & Preparation Operating Procedures*, (Tennessee Department of Education, 2019): 11, 16, https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/forms/1EducatorLicensureOperatingProceduresforDistricts_FINAL.pdf.

⁴³³ Ibid., 15.

ephemeral, as educators can only be granted this annual opportunity three times.⁴³⁴ ⁴³⁵ Also, the “teacher holding a permit” is also only rehired when “. . . the respective board of education is unable to secure a qualified teacher with a valid license for the type and kind of school.”⁴³⁶ Thus, as with the previously examined alternative licensure options, the reader is reminded that these opportunities do not represent an equal or equitable licensure pathway for non-traditional educators. The latter option does, however, appear to be feasible for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals seeking educational employment on a temporary basis.

In addition to the state’s apparent openness to alternative licensing prospects, Tennessee may provide an optimum environment for insightful advocacy. This premise is supported by interviewee assertions highlighting the vast range of Tennessee’s vernacular music traditions, political support for Tennessee arts and history, and noted educational proclivities for cultural relevancy. In this framework, the interviewee speculated “that the state of Tennessee, politically, probably is fertile ground for a program like this,” and that “. . . the politicians, the people, the higher-ups, would love to see you know bluegrass, old-time music . . . in school systems.”⁴³⁷ That interviewee further declared that “I can’t imagine them not,” and “. . . there would be very little pushback . . . as long as we could find a way to do it, to do it in a thoughtful way, to really plan it, think it out.”⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ “Practitioner Teacher License,” TN Department of Education: New to Education, accessed on July 16th, 2023, <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/educators/licensing/educator-licensure/new-to-education.html>.

⁴³⁵ *Educator Licensure: Educator Licensure & Preparation Operating Procedures*,” 16.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴³⁷ Interviewee One, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, May 16th, 2023.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

Similarly, interviewees six and seven stressed the innate benefits of exploring K-12 vernacular music licensure revisions in Tennessee. According to interviewee six,

. . . in Tennessee, they're required a certain amount of like Tennessee history that's specifically about Tennessee, [and] I don't see any problem why they couldn't also include [bluegrass or roots music studies], whether it would be part of an elective system where you could pick this or that, but to focus on that because you know they're the ones screaming 'we're losing our culture,' but they're not providing any cultures that they want to promote.⁴³⁹

Interviewee seven further speculated that “. . . this, our local institutional history, shows that it's probably not something that's going to happen everywhere, but maybe it could happen here.”⁴⁴⁰

Finally, in response to the Main Research Question, a question about the circumstances that could potentially enable college students majoring in bluegrass or roots music studies to pursue Tennessee licensure in music education licensure, the researcher was, admittedly, unable to discover a “smoking gun” answer—a definitive solution to instantaneously turn the tides of exclusionary pedagogy and Euro-Centricity. This study did, however, reveal numerous themes—strategies, observations, and suggestions—pertaining to the objectives of this project. When collated, the data revealed predictions, patterns, and progressive processes that may lead to K-12 bluegrass and roots music licensure.

However, if these objectives are ultimately to be accomplished, there are also pedagogical and ideological gulfs to be bridged. Stakeholders must attribute equal value to the preferences of others. Bluegrass and roots studies must be considered equivalent to Western art music styles. The contributions of bluegrass and roots musicians are to be recognized alongside all other musical traditions. Most importantly, bluegrass and roots music students are to be

⁴³⁹ Interviewee Six, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 6th, 2023.

⁴⁴⁰ Interviewee Seven, Jeremy Fritts, Zoom, June 16th, 2023.

afforded equal opportunities to acquire, perform, create, and share their music. Additionally, formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals must be granted opportunities available to their classically trained contemporaries. These prospective educators must be provided a pathway to K-12 music education licensure.

Bibliography

- “Adjunct Instructors - Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies.” East Tennessee State University: eJobs. Accessed on April 16th, 2023. <https://jobs.etsu.edu/postings/14622>.
- “American Roots Music Program: Digging deep to connect with the diverse rural roots of American music in the first half of the 20th century.” Berklee College of Music. Accessed on October 10th, 2022. <https://college.berklee.edu/focused/roots>.
- Arsel, Zeynep, Darren Dahl, Eileen Fischer, Gita Johar, and Vicki Morwitz. “Asking Questions with Reflexive Focus: A Tutorial on Designing and Conducting Interviews.” *The Journal of Consumer Research* 44, no. 4 (2017): 939–948. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialsolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Asking%20Questions%20with%20Reflexive%20Focus:%20A%20Tutorial%20on%20Designing%20and%20Conducting%20Interviews&rft.jtitle=The%20Journal%20of%20consumer%20research&rft.au=Arsel,%20Zeynep&rft.date=2017-12-01&rft.pub=University%20of%20Chicago%20Press&rft.issn=0093-5301&rft.eissn=1537-5277&rft.volume=44&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=939&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.1093%2Fjcr%2Fcx096&rft.externalDocID=A518235747¶mdict=en-US.
- “Artist in Residence in Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music Studies: East Tennessee State University.” HigherEdJobs. Accessed on April 16th, 2023. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/faculty/details.cfm?JobCode=178283945>.
- Bardelli, Emanuele, and Matthew Ronfeldt. “Workforce Outcomes of Program Completers in High-Needs Endorsement Areas.” *American Journal of Education*. 128, no. 1 (Nov., 2021): 59-93. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialsolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Workforce%20Outcomes%20of%20Program%20Completers%20in%20High-Needs%20Endorsement%20Areas&rft.jtitle=American%20journal%20of%20education&rft.au=Bardelli,%20Emanuele&rft.au=Ronfeldt,%20Matthew&rft.date=2021-11-01&rft.issn=0195-6744&rft.eissn=1549-6511&rft.volume=128&rft.issue=1&rft.spage=59&rft.epage=93&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.1086%2F716486&rft.externalDBID=n%2Fa&rft.externalDocID=10_1086_716486.
- Barnett, Berry. “No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers.” *Educational leadership journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A.* 58, no. 8 (2001): https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialsolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=No%20shortcuts%20for%20preparing%20good%20teachers&rft.jtitle=Educational%20Leadership&rft.au=Barnett,%20Berry&rft.date=2001-05-01&rft.pub=Association%20for%20Supervision%20and%20Curriculum%20

Development&rft.issn=0013-1784&rft.eissn=1943-5878&rft.volume=58&rft.issue=8&rft.space=32&rft.externalDBID=NO_FULL_TEXT&rft.externalDocID=74846313¶dict=en-US.

Barnett, Berry. "No Shortcuts for Preparing Good Teachers." *Educational leadership journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A.* 58, no. 8 (2001): 32. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=No%20shortcuts%20for%20preparing%20good%20teachers&rft.jtitle=Educational%20Leadership&rft.au=Barnett,%20Berry&rft.date=2001-05-01&rft.pub=Association%20for%20Supervision%20and%20Curriculum%20Development&rft.issn=0013-1784&rft.eissn=1943-5878&rft.volume=58&rft.issue=8&rft.space=32&rft.externalDBID=NO_FULL_TEXT&rft.externalDocID=74846313.

Bates, Vincent C. Bates. "Standing at the Intersection of Race and Class in Music Education." *Action, Criticism, & Theory for Music Education* 18, no. 1 (2019): 117–160. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Standing%20at%20the%20Intersection%20of%20Race%20and%20Class%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.jtitle=Action,%20criticism,%20%26%20theory%20for%20music%20education&rft.au=Bates,%20Vincent%20C.%20Bates&rft.date=2019-03-01&rft.issn=1545-4517&rft.eissn=1545-4517&rft.volume=18&rft.issue=1&rft.space=117&rft.epage=160&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.22176%2Fact18.1.117&rft.externalDBID=n%2Fa&rft.externalDocID=10_22176_act18_1_117.

Bates, Vincent C., Jason B. Gossett, and Travis Stimeling. "Country Music Education for Diverse and Inclusive Music Classrooms." *Music Educators Journal* 107, no. 2 (Dec., 2020): 28–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432120956386>.

Berry, J.W. "Globalisation and acculturation." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 4 (July, 2008): 328-336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.04.001>.

"BG College email spreadsheet 2020." The IBMA Foundation. Accessed on October 2nd, 2022. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yWSYbxM0dDpNKPQbQy1m87Z4alrwkTEzu8eb1-cgRds/edit#gid=0>.

Block, Rachel. "Denison's Bluegrass now American Roots," Denison. Accessed on September 11th, 2022, <https://denison.edu/academics/music/wh/143987>.

Burton, Suzanne L. "Perspective Consciousness and Cultural Relevancy: Partnership 9 Considerations for the Re-Conceptualization of Music Teacher Preparation." *Arts Education Policy Review* 112, no. 3 (2011): 122-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2011.566082>.

- Cattaneo, Lauren B., Wing Yi Chan, Rachel Shor, Kris T Gebhard, and Nour H Elshabassi, "Elaborating the Connection between Social Class and Classism in College." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 63, no. 3–4 (June 2019): 476-486. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mnh&AN=30869811&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=liberty&authtype=ip,shib>.
- Clarke, Chris. "Paths between Positivism and Interpretivism: An Appraisal of Hay's Via Media." *Politics* 29, no. 1 (Feb., 2009): 28-36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2008.01335.x>.
- Coates, Wendy C., Jaime Jordan, and Samuel O. Clarke. "A practical guide for conducting qualitative research in medical education: Part 2–Coding and thematic analysis." *AEM Education and Training: A GLOBAL JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY CARE* 5, no. 4 (Aug., 2021): 1-7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8457700/>.
- de Bruin, Leon R. "Expert improvisers' formal, informal and situated influences on learning, motivation and self-efficacy: a qualitative study." *Music Educator Research* 21, no.1 (Sept., 2018): 99-115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2018.1516746>.
- Dibley, Lesley, Suzanne Dickerson, Mel Duffy, and Roxanne Vandermause. *Doing Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research: A Practical Guide*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529799583>.
- Dittrick, Paula. "SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE STUDENTS MAJOR IN BLUEGRASS." Chicago Tribune. Accessed on September 7th, 2022. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1985-02-07-8501080105-story.html>.
- Doody, Owen, and Maria Noonan. "Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data." *Nurse Researcher (through 2013)* 20, no. 5 (May, 2013): 28-32. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/preparing-conducting-interviews-collect-data/docview/1443469489/se-2>.
- Duncan, Arne. "TEACHER PREPARATION: REFORMING THE UNCERTAIN PROFESSION." *The Education Digest* 75, no. 6 (Jan., 2010): 13-22, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/teacher-preparation/docview/1933127735/se2>.
- Educator Licensure: Educator Licensure & Preparation Operating Procedures*. (Tennessee Department of Education, 2019): 1-48. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/forms/1EducatorLicensureOperatingProceduresforDistricts_FINAL.pdf.
- "Educator Pay and Student Spending: How Does Your State Rank?" National Education Association. Accessed on September 14th, 2022. <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/educator-pay-and-student-spending-how-does-your-state-rank>.
- Elliott David, James. *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

- Elpus, Kenneth. "Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States: A Demographic Profile and Analysis of Licensure Examination Scores." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 3 (2015): 314–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43900301>.
- Ewing, Tom. *Bill Monroe: The Life and Music of the Blue Grass Man*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2018). Accessed October 15, 2022. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/etsu/detail.action?docID=5518178#>.
- Farago, Bonnie, Julie S Zide, and Comila Shahani-Denning. "Selection Interviews: Role of Interviewer Warmth, Interview Structure, and Interview Outcome in Applicants' Perceptions of Organizations." *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 65, no. 3 (2013): 224-239. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=Selection%20interviews:%20Role%20of%20interviewer%20warmth,%20interview%20structure,%20and%20interview%20outcome%20in%20applicants%E2%80%99%20perceptions%20of%20organizations&rft.jtitle=Consulting%20psychology%20journal&rft.au=Farago,%20Bonnie&rft.au=Zide,%20Julie%20S&rft.au=Shahani-Denning,%20Comila&rft.date=2013-09-01&rft.pub=Educational%20Publishing%20Foundation&rft.issn=1065-9293&rft.eissn=1939-0149&rft.volume=65&rft.issue=3&rft.spage=224&rft.epage=239&rft_id=info:doi%2F10.1037%2Fa0034300¶mdict=en-US.
- Farrugia, Lorleen. "WASP (Write a Scientific Paper): The Ongoing Process of Ethical Decision-Making in Qualitative Research: Ethical Principles and their application to the research process." *Early human development* 133 (2019): 48–51. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S037837821930180X?via%3Dihub>.
- Filene, Benjamin. *romancing the folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Fink-Jensen, Kirsten. "Attunement and Bodily Dialogues in Music Education." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 15, no. 1 (Mar., 2007): 53-68.
- Gee, Kate, and Pamela Yeow. "A hard day's night: building sustainable careers for musicians." *Cultural Trends* 30, no. 4 (June, 2021): 338-354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2021.1941776>.
- Goldkuhl, Göran. "Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research." *European Journal of Information Systems* 21, no. 2 (2012): 135-146. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2011.54>.
- Good-Perkins, Emily. "Culturally Sustaining Music Education and Epistemic Travel." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 29, no. 1 (spring, 2021): 47-66. <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.liberty.edu/article/786578>.

- Graves, Josh, and Neil Rosenberg. "1927–1942, A Tennessee Childhood." In *Bluegrass Bluesman: A Memoir*, edited by Fred Bartenstein, 1-11. University of Illinois Press, 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt3fh4wf.6>.
- Guest, Greg, Emily Namey, Mario Chen. "A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research." *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 5 (May, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076>.
- Hahn, Christopher. *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer* (London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2008). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857024411>.
- Halcomb, Elizabeth J., and Patricia M. Davidson. "Is verbatim transcription of interview data always necessary?" *Applied Nursing Research* 19, no. 1 (2006): 38-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2005.06.001>.
- Hellman, Daniel S., Barbara J. Resch, Carla E. Aguilar, Carol McDowell, and Laura Artesani. "A Research Agenda for Alternative Licensure Programs in Music Education." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 4 (2011): 78-88. https://liberty.alma.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/openurl?institution=01LIBU_INST&vid=01LIBU_INST:Services&%3Fctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_enc=info:ofi%2Fenc:UTF-8&rft_id=info:sid%2Fsummon.serialssolutions.com&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi%2Ffmt:kev:mtx:journal&rft.genre=article&rft.atitle=A%20Research%20Agenda%20for%20Alternative%20Licensure%20Programs%20in%20Music%20Education&rft.jtitle=Journal%20of%20research%20in%20music%20education&rft.au=Hellman,%20Daniel%20S&rft.au=Resch,%20Barbara%20J&rft.au=Aguilar,%20Carla%20E&rft.au=McDowell,%20Carol&rft.date=2011-12-01&rft.pub=National%20Association%20for%20Music%20Education&rft.issn=0022-4294&rft.eissn=1945-0095&rft.volume=59&rft.issue=4&rft.spage=78&rft.externalDBID=NO_FULL_TEXT&rft.externalDocID=2545254781.
- Henry, Michele. "An Analysis of Certification Practices for Music Educators in the Fifty States." *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 14, no. 2 (January 2005): 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837050140020108>.
- "History: Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music." Bluegrass, Old-Time, Country Music: Department of Appalachian Studies. Accessed on October 10th, 2022. <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/das/bluegrass/about-us/history.php>.
- "History: IN THE BEGINNING," Bluegrass, Old-Time, Country Music: Department of Appalachian Studies. Accessed on September 7th, 2022, <https://www.etsu.edu/cas/das/bluegrass/about-us/history.php>.
- Kelly, Steven Nelson, and Kenna Veronee. "High School Students' Perceptions of Nontraditional Music Classes." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 219 (Winter, 2019): 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.219.0077>.

- Koziel, Ellen B. "Are We Lovin' It?: The edTPA and the McDonaldization of Music Teacher Training." Phd diss. The University of Memphis, 2018. <https://go.openatens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/are-we-lovin-edtpa-mcdonaldization-music-teacher/docview/2051387803?pq-origsite=summon>.
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS, Political Science and Politics* 39, no. 1 (Jan., 2006): 127-132. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/doing-literature-review/docview/224895969/se-2>.
- Krakauer, Benjamin. "A 'Traditional' Music Scene and Its Fringes: experimental bluegrass of 1970s New York City." *American Music* 36, no. 2 (2018): 163-193. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A641263852/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=f8cdcfc9.
- Krikun, Andrew. "Popular Music and Jazz in the American Junior College Music Curriculum during the Swing Era (1935-1945)." *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 30, no. 1 (10, 2008): 39-49. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/popular-music-jazz-american-junior-college/docview/197388987/se-2>.
- Kugelman, Louis Samuel. "Effectiveness of Undergraduate Music Teacher Education Programs: Perceptions of Early-Career Music Educators." Order No. 28774203, Temple University, 2021. <https://www.proquest.com/pagepdf/2622778948?accountid=12085>.
- Lawless, John. "ETSU faculty responds to No Depression article." *Bluegrass Today*. Accessed on February 19th, 2023, <https://bluegrasstoday.com/etsu-faculty-responds-to-no-depression-article/>.
- Lehmann, Ted. "Bluegrass Goes to College, But Should it?" *No Depression* (July, 2017). Accessed on October 14th, 2022. <https://www.nodepression.com/bluegrass-goes-to-college-but-should-it/>.
- Linneberg, Mai Skjott, and Steffen Korsgaard. "Coding, qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice." *Qualitative research journal* 19, no. 3 (July, 2019): 259-270. https://liberty.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNptkE1LAzEQhoNUsFbvHhc8r80k2WziTYqfFETRc0h2Z2tKu9smu4X-e9P2JHh7B95nhnkuyajtWiTkBugdAFXTj8-3HFjOKKicUmBnZAxCpKwVHR0zz7VS_IJcxriktCi4EmNSzrrat4tsO9iV723vd5jVtrf3mc3ivu1_MPqYLQZ_bKUxa7udr_CKnDd2FfGajPow4IR8Pz1-zV7y-fvz6-xhnlDCQZ-XDYWm5K5h2lW6rq2TXLmq5BoLqyqHhSwaDkxwZEJKLSWWNSrmtKQA4PiE3J72bkK3HTD2ZtkNoU2XDWNciPQ56NSip1YVuhgDNmYT_NqGvQFqDnZMsmOAmYMdc7CTkOkJwTUGu6r_I_745L9-tGZQ.
- Locke, Karen, Martha Feldman, and Karen Golden-Biddle. "Coding Practices and Iterativity: Beyond Templates for Analyzing Qualitative Data." *Organizational Research Methods* 25, no. 2 (2022): 262-284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120948600>.

- Lornell, Kip. *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01 ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_ebookcentral_EBC932777.
- Luty, Bryce. "Jazz education's struggle for acceptance: Part I." *Music Educators Journal* 69, no. 3 (Nov., 1982): 38–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396019>.
- Luty, Bryce. "Part II: Jazz Ensembles' Era of Accelerated Growth." *Music educators journal*. 69, no. 4 (Dec., 1982): 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396145>.
- Mark, Michael L., and Patrice Madura. *Contemporary Music Education, Fourth Edition* (Boston: Schirmer, 2014).
- Marquis, Alice Goldfarb. "Forum: Jazz Goes to College: Has Academic Status Served the Art?" *Popular Music and Society* 22, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 117-24. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/forum-jazz-goes-college-has-academic-status/docview/1338473/se-2>.
- Mateos-Moreno, Daniel. "Why (not) be a music teacher? Exploring pre-service music teachers' sources of concern regarding their future profession." *International Journal of Music Education* 40, no. 4 (Nov., 2022): 489-501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02557614211073138>.
- May, Brittany Nixon, Karen Willie, Cherilyn Worthen, and Allyssa Pehrson. "An Analysis of State Music Education Certification and Licensure Practices in the United States." *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 1 (October 2017): 65–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717699650>.
- Mills, Susan W. "Bringing the Family Tradition in Bluegrass Music to the Music Classroom." *General music today* 22, no 2 (Jan., 2009): 12-18. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.ecdu?url=http://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bringing-family-tradition-bluegrass-music/docview/235939129/se-2>.
- Moran, Pat. "Bluegrass U." *Acoustic Guitar* 26, no. 3 (Sept., 2015): 30-33. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/bluegrassu/docview/1700972463/se-2>.
- "National Association of Schools of Music HANDBOOK 2022-23." National Association of Schools of Music. Reston, VA. Accessed on March 26th, 2023. <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/03/M-2022-23-Handbook-Final-02-27-2023.pdf>
- Neubauer, Rian E., Catherine Witkop, and Lara Varpio. "How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others." *Perspectives on Medical Education* 8, no.2 (Apr., 2019): 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>.

- Olson, Nathaniel Jay. "The Institutionalization of Fiddling in Higher Education: Three Cases." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_journals_1545887806.
- "Practitioner Occupational License." TN Department of Education: New to Education. Accessed on July 16th, 2023. <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/educators/licensing/educator-licensure/new-to-education.html>.
- "Practitioner Teacher License." TN Department of Education: New to Education. Accessed on July 16th, 2023. <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/educators/licensing/educator-licensure/new-to-education.html>.
- Prichard, Stephanie. "A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices in Music Teacher Education." *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 3 (June, 2018): 94-105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717750079>.
- Randles, Clint, Roberto Jimenez, Dominick Agostini, Adam Balic, and Gretchen Dodson. "The experience of musical jamming: Testing the fit of a model of hermeneutic phenomenology of spirituality in music education." *Research Studies in Music Education* 44, no. 1 (Oct., 2021): 257-272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X211038844>.
- Ray, Sarah M. "Teaching Case— Applications of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in a Community College Classroom." *New Horizons in Adult Education & Human Resource Development* 31, no. 4 (2019): 65-69. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/nha3.20267>.
- Regelski, Thomas A. *A Brief Introduction to a Philosophy of Music and Music Education as Social Praxis, 1st ed.* New York: Routledge, 2015. Accessed on Jan. 18th, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315686493>.
- Regelski, Thomas A. "Musicianism and the Ethics of School Music." *Action, Criticism, & Theory for Music Education* 11, no. 1 (Mar., 2012): 7-43. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=74314931&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=liberty&authtype=ip,shib>.
- Rice, Timothy. "Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography." *Ethnomusicology* 47, no. 2 (Spring-Summer, 2003): 151-179. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3113916>.
- Riley, Holly Bugg. "Community in the Academy: Musicianship and Transformation in University Old Time Ensembles and Local Music Scenes." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2017. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_proquest_journals_2018309748.

- Runeson, Per and Martin Höst. "Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Case Study Research in Software Engineering." *Empirical Software Engineering* 14, no. 2 (April, 2009): 131-164. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/guidelines-conducting-reporting-case-study/docview/87966262/se-2>.
- Sarath, E., Myers, D., and Campbell, P. *Redefining Music Studies in an Age of Change: Creativity, Diversity, and Integration, 1st ed.* New York: Routledge, 2016. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4324/9781315649160>.
- Spencer, Michael T. "Jazz Education at the Westlake College of Music, 1945-61." *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 35, no. 1 (10, 2013): 50-65, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/jazz-education-at-westlake-college-music-1945-61/docview/1448258129/se-2>.
- Stimeling, Travis D. "The Country Music Reader." New York: Oxford University Press. Incorporated, 2015. https://etsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ETSU_INST/1ccjgob/cdi_askewshots_vlebooks_9780199314935.
- Stimeling, Travis D. and Sophia M. Enriquez. "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES: DECOLONIAL DIRECTIONS IN HIGHER ED BLUEGRASSPEDAGOGY: CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MUSIC." *Intersections* 39, no. 1 (2019): 57-72, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/building-relationships-sustaining-communities/docview/2479073168/se-2>.
- Tanner, Paul. "Jazz Goes to College: Part I." *Music Educators Journal* 57, no. 7 (1971): 57-113. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3393808>.
- "Teacher Shortage Areas." U.S. Department of Education. Accessed on March 25th, 2023. <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/reports>.
- Templeton, David. "ALL THAT JAZZ." *Strings* 33, no. 2 (Sept., 2018): 38-40. <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/all-that-jazz/docview/2450797683/se-2>.
- Thomas, Jeannie B. and Doug Enders. "Bluegrass and 'White Trash': A Case Study Concerning the Name 'Folklore' and Class Bias." *Journal of Folklore Research* 37, no. 1 (Jan 01, 2000): 23-52, 91-93. <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/bluegrass-white-trash-case-study-concerning-name/docview/1308429783/se-2>.
- Tunnell, Kenneth D., and Stephen Groce. "The social world of semiprofessional bluegrass musicians." *Popular Music and Society* 22, no. 4 (Jul., 2008): 55-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007769808591718>.
- Walker, Robert. "The Rise and Fall of Philosophies of Music Education: Looking backwards in order to see ahead." *Research Studies in Music Education* 17, no. 1 (Dec., 2001): 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X010170010201>.

Appendix A
Recruitment Form

Dear Bluegrass or Roots Music Instructor,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Music Education degree. The purpose of my research is to explore potential pathways for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to pursue public school music education licensure in the state of Tennessee, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, and they must be employed or have been employed at an institution of higher learning to teach bluegrass or roots music courses. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, video-recorded in-person or online interview. It should take approximately thirty minutes to complete the procedure listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me at [REDACTED] to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Fritts
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

[REDACTED]

Appendix B

Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: Potential Pathways to Culturally Relevant Licensure

Principal Investigator: Jeremy Fritts, Doctoral Candidate, School of Music, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, and you must be employed or have been employed at an institution of higher learning to teach bluegrass or roots music courses. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore potential pathways for formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals to pursue public school music education licensure in Tennessee.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in a one-on-one, video-recorded in-person or online interview that will take no more than thirty minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include an increased understanding of current limitations in music education licensing procedures, a greater appreciation for the diverse pedagogical practices employed in institutionalized bluegrass and roots music studies, and the triangulation of comparative data concerning these musical traditions, educational movements, and sociological trends.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for five years and then deleted. The researcher will have access to these recordings.

Liberty University
IRB-FY22-23-1289
Approved on 5-1-2023

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Jeremy Fritts. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Newman, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Liberty University
IRB-FY22-23-1289
Approved on 5-1-2023

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Questions

1. Are college-level bluegrass and roots music students and educators afforded the same opportunities or the same levels of respect as their classical music contemporaries? Why do you believe this to be the case?
2. What societal benefits could be gained if public school music educators were required to teach students about the unique vernacular music of their region?
3. Would K-12 vernacular music coursework have aided you in your quest to become a professional bluegrass roots music educator or performer? Why, or why not?
4. In terms of college preparation, what advantages would bluegrass and roots music studies students gain if public schools explored these traditions in grades K-12 music classes?
5. What benefits might the bluegrass community and society as a whole gain if formally trained bluegrass music professionals were granted access to Tennessee music education licensure?
6. What impediments currently prevent formally trained bluegrass and roots music studies professionals from pursuing Tennessee music education licensure?
7. Can you think of any pedagogical or procedural revisions that could strengthen the case for these professional musicians to be granted access to Tennessee music education licensure?
8. Do you feel that it is important for bluegrass or roots music studies majors to learn to read standard notation? Why, or why not?

9. In the event that formally trained bluegrass music professionals were granted access to state Tennessee music education licensure, what percentage of your students would you estimate to be interested in this opportunity?
10. Do you believe that formally trained bluegrass and roots music professionals will be granted access to Tennessee music education licensure at some point in the near or distant future? Why, or why not?