

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**The Lack of and Discouragement of Certified and Intended Music Educators due to the  
State of Louisiana Teacher Certification Requirements.**

A Thesis Submitted To

The Faculty of The School of Music

In Candidacy for The Degree of

Doctor of Music Education

by

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Lynchburg, Virginia

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THE LACK OF AND DISCOURAGEMENT OF CERTIFIED AND INTENDED MUSIC  
EDUCATORS DUE TO THE STATE OF LOUISIANA TEACHER CERTIFICATION  
REQUIREMENTS.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Current trends in today's secondary education level lean towards a shortage of certified teachers and educators in all subject areas. As public and private school administrations devise new incentives and plan to recruit individuals to the field of education, preservice educator requirements and university curriculum demands continue to discourage and prevent aspiring educators from not only becoming fully certified but also continuing the journey of the teacher preparation and certification process. This qualitative research study will focus on Louisiana's music teacher certification preparation practices within its universities and the effects of failure to successfully pass the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam on future music educators. Additionally, it will show the impact of having non-certified music professionals teaching music/band in public schools in Louisiana. The purpose of this study is to thoroughly investigate the issue of Louisiana's certified music educator shortage and offer research to improve preservice music educator preparation practices to increase the number of certified music educators within Louisiana music schools and programs. Multiple music educators and preservice music educators who have acquired certification through the means of a Louisiana music education curriculum or are currently seeking certification through the means of the State of Louisiana music teacher certification standards will be interviewed. Additionally, Louisiana's university music curriculum requirements will be analyzed, and previous topic research will be utilized for the purpose of substantiation and reference.

## **DEDICATION**

During one's lifespan, there are times when, without the support, sacrifices, and understanding from others, our personal goals and dreams could not be accomplished. I would like to thank, first, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for His grace and mercy throughout my life journey and for the individuals He brought into my path. For those people with whom I have been blessed to have in my life, I am grateful for everything. Thus, I write this dedication to my family for their unwavering support throughout my academic journey. My successful completion of the curriculum, courses, academic mandates, and ultimately the Doctor of Music Education degree at Liberty University could not have been possible. I would be remiss if I did not recognize my beautiful, encouraging, and understanding wife Tia, our wonderful son and daughter Dajun and D'mya, and our granddaughter Scarlett. I am also grateful for my mother, Linda Damond, and my father, Quinton Moore, as they, throughout my entire life, supported and encouraged me throughout this entire academic process, and motivated me when times seemed overwhelming. Furthermore, I am grateful for my second set of parents, Dorothy and Elmo Breaux, as they too were influential in my successes in life. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to all the teachers and mentors who chose to give their best when teaching and guiding me during my lifetime. I hope this work serves as a testament to your efforts in my life. I would not be remiss if I did not finalize my dedication with my grandmother, Irene Damond. Thank you for loving me. May you rest in peace.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Orff-Schulwerk Association-----	AOSA
Educational Testing Service-----	ETS
Every Student Succeeds Acts-----	ESSA
Institutional Review Board-----	IRB
Liberty University-----	LU
National Association of Schools of Music-----	NASM
No Child Left Behind-----	NCLB
Praxis Music: Content Knowledge exam-----	(5113)
Principles of Learning and Teaching (Exam)-----	PLT
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges-----	SACSCOC

## Introduction

The field of education has been under the watchful eye of the world since the beginning of its inception but has become more scrutinized and monitored as time has progressed due to the value of children to not only their parents but the communities in which they live. Relatively, educators, music teachers included, have been held to higher professional, educational, and moral standards than individuals of other professions. Aspiring, secondary, and university-level educators are adversely connected by the demands of the world regarding teacher certification, licensure, and as a result, teacher pay, and teacher survival within the profession. Harding contends that teacher education follows the needs/demands of the education system, thus preservice teachers must be adequately prepared by institutions for what the real world demands of them.<sup>1</sup>

In the state of Louisiana preservice music educators are expected to not only complete curriculum guidelines, but also complete service-learning hours, pass the Praxis Learning and Teaching exam, the Music Content Knowledge exam, and complete a year of student teaching before becoming fully certified/licensed. Many individuals, especially within the African American community experience difficulties completing the demands of the state as a result. Being a university professor and academic advisor for undergraduate music education majors has allowed for the constant witness to the persistent disappointment of the intended music education major's curriculum and testing requirement struggles. The adversity experienced by those who fail to complete preservice teacher programs/graduate because of music educator testing

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<sup>1</sup> Leonie Harding, "Graduates and Pre-Service Teachers: Survival in the Early Years," *Idiom*; v.49 n.1 p.18-20; 2013 49, no. 1 (2013): 18–20. <https://search-informit-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/10.3316/aeipt.197591>.

requirements is familiar to the author and serves as a motivation to right the wrongs of the system for the intended music professionals of the future.

Erbes predicted, in 1987, that with more entrance and exit standards proposed for teacher certification and licensure, the number of available teachers would be diminished.<sup>2</sup> Now, more than ever, public, and private school districts are hiring noncertified individuals to teach music/band/choir because of teacher shortages or lack of available certified teachers which is, in part, because of the testing requirements and curriculum demands of the music education profession. Steadman and Simmons attest, that school districts across America must contend with the problem of not enough educators versus too many students, and that colleges and universities, nationwide, are in a struggle to replace retired educators with qualified/certified persons.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this study intends to highlight the issues of the teacher preparation and certification processes in the state of Louisiana and assist stakeholders in the development of a more efficient process in which to prepare and sustain preservice educators in the state, will bring awareness to the dysfunctional cycle of the process by which what is acceptable to become a certified music educator in the state of Louisiana is governed.

### Background of the Topic

According to Colwell, May, Willie, Worthen, and Pehrson, music teacher certification practices evolved out of concern for competency in the music classroom.<sup>4</sup> In response to the

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<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Erbes, "A New Era in Teacher Certification," *Music Educators Journal* 73, no. 6 (1987): pp. 46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3400261>.

<sup>3</sup> Sharilyn C. Steadman and John S. Simmons, "The Cost of Mentoring Non-University-Certified Teachers: Who Pays the Price?," *Phi Delta Kappan* 88, no. 5 (2007): pp. 364-364, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170708800507>.

serious problems brought to the forefront by The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession and the specified task force that was responsible for the generating of the Holmes Group Report, a report informing the public of the makeup and duties of the task force for teacher education reform,<sup>5</sup> accountability measures, including teacher proficiency exams, observations, and curriculum guidelines have become the standard of teacher accountability measures.<sup>6</sup> As a result, educators, music teachers included, in order to be considered fully certified must not only gain certification, the acquisition of teaching credentials from an official educational institution or government agency but also licensure, the legal right to practice the teaching profession in a state.<sup>7</sup> As concern for teacher competency in the classroom increases, the processes; and standards by which educators are judged are altered and often become more rigorous and demanding.

Dating back in history to the time of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA), music and the arts have been solidified as essential subject areas pertaining to the overall development of students. Since then, music and art professionals have been held to higher standards than those prior. The education profession has, for; a while, been experiencing teacher shortages or a lack of available certified teachers which is, partly because of the testing requirements, curriculum demands of the music education profession, low wages,

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<sup>4</sup> Brittany Nixon May et al., “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification and Licensure Practices in the United States,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 1 (April 2017): pp. 65-88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717699650>.

<sup>5</sup> “Tomorrow’s Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group.,” ERIC (The Holmes Group, Inc., 501 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034 (\$6.50)., March 31, 1986), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED270454>.

<sup>6</sup> Brittany Nixon May et al., “An Analysis of State Music Education Certification and Licensure Practices in the United States, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

and a lack of respect from other professions.<sup>8</sup> Muller contends, that the United States is in its worse teacher shortage in history.<sup>9</sup> The COVID-19 shutdown of spring 2020 resulted in an unprecedented disruption in not only K–12 education but also increased the teacher shortage in the education profession in addition to affecting all disciplines, including instrumental music.<sup>10</sup> These downfalls, combined with the continuous demands of the profession, have caused a dilemma that must be addressed for the education profession to thrive.

Since the introduction of teacher educator assessment as a means of certification and licensure, the debate has been about whether teacher preparation and certification are related to teacher effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> Currently, in many Louisiana school districts, teacher effectiveness is taking a back seat to the demand of having an individual teach subjects offered within the K-12 curriculum. This dilemma is causing education administrators and professionals to revisit the priorities of the profession and current teacher education guidelines. They must consider more than ever the means by which to either keep certified educators in the school system or to entice available and certified newcomers to work for their district. Louisiana legislation has, recently, due to the current state of education, decided to abandon the Praxis I: Core Exam as a means of alleviating state requirements for preservice teachers in hopes that it will increase the graduation rate of certified educators within its teacher programs. This move further substantiates the notion

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<sup>8</sup> Wesley Muller, "What's Behind Louisiana's Teacher Shortage," *New Orleans CityBusiness* (Aug 26, 2022), <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/whats-behind-louisianas-teacher-shortage/docview/2708621127/se-2>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Phillip M. Hash, "Remote Learning in School Bands during the Covid-19 Shutdown," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 68, no. 4 (July 2020): pp. 381-397, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429420967008>.

<sup>11</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher education and the American future," *Journal of Teacher Education* 61, no. 1-2 (2010): 35+. *Gale In Context: Biography* (accessed September 14, 2022), [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A216896337/BIC?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=2fb789e3](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A216896337/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=2fb789e3).



that its education system is in dire need of further improvement for the sake of recovery and its students. Veteran teachers are being impacted in that, because of the teacher shortage, many times, are called to hold extra duties in the effort of “closing the gap” left by unfilled or underfilled positions. As a result, many of them experience teacher burnout, leave the profession, or lose enthusiasm for the job. A random-effects meta-analysis confirmed that exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment are significantly related to teacher burnout.<sup>12</sup> It is evident that if Louisiana officials do not take immediate action regarding this matter, its education system’s effectiveness will continue to decline at a dramatic rate due to the lack of unqualified professionals combined with overcrowded classrooms. In addition to improving the material discussed within this study, other issues such as teacher pay, workload, and professional development opportunities will also have to be addressed for the complete revival of the education system.

### Theoretical Framework

The profession of education reflects a combination of worldly demands, the needs of students and communities, and human beings’ intent to ensure that the next generation is not only prepared to uphold the standards of society but also to propel the world to higher standards. As nations contend to become among the top world economies through means of increasing the rate of educated citizens,<sup>13</sup> education and its professionals are demanded to uphold the standard and to carry the load, which calls for a higher standard of education and professional competence for them. Currently, educators are viewed by society as the main avenue by which the generation

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<sup>12</sup> Daniel J. Madigan and Lisa E. Kim, “Towards an Understanding of Teacher Attrition: A Meta-Analysis of Burnout, Job Satisfaction, and Teachers’ Intentions to Quit,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 105 (2021): pp. 1-1, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103425>.

<sup>13</sup> Marjolein Torenbeek and Velibor Peters, “Explaining Attrition and Decreased Effectiveness of Experienced Teachers: A Research Synthesis,” *Work* 57, no. 3 (July 2017): pp. 397, <https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-172575>.

of tomorrow will receive the information, motivation, and guidance deemed necessary to be successful in life. “During the Teachers’ Association Congress, Ataturk emphasized that the teaching profession is not limited only with professional knowledge and skills but also requires teacher sacrifice beyond the classroom.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Kösterelioğlu asserts that the performance of teachers are perceived and judged by varying attitudes and behavior caring for children and personal and professional development.<sup>15</sup> Because of this, educators are in a constant mode of self and professional upgrade, and preservice educators are forced to adhere to preservice education curriculum standards and certification/licensure exams aligned with the educational, political, and professional perceptions of the world.

Music education, ever since its inclusion in the Boston school system’s curriculum in 1832, because of the efforts of the music education pioneer, Lowell Mason has continued to progress as an essential and necessary subject area for the development of children, worldwide.<sup>16</sup> The demand to prove to American society the importance of music education to not only children’s overall development but also within the communities where music education is implemented has brought attention to music educator development. Additionally, the highlighting of music education’s importance to society has influenced America’s highest officials to declare music and art’s importance to society and children’s development. With music education’s acceptance and the growing spotlight on the education profession and its educators, the demand for more effective music education professionals, like other education

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<sup>14</sup> İlker Kösterelioğlu, “The Effect of the Activities within the Scope of the 2023 Education Vision Document on Teachers’ Professional Image Perceptions,” *Problems of Education in the 21st Century* 79, no. 1 (October 2021): pp. 60-61, <https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/21.79.60>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>16</sup> Michael L. Mark, “A History of Music Education Advocacy,” *Music Educators Journal* 89, no. 1 (2002): pp. 45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399884>.

subjects, has transformed into preservice teacher programs, curriculum demands, and music educator exams.<sup>17</sup> The state of Louisiana is no exception to the national trend of teacher preparation and observation practices and programs.

Louisiana's school system is currently in a state of survival as a result of teacher shortages, and as a result, the demand to have to utilize non-licensed/certified teachers in classrooms.<sup>18</sup> Being a witness to the many negative preservice teacher testing experiences and curriculum guideline failures, as a professor at a Historical Black College/University (HBCU) has allowed for an in-depth understanding of not only the hardships of preservice music educators but also of the reasons why Louisiana's education system is suffering. After examining this process for many years and also falling victim to Louisiana's curriculum demands, it is determined that action must be taken to solve the catastrophes within the system.

This study will uncover the transgressions of Louisiana's preservice music educators through the survey methodology in which those who have experienced Louisiana's practices and testing will be asked a series of questions pertaining to the main objective of the study. It will assist readers in dissecting Louisiana's preservice music educator programs for the purpose of repair of the system and developing more effective preservice music teacher testing procedures. The research will also be conducted on teacher education programs within state universities for the purpose of investigating the pitfalls of curriculums as a result of testing, schedule conflict, and curriculum guidelines. The overall intent of this study is to improve the music education

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<sup>17</sup> Edward Asmus, "The Increasing Demand for Music Teachers," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 8, no. 2 (1999): pp. 5-6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/105708379900800202>.

<sup>18</sup> Wesley Muller, "What's Behind Louisiana's Teacher Shortage," *New Orleans CityBusiness* (Aug 26, 2022), <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/whats-behind-louisianas-teacher-shortage/docview/2708621127/se-2>.

profession, make intended music educator evaluation practices less damaging and detouring, emotionally, and foster a more effective music educator certification process by way of improving music educator preparation practices, thus ensuring that students who are involved in music within Louisiana schools receive the highest level of education attainable.

### Problem Statement

An overwhelming number of research studies propose that the recruitment and retention of effective teachers are vital for the student's academic success, thus recruitment, retaining, and teacher preparation processes regarding high quality/effective educators is a long-standing concern and policy issue for schools, school districts, and states abroad.<sup>19</sup> In the state of Louisiana, educational stakeholders endure similar problems and are experiencing constant decline as a result of recent worldly events. In addition to those common issues, preservice teacher candidates are subject to curriculum guidelines and licensure exam standards. Many times, students experience failure, which leads to discouragement and a loss of interest in the education profession.

### Purpose Statement

Researchers attest that one of the main criteria of content validity of teacher subject matter knowledge tests is ratings of competencies for importance for inclusion in the tests for initial certification.<sup>20</sup> The research accumulated because of this study will assist education professionals and state policymakers in repairing teacher preparation processes to increase not

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Vagi, Margarita Pivovarova, and Wendy Miedel Barnard, "Keeping Our Best? A Survival Analysis Examining a Measure of Preservice Teacher Quality and Teacher Attrition," *Journal of Teacher Education* 70, no. 2 (2017): pp. 115-127, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117725025>.

<sup>20</sup> Carolyn Lavelly et al., "Factor Analysis of Importance of Teacher Initial Certification Test Competency Ratings by Practicing Florida Teachers," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 50, no. 1 (1990): pp. 161, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164490501019>.

only the number of effective teachers entering Louisiana's school systems but also the number of certified/licensed teachers in the state. Thus, the study's purpose is to not only highlight the inconsistencies of the present processes but also to offer fact-based data for the purpose of developing a more efficient music educator system of preparation.

### Significance of the Study

Higher education professionals are responsible for preparing and guiding preservice music educators for the music education profession; thus, it is evident that the cycle of inadequate or uncertified music educators must be ended at the higher education level.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the questions to be answered in this study are specific to the intention of the significance of this work. Research question one is significant because due to the constant demand for educator reliability and competence, preservice music educators are forced to maneuver through music education curriculum guidelines and updates, political decisions, testing requirements, and many other standards to gain acceptance and complete certification and licensure in the profession. This question will assist in highlighting not only the obstacles the preservice music educators must overcome but also shed light on the repercussions of the pressures of those experiences.

The significance of research question number two is that it allows for the research and highlighting of effective strategies and methods in the effort of repairing the issues of teacher preparation programs, thus helping higher education music professionals in the mission to increase the certified music educator curriculum completion and graduation rate. Darling-Hammond suggests that subject matter knowledge has a positive influence up to a certain level

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<sup>21</sup> Eunice Boardman Meske, "Teacher Education Reform and the College Music Educator," *Music Educators Journal* 73, no. 6 (1987): pp. 26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3400257>.

of basic competence but is less important thereafter.<sup>22</sup> Question number three is significant in that it is intended to capture evidence that supports the notion that the calculation of knowledge of preservice educators by means of the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam is effective and required. All three research questions in the study have been researched in the effort of encouraging the progression of the music education teacher preparation practices and the overall betterment of the music education profession.

#### Statement of Primary Research Questions

Due to obstacles existing in the undergraduate tenure process, the professional futures of many music education students around the world remain undetermined. One problem lies within the ability to complete the collegiate music education curriculum and the steps required to obtain teacher certification. Observed during the seven and a half university-level years of my career, it has been witnessed that those who do not complete the requirements, many times, opt for the music liberal arts degree to graduate on time or at all. Still today, the national shortage of music teachers in kindergarten through grade twelve is one of the most critical challenges encountered in the profession of music education.<sup>23</sup> Thus, it is a challenge that affects all educational levels; and requires the collaborative effort of music education professionals, public school and university administrators, and the Louisiana Board of Education to address and rectify this lingering issue.<sup>24</sup> Now, more than ever, public and private school districts are hiring noncertified

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<sup>22</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement, A Review of State Policy Evidence," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 8, no. 1 (2000): 8:1.

<sup>23</sup> Carolynn A. Lindeman, "Idea Bank: Ten Strategies for Higher Education and the K-12 Music Teacher Shortage," *Music Educators Journal* 90, no. 3 (2004): pp. 66-67, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3399964>.

<sup>24</sup> Carolynn A. Lindeman, "Idea Bank: Ten Strategies for Higher Education and the K-12 Music Teacher Shortage," *Music Educators Journal* 90

individuals to teach music/band/choir because of teacher shortages or lack of available certified teachers which is, partly because of the testing requirements and curriculum demands of the music education profession. In the effort to bring awareness to the dysfunctional cycle of the process by which we govern what is acceptable to become a certified music educator in the state of Louisiana, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

**Research Question One:** What are the challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana?

**Research Question Two:** How can music educators, professionals, and state legislation increase the music education curriculum completion rate?

**Research Question Three:** In what ways does the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promote the preparation and future success of intended music educators, if at all?

### Working Hypotheses

As a result of the tireless efforts of music education professionals and advocates throughout the history of the United States music has transformed into a human development necessity. Thus, it is the understanding of today's society that music and music education are beneficial to all who are involved in the musical experience. Benefits include, but are not limited to success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life.<sup>25</sup> Years of experience have led the researcher to an innate understanding of the music education profession which allows for educational and professional problem-solving skills. What is envisioned for this study is that all readers will acquire in-depth knowledge and awareness of the

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<sup>25</sup> Ken Petress, "The importance of music education," *Education* 126, no. 1 (2005): 112+. *Gale In Context: Biography* (accessed September 15, 2022). [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A136846797/BIC?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=dbb585ce](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A136846797/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=dbb585ce).

crisis of music educator preparation practices and requirements in the state of Louisiana. The purpose of this study is for educational stakeholders to be able to gain a clearer perspective of why there is currently a shortage of not only music educators nationally but also fully certified music educators in the state of Louisiana's school system. The three research questions to be answered within this study are forecasted as such:

**Research question one may be answered with the following hypothesis:** The challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana are university requirements, based on the passing of the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge and Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) exams; Praxis exam requirements; curriculum pitfalls (course conflicts, etc.), and testing discouragement. One of the strategies Zeichner suggests is that for education to progress, university teacher educators and the field of education's professional organizations must seek ways to "broaden the goals of teacher education beyond raising the scores of standardized achievement exams," such as the Praxis exam.<sup>26</sup> Marchese and Buttram contend that recognition of the actual ability of teachers to perform holds much more importance than the amassing of course credits, competencies, and credentials.<sup>27</sup>

**Research question two may be answered with the following hypothesis:** Music educators, professionals, and state legislation can increase the music education curriculum completion rate by altering state mandates, eliminating praxis exam barriers, and ensuring

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<sup>26</sup> Ken Zeichner, "Reflections of a University-Based Teacher Educator on the Future of College- and University-Based Teacher Education," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 3 (2006): pp. 326-340, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105285893>.

<sup>27</sup> Joe B. Buttram "Outcomes Assessment: A Process for Improving Music Teacher Education," *Visions of Research in Music Education* 16, no. 4 (2010): 53.



teacher program curriculums are structured for efficiency. Many teachers have expressed the need for more tactile experiences, more discussions of pedagogical problems in a variety of settings, and classroom management.<sup>28</sup> In most cases, prospective preservice music educators are desperately searching for a concept of effective teaching<sup>29</sup>, understanding that without it, success during the early years of teaching will be difficult to accomplish. Blocker and Swetnam contend that the utilization of traditional procedures is a result of the precious balance that demands to be maintained between institutions of higher learning and schools and teachers who hold the responsibility of hosting preservice teachers.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the notion that state legislation and higher education teaching professionals should take notice of the pleas and suggestions of first to second-year teachers in an effort of acquiring a remedy to what really works regarding teacher preparation in the state of Louisiana is a reasonable one.

Music education majors on the undergraduate level experience a variety of formative and summative assessments during their degree programs.<sup>31</sup> Though the experiences allow for understanding, students, many times, are successful in passing required courses but encounter difficulties when expected to transfer the information learned to the Praxis exam. Additionally, many students are not equipped in understanding effective strategies/methods of test taking and

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<sup>28</sup> Roy M. Legette, "Perceptions of Early-Career School Music Teachers Regarding Their Preservice Preparation," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2013): pp. 12-17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123313502342>.

<sup>29</sup> Manny Brand, "Methods Class—Key to Improving Music Teacher Education," *Music Educators Journal* 72, no. 8 (1986): pp. 28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3396654>.

<sup>30</sup> Michael D. Zemek, "The Selection and Preparation of Cooperating Teachers in Music Education," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 17, no. 2 (2008): pp. 7-18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708317619>.

<sup>31</sup> Stephanie Prichard, "A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices in Music Teacher Education," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 27, no. 3 (March 2018): pp. 94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717750079>.

as a reason, become stagnant at the point of scheduling or attempting to take the exam. Reports from a study conducted by Hardacre, Hafner, and Nakama found that minority teacher candidates experience testing anxiety, “involving the fear or worry of negative evaluation that results in negative behavioral, physiological, or emotional response.”<sup>32</sup> Reports also noted that due to prior and present fears or issues of discrimination, some minority teacher candidates contend with racial battle fatigue<sup>33</sup>, a term coined in 2003 by Dr. William Smith which refers to anxiety or emotional discomfort because of negative and racially charged experiences.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, in many cases, many preservice music education students are hindered from entering the next phase of the curriculum of the degree program at their specific university. As a result, students experience stress and anxiety due to the realization that they have become stagnant and as a result may not graduate on time or as music educators.

**Research question three may be answered with the following hypothesis:** The Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promotes the preparation and future success of intended music educators in terms of teaching efficiency, subject understanding, and knowledge-based reasoning. Additionally, the exam ensures that all music educators are knowledgeable and aware of all that is included in the anticipated profession, music education, thus preparing them for future professional and educational success.

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<sup>32</sup> Bahiyiyh Hardacre, Anne Hafner, and Phyllip Nakama, "The Impact of Test Anxiety on Teacher Credential Candidates," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (Summer, 2021): 7-28, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/impact-test-anxiety-on-teacher-credential/docview/2562579855/se-2>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Morgan Taylor Goodwin, “Racial Battle Fatigue: What Is It and What Are the Symptoms?,” Medium (Racial Battle Fatigue at Michigan State University, January 28, 2022), <https://medium.com/racial-battle-fatigue/racial-battle-fatigue-what-is-it-and-what-are-the-symptoms-84f79f49ee1e>.

In recent years, the measurement of educator quality and effectiveness has been discussed and debated extensively in the United States in addition to teacher educator responsibilities.<sup>35</sup> As teacher shortages become more critical, people of today's society, have begun to question all aspects of not only the teacher preparation process but all that surrounds the teaching profession regarding educator sustainment. For this reason, education professionals and legislators must continue to investigate the matter of what is causing the education profession to constantly be in transition.

#### Identification of Variables/Methodology

According to Elpus, the most required music content exams required for teacher licensure in the United States are the music exams offered as part of the Praxis Series of teacher licensure tests published and administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS)<sup>36</sup>. Thus, this study, though focused on the state of Louisiana, will be resourceful in addressing the issues of music educator preparation processes in other states. As referred to and guided by the work of Creswell's research approach and design, this qualitative transformative worldview and narrative design research study seeks to examine the issues related to the oppression of prospective music education professionals.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the research will identify perspectives that have not yet been explored and documented concerning the lack of and discouragement of certified and intended music educators in Louisiana. The intention is to gain a greater understanding of why

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<sup>35</sup> Stephanie Prichard, "A Profile of High-Stakes Assessment Practices in Music Teacher Education," 94-95.

<sup>36</sup> Kenneth Elpus, "Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63., 315.

<sup>37</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, "Chapter 1/The Selection of a Research Approach," in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2023), pp. 17-17.

educators are either leaving the profession and why preservice music educators are changing their minds about becoming educators.

Perspectives on preservice music educator preparation, the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam validity and accuracy, and university music education curriculum requirements have emerged as themes through exploration of the small body of existing literature and the completion of an in-depth questionnaire/survey by participants who have been students in Louisiana university music education programs. Additionally, those who have been or are currently music educators that are products of the Louisiana music education curriculum guidelines and have experienced taking the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge exam will be examined. This examination will allow researchers to delve deep into the effects of the unsuccessful attempts of teacher examination and exam pitfalls.

### Core Concepts

The core concepts of this study align with educator competency, music teacher certification processes, teacher shortage awareness, and music proficiency testing for music educators. According to Elpus, “Researchers in music education have suggested that students from marginalized populations may encounter barriers to entering and completing music degree programs, thus this study will be centered to also gain a more in-depth understanding of the differences between the population of prospective teachers who pass praxis exams and those who do not.”<sup>38</sup> In an effort to educationally and professionally contribute to the positive transformation and reform of the music educator education and certification process, this study will not only bring awareness to defects within the system but also offer strategies and

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<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Elpus, “Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 3 (2015): pp. 316, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415602470>.

suggestions for repair. Additionally, in an effort of increasing the music education curriculum completion rate in Louisiana colleges and universities, the study will investigate curriculum guidelines as a means of highlighting the potential and present pitfalls and setbacks throughout.

### Definition of Terms

Within this portion of the chapter, the author provides readers with terms pertinent to the study and the Thesis as a means of education, as to assist readers in gaining a clearer understanding of the study and the thesis. The terms are organized in a manner to allow for easy navigation and are utilized throughout the study, thus it is important for all who read this thesis to become familiar with each for a more accurate reading of what is presented throughout.

Accountability- “*Education*: a policy of holding schools and teachers accountable for students' academic progress by linking such progress with funding for salaries, maintenance, etc.”<sup>39</sup>

Curriculum: the term is many times utilized by educators in diverse contexts. Generally, the term refers to courses, expectations, and guidelines students within an educational program, for the reason of learning, are required to pass/learn.<sup>40</sup>

Credentials: certified documentation earned by individuals of a profession, in this case music education, for the purpose of official right to practice or perform the duties of the profession openly.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Accountability Definition & Meaning,” Dictionary.com (Dictionary.com), accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/accountability>.

<sup>40</sup> Sabbott, “Curriculum Definition,” The Glossary of Education Reform, August 12, 2015, <https://www.edglossary.org/curriculum/>.

<sup>41</sup> “Credential Definition & Meaning,” Merriam-Webster (Merriam-Webster), accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/credential>.

Formative Assessment: the process by which to monitor student learning in the effort of providing consistent feedback to be utilized by educators, to enhance not only their teaching methods but also students to improve personal learning.<sup>42</sup>

Praxis Music: Content Knowledge (5113) Practice Test: The exam that is administered to preservice music educators/undergraduate music students with a music education emphasis/concentration. The exam is designed to assess the degree of knowledge and understanding of test takers as a means of determining competence pertaining to the music education profession.<sup>43</sup>

Preservice teachers: individuals who are enrolled in an educator education program who seek to become education professionals/teachers upon completion of said program/degree requirements. Preservice teachers are also referred to as student teachers or teacher candidates.<sup>44</sup>

Summative Assessment: evaluation of students learning conducted at the conclusion of a course, instructional unit, or school term which is normally analyzed in comparison to a predetermined standard or benchmark.<sup>45</sup>

Louisiana Teacher Certification/Licensure: Obtained by individuals who successfully complete a state approved teacher education/preparation program, thus earning a bachelor's degree in the

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<sup>42</sup> Carnegie Mellon University, "Formative vs Summative Assessment - Eberly Center - Carnegie Mellon University," Formative vs Summative Assessment - Eberly Center - Carnegie Mellon University, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/formative-summative.html>.

<sup>43</sup> "Praxis Music: Content Knowledge Practice Test (Updated 2022)," |, September 22, 2022, <https://www.mometrix.com/academy/praxis-ii/music-content-knowledge/>.

<sup>44</sup> "What Is Pre-Service Teachers," IGI Global, accessed September 29, 2022, <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/preparation-of-pre-service-teachers/23201>.

<sup>45</sup> Carnegie Mellon University, "Formative vs Summative Assessment - Eberly Center - Carnegie Mellon University," Formative vs Summative Assessment

field. Additionally, persons who complete state requirements earn a certificate of certification which is valid for a period of three years after acceptance and must be renewed through other state mandated requirements.<sup>46</sup>

Noncertified teacher: individuals who are members of the teaching profession who have not earned the state required credentials for licensure/certification. Noncertified persons, though in the teaching ranks, many times, do not earn the same level of earnings as certified teachers, are limited to the level of position with the teaching organization in which they teach, and are subject to teaching in the private school sector as a result of the demand for certification by the public-school system.<sup>47</sup>

Low-Completer Program: According to the Louisiana Board of Regent’s guidelines which were adopted/enacted in 2009 to combat anticipated budget shortfall within the University of Louisiana System, low-completer programs were categorized as college and university programs that could/would be eliminated or consolidated because they failed to have a specified amount of students (completers) to graduate within a specified amount of time (yearly/5 years).<sup>48</sup> In 2011, the Louisiana Board of Regents, thus the University System further reaffirmed/embraced the low-completer program. During this time, over one hundred teacher education programs were identified as “low completing.”<sup>49</sup> Since then, Louisiana’s college and university educator

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<sup>46</sup> “Louisiana Teaching Certification: Become a Teacher in La,” Teaching Certification, May 3, 2022, <https://teaching-certification.com/louisiana-teaching-certification/#initial-cert>.

<sup>47</sup> “Teaching without Certification,” Teacher, June 12, 2019, <https://www.teacher-certification-online.org/teaching-without-certification/>.

<sup>48</sup> “Regents Halts New Programs and Identifies Underperforming ... - Louisiana,” University Of LOUISIANA SYSTEM , January 8, 2009, <https://www.regents.la.gov/assets/docs/2013/03/lowcempl1809.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> “UL System Embraces New Low-Completer Program Review,” UL System, December 19, 2017, <https://www.ulsystem.edu/news-and-events/ul-system-embraces-new-low-completer-program-review/>.

programs and other programs have been governed according to the standard of the low-completer program.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter one of this thesis sets the stage for a qualitative transformative worldview, narrative design, and questionnaire-based interviewing research study on the state of Louisiana's music teacher preparation practices, curriculum mandates, and Praxis Music: Content Knowledge (5113) exam. Its purpose is not only to highlight the underlying issues of the processes and barriers because of but also to assist music education stakeholders and state policymakers in creating a more productive and efficient music teacher preparation process. The chapter will begin with an introduction that welcomes readers, enlightens them on the issues regarding the specified problem regarding music educator preparation and recruitment, and introduces them to the intent of the study. Following the introduction is the historical overview/background in which the author outlines historical events, policies, and decisions that have caused the issues to be presented in the study.

The author then supplies readers with a clearer understanding of the problems that encouraged the study, thus also showing them the study's core purpose and significance to not only the field of music education but also the entire education profession and the development of Louisiana's students. The research questions, which are the core of the study, are then presented as a means of offering additional direction to the study. Each question is countered with a hypothesis that is based on the educational and professional experiences of the author and seeks to foreshadow the concluding results of the study. To ensure the reader's understanding of the construct of the study and give knowledge-based information regarding the methods utilized, research method variables and concepts are then provided. Finally, pertinent terms listed within



the chapter are explained in a manner that readers who have no prior knowledge pertaining to the subject may be able to better understand the material presented during the chapter.

The chapter's purpose is to not only capture the interest of intended readers but also to inform readers of educational practices in the state of Louisiana pertaining to the music education profession and how music educators are developed prior to their first teaching year. As readers maneuver through the chapter, they will not only become motivated to read the entire study, but they will also gain interest in correcting the problem that the study intends to solve. Because of the concise structure of the chapter, readers can easily maneuver through the material presented, therefore creating a pleasant reading experience overall. It is the intent of the author to gain the attention of all who seek to improve the state of Louisiana's current preservice music teacher procedures.

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

### Introduction

Louisiana's educator testing requirements have been, recently, altered to accommodate for the strenuous teacher education process, the declining interest of undergraduate students to become educators and the declining number of fully certified teachers available for hire. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of Louisiana's music teacher preparation practices, particularly, the Praxis Music: Content Knowledge (5113) exam, and the experiences of individuals who were subject to taking the exam as part of the teacher certification requirement. This study intended to connect individuals' Praxis Music: Content Knowledge (5113) exam experiences, negative and positive, to the final educational and professional outcomes and decisions. The researcher/writer, to gain a more in-depth insight regarding the subject matter, explored past and current literature and utilized the information gained to solidify the study's claims.

Chapter two, to substantiate the material presented within the study, further expounds on other literature related to teacher education, particularly, music teacher education not only in the state of Louisiana but abroad, including research that focuses on topics related to this study. Additionally, this chapter discusses how the presented literature has impacted individuals' current decision-making regarding the music education profession. Readers will gain a more secure perspective of the platform by which future and current intended music educators are expected to "climb" to become professionally and fully financially secure in the field of music education in Louisiana's public school system. Additionally, readers will be able to refute negative notions projected in today's society regarding the education profession.

## Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum Expectations

In the study conducted by Norman Stafford Jr. written in 1978 entitled “A Study of Selected Aspects of Teacher Education Programs at Institutions of Higher Education in Louisiana,” he contends that other research efforts have concluded that teacher education programs must focus the main efforts on that of major teaching experiences, educational and professional activities, or problems which obligate and encourage the merging of educational and professional boundaries.<sup>50</sup> The study was intended to record aspects of the teacher education processes and practices within higher education institutions that offered Bachelor’s degree programs geared towards preparing and certifying future educators at that moment in time.<sup>51</sup> Because of the detailed nature of the study, accuracy pertaining to Louisiana’s teacher program history, and the author’s intent to involve all stakeholders of the then-teacher program process, this study will support the ideals and research goals of this study.

In August of 2022, Wesley Muller, in his article “What’s Behind Louisiana’s Teacher Shortage,” brought to the forefront the issues, including financial burdens, which add to the negative impacts brought on by the teacher education process and testing procedures. The article supports the notion that there is a decline in individuals seeking to become music education professionals in Louisiana. The article uncovers underlying factors that are encountered by education professionals even if or after they become certified educators, thus allowing readers to envision the entire perspective of the experience of not only incoming educators but also current ones. Many individuals, when deciding on a profession, weigh not only the variables presented

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<sup>50</sup> Norman James Stafford, “A Study of Selected Aspects of Teacher Education Programs at Institutions of Higher Education in Louisiana.,” 1978, pp. 9-9, [https://doi.org/10.31390/gradschool\\_disstheses.3315](https://doi.org/10.31390/gradschool_disstheses.3315).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, xiv

in Muller's article but also the experience of taking teacher certification exams and curriculum demands.

A study also relevant to the research conducted within this study is that written by Michele Henry in 2005. His research offers evidence that supports the core elements of this study. In the study entitled "An Analysis of Certification Practices for Music Educators in the Fifty States," Henry compiled pertinent information pertaining to teacher preparation and certification processes within all states in the United States.<sup>52</sup> Because of the research conducted within this study, music education stakeholders and all else interested in the well-being of music education gained insight into the differences and similarities of teacher education mandates and certification practices amongst the states. Pertaining to this study, the information gathered as a result will be used to support the history presented regarding Louisiana's teacher preparation practices in addition to substantiating the information found because of this study. Henry proves that certification requirements, procedures, and program practices vary drastically from state to state, contending that states, many times, determine certification requirements alterations based on state and teacher demand, thus proving that mandate changes are possible.

Like other professions, music education, to entice individuals into the profession, must morph itself into not only a lucrative option but also maintain the standard of achievement established since its inception. The article constructed in 2011 by McDowell and Hellman researched teacher preparation from a unique perspective and a fairly innovative approach to preparing certified teachers for the education field. They, for the purpose of "examining factors associated with enrolling, continuing, and completing alternative certification programs in music

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<sup>52</sup> Michele Henry, "An Analysis of Certification Practices for Music Educators in the Fifty States," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 14, no. 2 (2005): pp. 48-48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837050140020108>.

education.”<sup>53</sup> Alternative certification, according to Feistritzer, is a variety of avenues to becoming and certified educator, different from that of the traditional teacher certification process.<sup>54</sup> The research gathered because of the article will support this research study by serving as proof that individuals seeking to become certified music educators during the present day have other options besides that of a traditional teacher education program, thus making readers of this study cognizant of why and how the effects of continued disappointment as a result of exam failure can cause individuals to choose an alternative route or even another profession.

Because of the demand for public school districts to recruit certified educators for their academic programs, states and districts have begun to create other methods and processes in hopes of teacher recruitment such as alternative certification programs.<sup>55</sup> These new processes add pressure to traditional university-based teacher education programs in that they offer students options otherwise not available within traditional teacher education curriculums. Research gained as a result of this study will serve to bring awareness of the underlying pitfalls of continuous traditional teacher education pitfalls thus encouraging professionals and stakeholders to mandate policies to avoid pitfalls and improve teacher certification practices.

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted regarding teacher education, serving as a foundational platform for all future research efforts such as this study. The research presented in this study is necessary, in that education is in constant transformation because of the

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<sup>53</sup> Carol McDowell and Daniel Hellman, "Backgrounds, Teaching Responsibilities, and Motivations of Music Education Candidates Enrolled in Alternative Certification Music Education Programs," *Research and Issues in Music Education* 9, no. 1 (09, 2011): np, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/backgrounds-teaching-responsibilities-motivations/docview/1357491017/se-2>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 1.

nature of change in economic dynamics, people, the demands of society, and worldly transformation. A foundational article regarding teacher preparedness is Erbes' 1987 article "A New Era in Teacher Certification." During the article Erbes educates readers about the historical experiences that caused a change in how people viewed education which as a result highlighted teacher effectiveness, thus igniting the movement of teacher preparation. The article sheds light on how and why the teacher education process of today is in the current state and why individuals are reluctant to reconstruct the function in its entirety. Though Erbes' article is accurate in its message, it does not account for future educational endeavors in the teaching profession, nation-wide economic changes, and an epidemic such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Articles such as Hourigan and Scheib's "Inside and Outside the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum" study the skills understood to be necessary for the enabling of successful undergraduate pre-educator experiences. The premise behind these types of research is to highlight and expound on curricular aspects and how they impact student teaching experiences, future educational and professional endeavors, and inadvertently, teacher test preparation. The authors focused the study around six instrumental music pre-educators and centered it in curricular and co-curricular skills such as administrative skills, classroom management, musicianship, and content and pedagogical knowledge.<sup>56</sup>

At the conclusion of the research, it was found that the participants perceived that coursework, applied lessons, ensemble participation, and outside curricular experiences attributed to ultimate skill acquisition, thus educational and professional development, and

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<sup>56</sup> Ryan M. Hourigan and John W. Scheib, "Inside and Outside the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 18, no. 2 (2009): pp. 48-48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708327871>.

success.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, Hourigan and Scheib compared the results of their research to that of the research conducted by W. G. Perry in 1999 which focused on the ethical and intellectual development of students during their college tenure. Determinations were that pre-service music educators perceived those skills acquired prior to student teaching experiences rely on personal intellectual development.<sup>58</sup> In relation to the research of this study, Hourigan and Scheib's findings assist in substantiating the premise that testing though it measures knowledge does not offer a completely accurate account of student learning, thus should not be the final factor in gauging teacher effectiveness and certification. Additionally, the article certifies that despite learning understanding gained through curriculum standards, musical experiences, and outside endeavors, it is possible for undergraduate pre-educators to be unsuccessful in passing required educator certification exams, thus confirming that other uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances such as test anxiety, mental fatigue, racially motivated concern, and test broadness can contribute to student's exam failures.

In 2022, author and researcher, Colleen Conway utilized a different approach to understanding preservice music teacher education. Conway sought to gather information on the perceptions of preservice music educator education over a period of twenty years. In doing so, she sought to offer readers a clearer perspective of the differences of preservice music educator preparation practices of the past and present, thus influencing discussion about the importance of change in practice and the necessity of professional and educational reflection for the purpose of enhancement.<sup>59</sup> Conway, by way of this research, harnesses past experiences of veteran music

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<sup>57</sup> Ryan M. Hourigan and John W. Scheib, "Inside and Outside the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 18, 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>59</sup> Colleen Conway, "Preservice Music Teacher Education: The View from 20 Years Later," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 31, no. 3 (2022): pp. 10-10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837221075676>.

educators and utilizes it for the betterment of today's preservice music educator preparation practices.

The article is organized in five themes, during which the first four themes gather research participants' responses to past practices and current suggestions for the future in areas of musicianship, field experiences, student teaching experiences, and the diminishing of curricula over time.<sup>60</sup> During the fifth and final theme of the article, Conway allows participants to offer perceptions regarding preservice music educator education practices over a twenty-year period.<sup>61</sup> As a result of the discussion, readers gain insight about what actual music education professionals feel regarding preservice music educator education practices of the present, why they feel this way, and what has been consistently beneficial to preservice music educators over the span of twenty years. This type of research aids in the improvement of preservice music education, highlights the pros and cons of past and present-day practices, and substantiates prior practices. Regarding this research, Conway's article confirms that though testing serves a purpose in teacher certification, it is not the main variable in preparing music teachers for the profession and should not be the variable that hinders certification. Lastly, the article proves that music teacher preparation and certification should be heavily based on curriculum accomplishments, field experiences, ensemble experiences, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching practices.

Timothy Brophy, in his article "Teacher Reflections on Undergraduate Music Education" also investigates undergraduate music education practices through teacher reflection. Mr.

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<sup>60</sup> Colleen Conway, "Preservice Music Teacher Education: The View from 20 Years Later," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 31, no. 3 (2022): pp. 10

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



Brophy, an assistant professor of music at the University of Florida in Gainesville, utilized the survey method to gather information from current music educators, of that time, about the positives and negatives aspects of their undergraduate music education tenure.<sup>62</sup> The article focused on a study conducted by the American Orff-Schulwerk (AOSA) Ad Hoc Undergraduate Reform Curriculum Committee, thus allowing readers to acquire an authentic account of music education curriculum demands, what preservice music educators must accomplish to become completely certified as music educators, and how they feel about their encounters and the pressures brought on by music education program expectations.

Though results differed amongst teachers according to years of teaching experience, the majority agreed that student teachers receive more field experience in music education prior to student teaching/preservice education experience.<sup>63</sup> Studies such as this one support the idea that because music education students have been involved in music activities and involved in music ensembles and experiences prior to becoming student teachers, they have a solid music foundation and understanding prior to actual student teaching experiences. The data gathered as a response to the research attained in Brophy's study validates the ideals of this work in that it aligns with the notion that future music educators are educationally and professionally impacted more through actual musical and professional experiences whether because of curricular activities, student teaching experiences, or outside experiences.

Brophy's direct attention to undergraduate music education allows readers of the study to recognize the curricular substance within the undergraduate music educator experience.

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<sup>62</sup> Timothy S. Brophy, "Teacher Reflections on Undergraduate Music Education," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 12, no. 1 (2002): pp. 1-1, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837020120010501>.

<sup>63</sup> Timothy S. Brophy, "Teacher Reflections on Undergraduate Music Education," *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 12.

Additionally, this type of research supports the notion that testing accounts for what or how much information students have grasped to that point but does not account for their teaching and musical abilities. This research also serves as evidence of music education program curriculum demands, the pressures encountered by preservice music education students as a result, and the feelings of music education majors regarding all program encounters.

During the article “Perceptions of Early-Career School Music Teachers Regarding Their Preservice Preparation,” conducted in 2013, the author and researcher Roy Legette reported the results of research regarding the preservice music education program experiences of beginning music educators.<sup>64</sup> Legette aimed to educate readers about the impact of preservice music education programs in relation to the survival or success of music educators once they enter the music education profession.<sup>65</sup> For the study, 101 music educators were surveyed via an online survey. The article serves as supporting evidence that not only preservice music education programs, curriculum, and preservice music educator testing standards attribute to educator shortage but also the reality that despite all the preservice music educators experience prior to entering the field, many are still not prepared.

The article gives readers perspective on the transition experiences of early career music educators nationwide, thus giving an account of common issues of the music education profession. Legette’s research assists this study in making readers aware of the many different dynamics within the process of preparing future music educators and how it is impossible for one dynamic to determine teacher certification and preparedness.

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<sup>64</sup> Roy M. Legette, “Perceptions of Early-Career School Music Teachers Regarding Their Preservice Preparation,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 32, no. 1 (2013): pp. 12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/8755123313502342>.

<sup>65</sup> Roy M. Legette, “Perceptions of Early-Career School Music Teachers Regarding Their Preservice Preparation,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 32.

Another article “Teacher Education and the American Future,” which was constructed in 2009 by Linda Darling-Hammond contributes to educating people about variables inside and outside the music education realm and the effects they have on music education practices, procedures, and music teacher education.<sup>66</sup> Darling-Hammond via this article reports from the perspective of present-day events and the effects of variables of the United States on the music education profession’s survival and existence. Additionally, the study highlights the United States context for teacher education, the power of teacher preparation processes for transforming teaching and learning, and current challenges regarding the topic in the United States.<sup>67</sup> It offers insight into the effect that outside political events such as the stimulus package enacted in 2009, have on education and the teacher preparation processes.

Regarding the present study, the article will assist in supporting the thought that education and teacher education are also affected by governmental aspects besides other variables. It will allow for justification of the main objective: the discouragement of intended music educators due to Louisiana teacher certification requirements, of the thesis topic and research, sought and give purpose to this study. Additionally, it will also allow readers to grasp a greater understanding and perspective of all that aspiring music educators have to contend with besides certification testing.

#### Undergraduate Music Education Testing

At the conclusion of curriculum requirements and the attainment of curricular demands, undergraduate music education students are expected to pass Praxis exams to become completely

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<sup>66</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher education and the American future," *Journal of Teacher Education* 61, no. 1-2 (2010): 35+. *Gale In Context: Biography* (accessed February 28, 2023), [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A216896337/BIC?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=2fb789e3](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A216896337/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=2fb789e3).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

certified according to Louisiana educator regulations. In many instances, students fail to become fully certified educators because of unsuccessful test scores despite completing course requirements. In some instances, students are denied access to upper-level courses because they have not acquired the required English and mathematics course standards.<sup>68</sup> Thus, it is imperative that more research be conducted to improve teacher-educator exam experiences. The following articles offer research in the area of music educator testing requirements, experiences, demands, guidelines, and effects on the music education profession.

A plethora of research has also been conducted for the purpose of connecting teacher effectiveness in the classroom to teacher education certification examinations. Researchers have sought to, in this type of research, answer questions pertaining to the effectiveness of testing educators for the purpose of certification attainment. Don Goldhaber sought to examine the relationship between educator testing and teacher effectiveness by connecting teachers to their students.<sup>69</sup> Goldhaber, utilizing a unique data formula found evidence of connections between student achievement and some teacher licensing results.<sup>70</sup> Findings also showed that teacher exams can have a negative impact on the number of effective and impactful individuals denied access to the classroom while also catapulting noneffective individuals who may be good testers into educator positions.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> “College of Education,” Grambling State University - College of Education, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.gram.edu/academics/majors/education/>.

<sup>69</sup> Dan Goldhaber, “Everyone’s Doing It, but What Does Teacher Testing Tell Us about Teacher Effectiveness?,” *Journal of Human Resources* XLII, no. 4 (2007): pp. 765, <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.xlii.4.765>.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Dan Goldhaber, “Everyone’s Doing It, but What Does Teacher Testing Tell Us about Teacher Effectiveness?,” *Journal of Human Resources* XLII, no. 4 (2007): pp. 765, <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.xlii.4.765>.

Goldhaber asserts that there is a great deal of uncertainty with utilizing teacher exams as a screening tool by which to limit/discourage low-quality teacher candidates from the teaching profession or as a measuring device utilized by school districts in making decisions related to hiring or staffing.<sup>72</sup> During the present-day version of the education profession, the notion that there is uncertainty with teacher testing as a means of the standard or final “right-of-passage” to becoming a certified teacher remains uncertain. Due to the current state of the profession as a result of recent events such as Covid-19 and national educator turnover states must revisit current teacher-educator certification standards as a means of alleviating negative implications.

In the article, “Race, Gender, and Teacher Testing: How Informative a Tool Is Teacher Licensure Testing?,” Goldhaber and Michael Hansen conduct research centered around Praxis II in an effort of answering two questions regarding teacher licensure policies: Question 1: Is the information conveyed through teacher certification exams consistent across the various teacher demographic groups? Question 2: Does diversity in the teacher labor market and the profession influence the distribution of student learning gains?<sup>73</sup> Goldhaber and Hansen assert that not only relationships between students and teachers impact student learning but also the racial demographic of the two are as important. Additionally, they recognize that there is significant racial disparity among teacher test results regarding teacher certification examinations.

The realization that today’s classrooms are diverse and that students react, respond, and relate differently to teachers of like backgrounds and ethnicity is highlighted and accounted for throughout this work. As Goldhaber and Hansen also recognize, since the implementation of teacher exams into

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<sup>72</sup> Dan Goldhaber, “Everyone’s Doing It, but What Does Teacher Testing Tell Us about Teacher Effectiveness?”, 766.

<sup>73</sup> Dan Goldhaber and Michael Hansen, “Race, Gender, and Teacher Testing: How Informative a Tool Is Teacher Licensure Testing?,” *American Educational Research Journal* 47, no. 1 (2010): pp. 220-220, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209348970>.

the teacher certification process, minority teacher candidates, the majority of the African American community have been negatively impacted by virtue of failure of exams. Thus, not only have they been negatively impacted as a result, but also have their potential African American communities and students. Articles such as this show that teacher testing, though important, does not measure enough to be regarded as the main variable for determining teacher effectiveness.

Another study that recognized the hardships encountered by minorities because of teacher certification exams is “A Case Study of the Impact MINORITIES of Performance-Based Testing on the Supply of Minority Teachers” of 1988. The authors of this case study focused their efforts on Florida’s intended minority educators, in that they outline the many test requirements, starting from the high school level, that aspiring teachers must pass/overcome to eventually become certified educators in the state of Florida.<sup>74</sup> The study serves as evidence that teacher certification exams have, for many years, been a hindrance for not only African Americans but also for many individuals who sought to enter the teaching profession. It reveals through overwhelming data the disparities between races on major exams, including teacher certification exams, thus supporting their notion that the entire Florida education system combined with its teacher certification requirements is counterproductive in increasing the number of minority educators in Florida.<sup>75</sup>

This case study gives readers insight into the development of the Florida teacher education system, a model mimicked by states around the nation since its inception during the 1970s.<sup>76</sup> Thus,

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<sup>74</sup> G. Pritchey Smith, Martha Chang Miller, and Janice Joy, “A Case Study of the Impact Minorities of Performance-Based Testing on the Supply of Minority Teachers,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 39, no. 4 (1988): pp. 45-45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718803900409>.

<sup>75</sup> G. Pritchey Smith, Martha Chang Miller, and Janice Joy, “A Case Study of the Impact Minorities of Performance-Based Testing on the Supply of Minority Teachers,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 39, no. 4 (1988): pp. 45-45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718803900409>.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

giving insight into other state programs around the nation today. Sadly, the trend discussed regarding teacher certification and African American teacher candidates and the treacherous journey to becoming a certified teacher has not improved much since that time. Now, more than ever, because of the recent spike in teachers within the classroom leaving because of various reasons as stated previously in this work, that state legislature seeks to improve testing inequities in the teacher certification process, beginning with testing requirements. Louisiana's teacher education program is like that of the program discussed in this case study, thus exemplifying many of the same issues.

Researcher Kenneth Elpus conducted research on the demographic impact on music teacher Praxis examination results. Elpus analyzed not only demographic profiles of teacher candidates seeking music teacher certification in the United States, but he also sought to understand whether candidate performance on the Praxis II: music content knowledge portion varies systematically as a function of various demographic characteristics.<sup>77</sup> This study, like many others, offered evidence that teacher testing program requirements are flawed in the United States and that testing alone cannot examine true teacher potential and effectiveness in the classroom. The research conducted in Elpus's study shows that the subject of music education is not only included in the struggle for teacher certification but also that music educator candidates, in many instances, have added obstacles regarding teacher certification that teacher candidates of other academic concentrations.

The study serves as evidence that improvements are needed in the area of music teacher testing and preparation in the United States. The research also brings awareness to the racial discrepancies amongst music educator candidates as it pertains to Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge pass/fail rates.

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<sup>77</sup> Kenneth Elpus, "Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 3 (2015): pp. 314-314, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415602470>.

In the article “Taking the long view toward music teacher preparation: The rationale for a dual-degree program” by Gena Greher and R. Tobin, the transformation of music teacher education programs and curriculums in the United States’ colleges and universities because of national and state teacher requirement changes and demands were explained in an effort to educate readers about the history behind today’s music teacher programs and testing requirements.<sup>78</sup> The research showed that many colleges and universities have, in the past, and, even now, in the present day to better prepare music teacher candidates have been in constant transformation. Additionally, the research serves as evidence that music teacher processes are not perfect, thus must be revisited annually in an effort of sustainability and effectiveness. Despite adjustments conducted by colleges and universities, the discrepancies because of racial demographics have not been addressed, thus the issues still exist in today’s education profession. Additionally, this study shows that teacher candidates can experience an effective music program but still not become certified because of below-level Praxis exam scores.

Ryan Hourigan and John Shweib through their “study examined perceived requisite skills and understandings needed for a successful music student teaching experience.”<sup>79</sup> The results of the study showed that music teacher candidates perceived curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular music teaching, and non-teaching experiences to be important and essential in their preparation for their future professional endeavors.<sup>80</sup> The study supports that music teacher candidates need not only curriculum and ensemble experiences but also outside curriculum experiences to become fully

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<sup>78</sup> Gena R. Greher and R. Nicholas Tobin, “Taking the Long View toward Music Teacher Preparation: The Rationale for a Dual-Degree Program,” *Music Educators Journal* 92, no. 5 (2006): pp. 50-50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3878503>.

<sup>79</sup> Ryan M. Hourigan and John W. Scheib, “Inside and Outside the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 18, no. 2 (2009): pp. 48-48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083708327871>.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid



prepared as music teacher candidates. What the study does not address is the idea that regardless of the attainment of the complete music teacher academic experience, students could possibly not become certified as music teachers because of a failed portion of the Praxis exam. The aforementioned experience is one experienced by many African American teacher candidates in the United States. Situations, as such, serve as proof that testing requirements for music teacher candidates must be re-examined.

Other articles such as Walter Mercer's "Teacher Education Admission Requirements: Alternative for Black Prospective Teachers and Other Minorities" discuss data that highlights the discrepancies in minority teacher candidate achievement on teacher exams and the attainment of teacher education program requirements. Research has shown university teacher education program requirements to also be of hindrance to music education/education teacher candidates. Mercer attests, that often, because of inadequate entrance examination test scores, otherwise, talented, motivated, committed, and capable minority students fail to gain access to teacher education programs.<sup>81</sup> Teacher education programs of today such as the program at Grambling State University also require students to have completed English and math course requirements to gain access to the teacher education programs.<sup>82</sup>

Recently, Louisiana's department of education removed the Praxis I: Core Academic Skills for Music Educators exam requirements as a standard for entrance into its teacher education programs as a means of alleviating present-day teacher shortages/program participation.<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>81</sup> Walter A. Mercer, "Teacher Education Admission Requirements: Alternatives for Black Prospective Teachers and Other Minorities," *Journal of Teacher Education* 35, no. 1 (1984): pp. 26-26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718403500108>.

<sup>82</sup> "College of Education," Grambling State University - College of Education, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.gram.edu/academics/majors/education/>.

research conducted by Mercer allows readers to recognize that teacher candidates, even prior to Praxis II testing, must overcome teacher education program requirements and other testing measures. Music education teacher candidates, in addition to the previously mentioned stipulations, as stated previously in this study, must meet music curriculum mandates/measures such as the performance-based senior recital. As a result of the combination of testing requirements/exam hurdles starting in grades 9-12, the demand of the music curriculum, education curriculum, and state testing mandates, and the hardships presented by demographics and the lack of educational support throughout academia minority teacher candidates have the odds stacked against them when contemplating a future in the music education or education profession. Though testing for teachers should be a requirement for measuring growth and understanding of pedagogical methods, the research conducted by Mercer shows that, as a defining mandate for teacher certification, it serves more as a hindrance to the progress of education instead of an uplifter of the profession.

Though many articles speak to the hindrance of minorities pertaining to teacher examinations, all races have been in some form negatively affected as a result of the failure of exams upon completion of their perspective curriculum requirements. As colleges and universities continue to adjust or conform to overcome state requirements, teacher candidates, from change to change, will be negatively impacted by the shifts. For example, during the early 2000s universities such as Grambling State University did not deny students who did not meet testing requirements access to upper-level education courses such as student teaching, but during the present day, Grambling State's teacher education program denies access to those same courses to students who have not met

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<sup>83</sup> Daffney Dawson and Tayler Davis, "New La. Law Changes Requirements to Become a Teacher," <https://www.ksla.com>, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.ksla.com/2022/06/30/new-la-law-changes-requirements-become-teacher/>.

testing/program requirements. Testing mandates seem to have become the overall dictator of teacher certification, in that all terms of teacher certification have been adjusted around it.

John Loughran acknowledges that there had been growing interest because of much recent scrutiny of the academic, testing, expectations, and program demands of teacher education.<sup>84</sup> Within his article “Professionally Developing as a Teacher Educator,” Loughran outlines what he refers to as crucial shaping factors of the development process of teacher educators as a means of offering a more well-rounded understanding of the process of developing professionally as a music educator.<sup>85</sup> Loughran, through careful analysis of teacher education processes, casts attention to the major aspects of teaching how to become a teacher. He, through his research, allows readers to get a glimpse of how teachers not only must learn for themselves but also for their prospective students which adds another layer of learning to the equation of academia.

The article discusses teachers as teachers of future teachers, the nature and constant transformation/adaptation of teacher education, the teacher education curriculum, pedagogical aspects of the profession, and the idea of research on teacher education practices. Doing so, Loughran teaches educators how to construct growth and develop professionally as music educators. The article is relevant to the intentions of this study in that it brings awareness to another facet of the music education profession that cannot be definitively calculated utilizing examining methods. Thus, further solidifying the stance of this article that teacher exams should not be the deciding factor of teacher certification/licensure.

Additionally, the article supports the notion that professionalism is an art that, over time, strengthens through experience in the profession, asserting that teacher candidates can only attain a

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<sup>84</sup> John Loughran, “Professionally Developing as a Teacher Educator,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 65, no. 4 (2014): pp. 271-271, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114533386>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

certain level of professionalism by the end of their undergraduate tenure. Variables such as professionalism are not calculated accurately, though very valuable, into overall teacher examination scores but are expected in the education field. Scenarios such as this instigate the overall validity of music teacher exams.

Kristen Gansle, George Noell, and Jeanne Burns embarked on a journey of research centered on Louisiana's teacher education system/program. Their research examined teacher preparation programs, utilizing a hierarchical linear model of Louisiana's student achievement data in the subjects of English, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.<sup>86</sup> The intent of the study was to explore the connection between teacher candidate levels of preparation within teacher preparation programs and new teacher achievement levels upon their entrance into the teaching profession. The authors contend that the level by which new teachers perform in the profession after completion of teacher preparation programs is directly related to the quality and quantity of educational experiences they have encountered while in undergrad.<sup>87</sup> Thus, the question arises: If this is correct, why is testing weighted so heavily in the determination of teacher certification? It also leads one to question, why teacher preparation programs and teacher candidates are judged by Praxis exam scores, in that if passing scores are not attained by students, teacher preparation programs or perceived to have not properly prepared said students. The authors also discuss the matter of: does the type of teacher program that a student goes through affect their overall preparation?

The assumption/notion that teacher preparation programs, the faculty members within these programs, and mentor teacher professionals combine their efforts to prepare teacher candidates for

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<sup>86</sup> Kristin A. Gansle, George H. Noell, and Jeanne M. Burns, "DO Student Achievement Outcomes Differ across Teacher Preparation Programs? an Analysis of Teacher Education in Louisiana," *Journal of Teacher Education* 63, no. 5 (2012): pp. 304-304, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487112439894>.

<sup>87</sup> Kristin A. Gansle, George H. Noell, and Jeanne M. Burns, "DO Student Achievement Outcomes Differ across Teacher Preparation Programs? an Analysis of Teacher Education in Louisiana," *Journal of Teacher Education* 63, no. 5 (2012): pp. 304-304.

the teacher workforce but are judged by how students perform on Praxis exams regardless of test anxiety and other negative variables that, many times, affect student testing performance and achievement, is undocumented. The research conducted in this study confirms the connection between teacher preparation programs, faculty members, educational experiences, teacher candidates, and candidate professional and academic achievement. Additionally, the study serves as evidence to support the idea that student academic and professional experiences should be regarded higher than Praxis exam results in determining teacher certification in Louisiana.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter two, including literature related to teacher education, further expounds the research focused on topics related to this study. Additionally, the material within this chapter educates readers on how presented literature has impacted individuals' current decision-making regarding the music education profession, teacher preparation processes, teacher candidate testing and assessment, and the impact of teacher preparation programs, processes, curriculums, and mandates. Readers of the chapter gain a more secure perspective of the platform by which future and current intended music educators are expected to "climb" to become professionally and fully financially secure in the field of music education in Louisiana's public school system. The public school system requires teachers to be certified as justification of them being adequate to teach the subject that they are responsible for teaching. Thus, uncertified teachers, though, at times, still hired to fill vacant positions, are placed on temporary or probationary status in which they are expected to complete certification requirements by an agreed time. Typically, uncertified teachers are not offered the same contracts as certified teachers which include lower salaries.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This qualitative study addressed an acknowledged academic gap in present-day literature by investigating Louisiana's preservice music educator programs for the purpose of repairing the system and developing more effective preservice music teacher testing procedures. In doing so, the author of the study utilized the opportunity to examine current and former teacher candidates' responses and feedback regarding individual experiences pertaining to taking the Praxis II-Music Content Knowledge portion of the Louisiana teacher certification program. Additionally, the study, through surveyal methods, connects Louisiana music educator program practices to certification requirements and new teacher progress within the entrance teaching term.

The research conducted during the study uncovered the transgressions of Louisiana's preservice music educators who have experienced Louisiana's practices, testing, and assisted music professionals in dissecting Louisiana's preservice music educator programs for the purpose improving the system and developing more effective preservice music teacher testing procedures. As a result of the survey of students who participated in state universities of Louisiana's teacher education programs, the pitfalls of those curriculums as a result of testing, schedule conflict, and curriculum guidelines were also included. The following segments of the study provide a comprehensive outline of the research executed thus, further solidifying the purpose of the study.

#### **Research Design**

This study utilizes a qualitative design combined with a historical approach. By employing an in-depth data-driven questionnaire, the author was allowed the opportunity to examine real-life and authentic perceptions and experiences of current, former, and intended music education professionals regarding the Praxis II: Music Content portion of the Praxis

testing series required to become a certified/licensed music educator in Louisiana. The approach of this study was most appropriate, in that it, not only allowed for a clearer perspective of the history of Louisiana's music educator licensing practices and procedures but also allowed access to the most authentic and personal impact testing has had on individuals who have experienced the test and the process for the purpose of gaining certification. As in the corporate field, test takers, like customers, gain an in-depth visual of the effects of their overall experience, and must be interviewed to gain perspective and to acquire emotional and cognitive responses.<sup>88</sup> Tracy contends, that "good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, and evocative,"<sup>89</sup> thus, the employment of the approach for this study.

The interview process/in-depth questionnaire consisted of carefully specified questions related to individuals' perspectives regarding their experiences with the music specialty exam and their feelings towards the relevance of the exams to teacher/educator preparedness. Questions were intended to gain the clearest perspective of the testing and teacher preparation experience. Data gathered as a result of the interview process were closely examined, considered, and infused with historical data gathered.

#### Reaffirmation of Research Questions

In the effort to assist education professionals and state policymakers in repairing the teacher preparation processes to increase the number of effective teachers entering Louisiana's school systems and its number of certified/licensed teachers in the state, this study highlighted the inconsistencies of the present processes and offered fact-based data for the purpose of

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<sup>88</sup> Janet R. McColl-Kennedy et al., "Gaining Customer Experience Insights That Matter," *Journal of Service Research* 22, no. 1 (2018): pp. 8-8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670518812182>.

<sup>89</sup> Sarah J. Tracy, "Qualitative Quality: Eight 'Big-Tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (January 2010): pp. 840-840, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>.

developing a more efficient music educator system of preparation. All participants of the study, whether in the present or the past, completed the Praxis II: Music Content portion of the Louisiana music educator licensure exam in an effort to become certified educators.

**Research Question One:** What are the challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana?

**Research Question Two:** How can music educators, professionals, and state legislation increase the music education curriculum completion rate?

**Research Question Three:** In what ways does the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promote the preparation and future success of intended music educators, if at all?

#### Stage/Setting

Because the study was focused on multiple participants whose locations varied and were dependent on their present-day work site, collaboration and communication were conducted at public and private school venues and through technological means such as email, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams meetings/interviews. Much of the interview process was conducted via the Google form/questionnaire platform, created specifically by the researcher and consisted of the IRB-approved questions presented in Appendix F on page 96, to avoid encountering scheduling and distance barriers. Thus, interviewees were asked the same series of interview questions, in the same manner, to maintain the validity of the data collected. All participants of the study, no matter the setting of the actual interview for the study, participated in some Louisiana teacher certification program and completed and received scores for at least one Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam.



### Technological Definition/Terms

**In-Person:** Meetings are conducted when all participants are physically present.<sup>90</sup>

**Email/Electronic Mail:** Method of transmitting and receiving information/messages through the utilization of electronic devices. (Computers, laptops, etc.)<sup>91</sup>

**Zoom:** “Zoom is a communications platform that allows users to connect with video, audio, phone, and chat. Using Zoom requires an internet connection and a supported device.”<sup>92</sup>

**Microsoft Teams:** Microsoft Teams is a cloud-based conferencing platform/program that allows users to communicate via video conferencing/calls.<sup>93</sup>

### Participants

Though there is no guarantee that student achievement/performance is connected to teacher certification requirements or results, many of today’s education professionals are required to pass professional proficiency examinations to become fully licensed/certified in our nation.<sup>94</sup> Louisiana’s educators are no different. The participants of this study were all subjected

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<sup>90</sup> “In-Person Meeting Definition,” Law Insider, accessed April 10, 2023, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/in-person-meeting>.

<sup>91</sup> “Email,” Wikipedia (Wikimedia Foundation, March 29, 2023), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email>.

<sup>92</sup> “What Is Zoom Video Conferencing? – Zoom Support,” accessed April 10, 2023, <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/4420426401037-What-is-Zoom-Video-Conferencing->.

<sup>93</sup> Leri Koen, “What Is Microsoft Teams? Collaborate and Communicate with Your Team,” Softonic (Softonic, August 29, 2022), [https://microsoft-teams.en.softonic.com/articles/what-is-microsoft-teams?utm\\_source=SEM&utm\\_medium=paid&utm\\_campaign=EN\\_US\\_DSA\\_Desktop\\_Category\\_Games&gclid=CjwKCAjw586hBhBrEiwAQYEnHVC9DNQwdlkVllvA917x8p-gO-o9a37mSooM4K8zZNn\\_Q-GWfIKkhxoCS2YQAvD\\_BwE#What\\_Is\\_Microsoft\\_Teams](https://microsoft-teams.en.softonic.com/articles/what-is-microsoft-teams?utm_source=SEM&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=EN_US_DSA_Desktop_Category_Games&gclid=CjwKCAjw586hBhBrEiwAQYEnHVC9DNQwdlkVllvA917x8p-gO-o9a37mSooM4K8zZNn_Q-GWfIKkhxoCS2YQAvD_BwE#What_Is_Microsoft_Teams).

<sup>94</sup> Dan D. Goldhaber and Dominic J. Brewer, “Does Teacher Certification Matter? High School Teacher Certification Status and Student Achievement,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 22, no. 2 (2000): pp. 129-129, <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737022002129>.

to Louisiana's certification processes, thus testing requirements. Particularly, to become music teachers/educators, they all took the Praxis: Music Content exam which is the content specialty provision. Thus, the participants of the study attended either SACSCOC-accredited universities, NASM-accredited undergraduate or graduate music programs, or are descendants of alternative certification programs in the state of Louisiana. Many of them were required to pass the exam to complete music educator curriculum programs to graduate or achieve program completion.

Participants, because of the nature of the music education profession, will be professionals presently working in either the junior high, high school, or university level of the music education profession. Many will be either current music educators, undergraduate teacher candidates, performers, or former music professionals. All participants, regardless of their current professional affiliation, will be required to reply to the same study questions to maintain conciseness and validity. Through the utilization of interviews, the researcher can gain a more realistic understanding/perspective of participants' feelings regarding experiences involving the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge exam, as prior research supports that interviews are "less fakeable" than other self-report measures.<sup>95</sup>

### Data Procedure

Data were collected according to guidelines set forth by Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Thus, approval was attained from the Board prior to all data collection for the study. Upon obtaining IRB approval, approved thesis committee professors serving as thesis advisors, along with their candidate, the researcher of this study completed the Cayuse IRB application which included the submission of a permission request letter, recruitment materials, consent materials, and instruments to be utilized for the study. Participants were

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<sup>95</sup> Melissa D. Pike et al., "Why Not Interview?," *Journal of Personnel Psychology* 21, no. 3 (2022): pp. 104-104, <https://doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000293>.

notified/solicited through email, telecommunication, and in-person invitation, in addition to the completion of a consent form.

Following the confirmation of participation from interviewees and discussion pertaining to availability, designated interview times were disbursed to participants. All interview questions, as a result of the IRB approval process, were examined to ensure that they were topic-centered, appropriate, and effective. Interviews were conducted according to suitability, convenience, equitability, and preference. Thus, in-person, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications were used for the purposes of face-to-face simulation. Additionally, a Google Form was created as another measure/avenue to collect interview data. All interviews conducted by media/e-conference methods were recorded pending participant approval.

#### Role of the Researcher

According to Creswell and Creswell, researchers, in addition to selecting the study methods in which to conduct, have the responsibility of deciding the type of study within the provided study methods.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, the researcher, because of the nature of the study, formed relationships with individuals/participants within the study in an effort to allow participants to gain a sense of trust towards not only the researcher but also in the research/interview process which allowed for the most honest answers to interview questions presented. Though interviewees had the option to interview through e-communication methods, the researcher conducted all interviews personally. The role of the researcher was not only to facilitate and conduct interviews for the study but also to maintain communication with all study

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<sup>96</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, "Chapter 1/The Selection of a Research Approach," in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), pp. 11-11.

participants, collect data, conduct follow-up communication, and connect participants' experiences to other data collected. Throughout the duration of the study, participants' information and responses remained confidential to sustain authenticity. The researcher refrained from offering opinions regarding the study/research questions to ensure that all participants' answers remained authentic and unaltered. Additionally, no prior discussion regarding nonessential variables was conducted in an effort to allow participants to rely only on individual experiences and judgment.

### Follow-up Communication

All participants of the study will receive follow-up communication in the form of an email in an effort to maintain transparency throughout and at the conclusion of the study. There are many benefits to conducting a follow-up proceeding, as asking follow-up questions tends to conjure additional information and aspects that may be effective in improving the investigation/study.<sup>97</sup> Follow-up proceedings will also serve as an avenue for the researcher to show gratitude to all participants of the study for being willing to participate, placing their trust in the researcher and the research, and any other assistance or suggestions given in efforts of making the study the most effective possible. Participant contributions are paramount to the success of the study; thus, the researcher understands the extent to which participant input matters. Additionally, the researcher realizes the importance of respectful, consistent, and professional communication practices prior to, throughout the duration of, and at the conclusion of the study.

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<sup>97</sup> Fabyio Villegas, "Follow-up Questions: What They Are, Advantages & Examples," QuestionPro, April 3, 2023, <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/follow-up-questions/>.

### Surveyal Process

In efforts to compartmentalize research survey responses of the participants of the study in such a manner that is rational and effective for the overall structural integrity of the study, the researcher assimilated questions based on the intention/purpose of the study, the research discovered regarding teacher examination, and personal experiences related to taking the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam in the effort of gaining teacher certification in Louisiana. With each survey question, the respondents are expected to answer questions honestly and freely, to the point that it generates an emotional connection between them, the question, and the experience. This idea is based on the prior belief that the recapture of past moments/experiences should comprise ideas presented during the initial experience, thus invoking original emotion from respondents.<sup>98</sup> Respondents' answers will, as per IRB requirements, remain confidential for the entire process.

### Interview Process

In the effort to garner in-depth information regarding the subject matter of the research conducted for the study, specific data-driven questions were presented to a select number of participants of the study. The intention of utilizing the interview/questionnaire methodology is to aid the researcher of the study in explaining the results to readers, allowing readers and participants to acquire an indisputable understanding of the study, materials presented regarding the research, and the results of the study.<sup>99</sup> Several types of interview styles will be utilized to allow for interviewee comfort, in adaptation to the participants', and the researcher's schedules,

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<sup>98</sup> J. D. Johnson and M. D. Rugg, "Recollection and the Reinstatement of Encoding-Related Cortical Activity," *Cerebral Cortex* 17, no. 11 (April 2007): pp. 2507-2507, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhl156>.

<sup>99</sup> "Research Guides: Research Methods Guide: Interview Research," Interview Research - Research Methods Guide - Research Guides at Virginia Tech, accessed May 9, 2023, <https://guides.lib.vt.edu/researchmethods/interviews>.

and to accommodate for any hindrances regarding the interview processes. Participants who will be selected to interview will be formally notified in the form of an International Review Board (IRB) approved recruitment letter/email which will be distributed by the researcher of the study. Similarly, as the surveyal processes, respondents' answers will, as per IRB requirements, remain confidential.

### Data Analysis

The data for the study was assimilated according to the guidelines of Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants of the study were required to fill out consent forms as protocol measures. The overall intent of the data collection/analysis process for this study is to gain the most accurate and effective participant answers and experiences not only during testing but also through their experiences while matriculating through their pre-service teacher program. The instruments utilized to collect data for the study are a survey questionnaire and by the conducting of personal interviews. Through the implementation of both data collection methods data will be acquired in a manner that allows the researcher to not only gain insight into the effectiveness of the study but to also gain an accurate account of Praxis II: Music Content testing experiences of all stakeholders. Survey questions are equitable because they allow all participants to maintain anonymity. The IRB-approved instrument will also allow participants who are not able to conduct an interview the opportunity to add substance to the research conducted for the study. All data collected will allow for the most accurate account of interviewed teacher participant experience and feeling towards Praxis II testing requirements and procedures. Additionally, the results presented to readers as a result of the collected data will ensure research transparency.

### Chapter Summary

Chapter three, to explain and solidify the practices and processes utilized during this study, outlines the method, qualitative, in that the researcher seeks to investigate Louisiana's preservice music educator programs and teacher Praxis II: Music Content testing experience for the purpose of repairing the pre-service music educator system and developing a more effective preservice music teacher testing procedure. The components within chapter three allow readers to gain an in-depth understanding of how, via the research design, the researcher of the study collected data, it also explained to readers the reasons for the use of the interview method and surveyal techniques. Additionally, this chapter confirms the overall intention of the study by reaffirming the study research questions and core concepts. Readers are then made aware of the setting by which study questionnaires/surveys will be administered and reminded of the subjects interviewed for the overall purpose of the study. To finalize chapter three, the author of the study establishes the role of the researcher of the study, outlines follow-up processes enacted, and, lastly, outlines that data analysis processes enacted in the effort of the presentation of the data collected as a result of the interview process and surveyal methods conducted.

## Chapter Four: Research Findings

### Introduction

During this chapter, data collected because of the questionnaires and surveyal methods conducted for the study will be presented in a manner that allows researchers to clearly portray the aim of the study, highlight the inconsistencies of the present teacher preparation processes, the Praxis II: Music Content exam, and to offer fact-based data for the purpose of developing a more efficient music educator system of preparation. By collecting information/responses regarding participant experiences with the Praxis II: Music Content exam and music educator preparation programs, researchers sought to acquire the mental, psychological, and emotional effects garnered as a result. Additionally, researchers sought to highlight the disparity between individuals who were successful in passing the test the first time taken and those who were subject to taking the test more than once because of test failure.

Researchers not only present results to readers during this chapter but also discuss the crucial themes which developed from the accumulation of the data collected. Thus, readers are offered in-depth insight into music education professionals' emotional and psychological journey to becoming certified in the music education profession. The research questions that the study and the data presented in the chapter are based upon are:

1. What are the challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana?
2. How can music educators, professionals, and state legislation increase the music education curriculum completion rate?
3. In what ways does the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promote the preparation and future success of intended music educators, if at all?



Additionally, the study is guided by the following hypothesis:

H1: The challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana are university requirements, based on the passing of the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge and Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) exams; Praxis exam requirements; curriculum pitfalls (course conflicts, etc.), and testing discouragement.

H2: Music educators, professionals, and state legislation can increase the music education curriculum completion rate by altering state mandates, eliminating praxis exam barriers, and ensuring teacher program curriculums are structured for efficiency.

H3: The Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promotes the preparation and future success of intended music educators in terms of teaching efficiency, subject understanding, and knowledge-based reasoning. Additionally, the exam ensures that all music educators are knowledgeable and aware of all that is included in the anticipated profession, music education, thus preparing them for future professional and educational success.

### Testing Effects

Standardized test-taking is a skill that many people have not yet mastered. In the attempt to gain more insight into how the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam, which is a standardized test, is necessary for teacher certification practices in Louisiana and how much of an impact the test has on teacher success in the classroom this section investigates standardized test-taking, its effectiveness, and effects on test-takers. As it is crucial, gaining a thorough understanding of the factors that affect test-taking ability will allow for a clearer perspective of

what hinders or promotes test-taker success on standardized exams.<sup>100</sup> Because the Praxis exam series is administered nationally and there is no age requirement, of which it is common that different age groups take the test at times according to professional and academic decision or level, its examinees cover a wide spectrum of culture, age, and tester backgrounds. Thus, test takers encounter a large variety of pre-test factor effects.

There are many studies focused on not only the effect that standardized test taking has on testers but also regarding pre-test variables that either cause test failures or successes. One of the effects of student testing that is, many times, overlooked is student disengagement. Student disengagement refers to when students or test takers become mentally disconnected or exhaustively disinterested or discouraged while testing as a result of frustration, prior failures, such as failing the same exam in the past, cognitive fatigue, defined as mental exhaustion caused by the individual desire to succeed combined with having to overcome “critical cognitively demanding tasks” and high stakes;<sup>101</sup> and other factors.<sup>102</sup> Knowledge gained through personal experiences, and failure to pass “threshold” examinations, especially multiple times, can negatively affect individuals psychologically and cause a lack of confidence, emotional distress, and anxiety, thus enhancing the possibility of student disengagement.

The standard set forth regarding becoming certified as a music educator within preservice teacher programs and university music and education departments, throughout a candidate’s

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<sup>100</sup> Leslie Rutkowski et al., “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Standardized Test-Taking Ability.,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 102, no. 1 (2010): 223–223, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017287>.

<sup>101</sup> Phillip L. Ackerman and Ruth Kanfer, “Test Length and Cognitive Fatigue: An Empirical Examination of Effects on Performance and Test-Taker Reactions.,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* 15, no. 2 (2009): pp. 163-163, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015719>.

<sup>102</sup> Steven L. Wise "The emerging science of test-taking disengagement: Student performance on standardized tests reflects more than just mastery of the material," *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2019, 72, *Gale In Context: Biography* (accessed May 3, 2023). [https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A606482656/BIC?u=vic\\_liberty&sid=summon&xid=e8ee5b27](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A606482656/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=e8ee5b27).

matriculation, heightens expectations for students when taking the Praxis certification examination which, inadvertently, pressurizes the testing experience. Ackerman and Kanfer suggest, that in order for individuals to accomplish success in these types of situations, they must be able to suppress negative connotations and circumvent feelings and notions of negativity in an effort to remain focused in the moment.<sup>103</sup> Such a task is not an easy one for many, thus one of many reasons why many who have attempted to pass the Praxis II: Music Content exam have either had to retake the test or have given up on taking the test.

During the present-day, music education professionals and programs have begun to conduct weekly “bootcamps” and semester-long accountability courses specifically centered around preparing music education majors for the Praxis Music examinations in hopes of overcoming recent student failure, regarding the exam, and as a means of assisting students in grasping a clearer understanding of the exam’s structure and material. Education professionals have recognized, over years of teacher certification entanglement, that to assist students to evade defeat or disengagement, they must prepare them in a manner that teaches them to approach failure as a positive learning experience.<sup>104</sup> Though failure is an unavoidable experience in the education profession,<sup>105</sup> failing an exam should not be, especially after an individual has successfully maneuvered through a music education program, the determining factor for program completion and certification.

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<sup>103</sup> Phillip L. Ackerman and Ruth Kanfer, “Test Length and Cognitive Fatigue: An Empirical Examination of Effects on Performance and Test-Taker Reactions, 163.

<sup>104</sup> Veselin Jungic et al., “Experiencing Failure in the Classroom and across the University,” *International Journal for Academic Development* 25, no. 1 (February 2020): pp. 38-38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144x.2020.1712209>.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

### Is it Worth It?

Yes, most teaching professionals believe that teaching is a calling on their life, thus a purpose for living. Many educators believe that their worth as productive members of society relate to their sacrifices in the profession and the work that they do for all connected to it. Prior studies report three different types of motives that cause individuals to pursue the education profession: extrinsic: salary, status, and working conditions; intrinsic: the importance of teaching, a passion for teaching, subject knowledge, and expertise; and altruistic: views of the profession being valuable/important, the desire to uplift/develop others, and to be a difference maker.<sup>106</sup> It is evident that all people are different, thus they all tend to pursue opportunities and professions in the same manner.

Do individuals that choose the education profession for extrinsic and intrinsic motives have the same amount of motivation and passion for the job, to continue to pursue educator certification and the profession during Praxis exam hardships, program failures, low teacher salary, and other negative experiences? Is the initial motive of individuals becoming a music education professional a factor pertaining to the reasons for profession abandonment? Many preservice music educators at the university level are young adults and are psychologically immature, thus the aforementioned types of factors have much impact during this stage of life. Additionally, student teachers/pre-service educators, like everyone else in the world, are aware of teacher shortage, low teacher pay, and other dysfunctions of the profession, as they hear it from others who have negative perceptions of the profession, witness it in social media, YouTube, and the internet. Thus, they, in addition to experiencing exam anxieties and other

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<sup>106</sup> Ulrika Bergmark et al., "Why Become a Teacher? Student Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching Profession and Motives for Career Choice," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 41, no. 3 (July 2018): pp. 266-266, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2018.1448784>.

effects of testing, also must suppress their emotions regarding much more. When considering all that Praxis exam testers and pre-service teachers must contend with mentally, psychologically, and emotionally, one must begin to recognize the possibility of disengagement or derailment because of excessive exam failure and other negative variables associated with the profession.

More importantly, because prior research has recognized that the motivations and attitudes of pre-service educators, upon entering chosen education/music education programs, are consequentially influential pertaining to the development of students and the energy and psychological drive they exude when entering the profession,<sup>107</sup> state legislators and education professionals must seek to eliminate or reconstruct the processes that diminish pre-service teacher motivation, motives, positive attitudes towards the profession, and emotional and psychological drive for teaching. Vocke and Foran agree that there is an increasing number of defeatist influences that are causing the education profession to be perceived undesirably in today's society.<sup>108</sup> Eliminating these types of inconsistencies will make the education profession more marketable, equitable, and sustainable in the future.

#### Confidential Practices

Confidentiality is a crucial component for protecting participants' personal, emotional, and psychological information. Confidentiality, in legal terms, is focused on the protection of the personal or confidential information of others. It signifies the responsibility or duty of one to hold the confidential information of others to themselves, thus protecting said individuals from

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<sup>107</sup> Manuela Heinz, "Why Choose Teaching? An International Review of Empirical Studies Exploring Student Teachers' Career Motivations and Levels of Commitment to Teaching," *Educational Research and Evaluation* 21, no. 3 (2015): pp. 259-259, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2015.1018278>.

<sup>108</sup> David E. Vocke and James V. Foran, "Why Choose Teaching?," *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 53, no. 2 (2017): pp. 81-81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2017.1299547>.

harm, scrutiny, embarrassment, or litigation.<sup>109</sup> Throughout the study, the researcher intends to maintain confidentiality, keeping all records (interview notes, audio/video recordings), always stored in a secure area. Additionally, the researcher will conduct all meetings in areas of seclusion to avoid distractions and to ensure a setting of discretion for all. Because the researcher can empathize with participants because of encountering similar experiences, his determination to uphold LU Institutional Review Board mandates and laws regarding confidentiality is unwavering. As an additional method of insurance, security measure, and transparency the researcher will make available the completed report/study data to all research participants.

#### Consent Decree

To ensure that all participants completely understand every aspect of the research process, including the selection of participants, interview process, post-surveyal process, confidentiality measures, risks, intensions of the research, and participate willingly, consent forms will be implemented for all. Gaining consent from participants is pertinent for the validity of the research and participant understanding. The researcher seeks to gain informed consent from participants, thus he, before gaining consent, intends for all participants to fully understand key concepts, potential risks, and benefits of the research prior to consenting to participation.<sup>110</sup> As an additional method of insurance, security measure, and transparency the researcher maintains the informed consensual process throughout the research process.<sup>111</sup> Because of the

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<sup>109</sup> “Confidentiality: Definition, Examples, How It Works,” Confidentiality: Definition, Examples, How It Works, accessed June 6, 2023, <https://www.contractscounsel.com/b/confidentiality#:~:text=In%20law%2C%20confidentiality%20is%20a,consent%20of%20the%20other%20party.>

<sup>110</sup> CC Nnebue, “Informed Consent In Research,” *Afrimedical Journal* 1, no. No. 1 (2010) (March 7, 2013):1

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

demographics of targeted group of the study participants, parental consent was not necessary, as no persons under the age of eighteen were utilized.

### Research Results

The following results are a culmination of the responses from the participants of this study of which all have the experience of taking the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam a minimum of once in the effort of gaining Louisiana educator certification. All responses were examined critically and applied in a manner that allows readers to not only gain an accurate account of the Praxis II: Music content participant experience but also to answer the proposed research questions of this study. Thus, the researcher will format this section of the study with readers' learning styles in mind to make this section of the study most effective in its prospective mission. After reviewing the data presented in this section, readers will have gained an in-depth perspective of the purpose and goals of the research conducted for the study in such a manner that allows them to realize the impacts of the Louisiana teacher certification practices on the music education profession, pre-service music educators, and music education professionals. Additionally, the study participants from which the data was collected, will have recognized the connection between pre- and post-personal emotional effects on themselves and their present-day perception of their testing experience, pre-service teacher processes, and the music education profession.

The hope for the results garnered because of the data collected during the study, whether negative or positive, is that they will enhance teacher preparation and testing practices in Louisiana. Additionally, it is the hope of the researcher that the study helps to bring awareness to the short-term and long-term effects of the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge testing experience, whether passed or failed, on all who took the test for the purpose of gaining teacher

certification in Louisiana. Thus, the overall expectation of the results presented, during this section, is to improve the state of Louisiana's teacher certification processes and procedures, aid in cultivating new criteria by which Louisiana teacher certification is governed, and rectify the certified teacher shortage issues within the state.

### Participant Data

#### Participant Demographics

Twenty-two individuals participated in the study. As shown in the graph below, all participants, except one individual, eventually acquired an undergraduate degree, of some sort prior to their participation in the study. Furthermore, Table 1, presents evidence that 9.1% of participants attained a post-baccalaureate degree despite any negative testing experiences related to the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam. The importance of this table is to serve as evidence that participants were/are encompassed the intelligence and academic ability in order to be successful in their academic and professional encounters, thus provoking the question of: Why are many of them encountering negative experiences when seeking to become professionally/academically certified according to Louisiana's teacher certification guidelines? Additionally, Data gathered from Tables 1 & 2 combined with the data presented in Table 3 demonstrate that the majority of the participants, regardless of their testing outcome, are currently serving as teaching professionals within Louisiana's public school system, thus strengthening the notion that teacher shortage issues combined with the demand to fill teacher rosters negate teacher certification.



Table 1: Participant Education

## Count of What is your educational background?

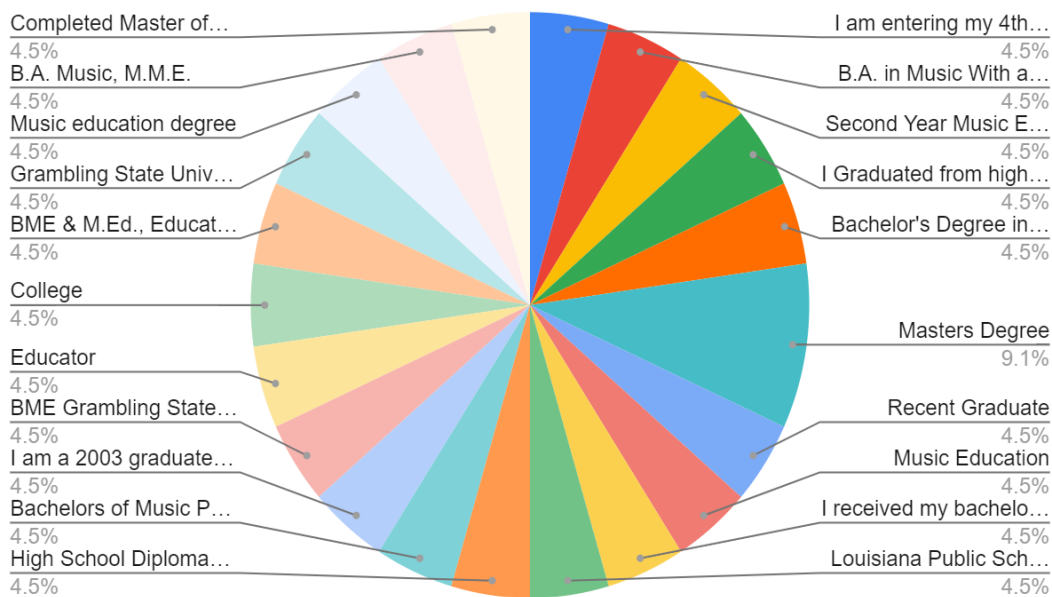


Table 2 denotes a more indepth visual of the data presented in Table 1, allowing readers to witness each participants individual response to survey question one. It also allows for readers to gain a clearer understanding of not only participants' educational background but also their current professional and educational status in relation to the music/music education profession, furthermore serving as evidence that experiences encountered, whether negative or positive, as a result of undergraduate music education curriculum guidelines did/does not necessarily negate indivuals chances to teach in Louisiana's public school systems or Charter school systems within the state.

Table 2: Participant Detailed/Individual Responses: Educational Background

What is Your Educational Background?	
Quantity of Responses (22)	Participant Detailed Responses
1 Response	B.A. in Music With a Concentration in Liberal Arts, B.A. in Music with a Concentration in Music Ed., Master of Music Ed.
1 Response	Second Year Music Educator
2 Response	Master's Degree
1 Response	Educator
1 Response	High School Diploma and Bachelor of General Studies w/ music concentration; Alt. Certification completed 2006
1 Response	BME Grambling State University
1 Response	I am entering my fourth year as an instrumental music teacher at Arthur F. Smith Middle Magnet
1 Response	I completed all of the classes for the music education curriculum but graduated with the General Studies degree because of not being successful on the Praxis. Currently a middle school music teacher
1 Response	College
1 Response	I received my bachelor's in music education from Grambling State University. I am in my Eighth year of teaching.
1 Response	Bachelor's degree in music education
1 Response	Bachelor of Music Performance/ Masters of Secondary Education
1 Response	I am a 2003 graduate of Wossman High School in Monroe, Louisiana and a Fall 2010 graduate of Grambling State University where I was a Music Education (Instrumental) graduate.
1 Response	Recent College Graduate
1 Response	Music Education
1 Response	Louisiana Public School System (P-12) and HBCU Graduate (Music Education)
1 Response	B. A. Music, M. M. E.
1 Response	BME & M. Ed., Educational Leadership
1 Response	Music Education Degree
1 Response	Grambling State University B. A. Music
1 Response	Completed Master of Educational Leadership and currently in my 15th year teaching

Table 3: Participant Detailed/Individual Responses: Current Occupation

What is your current occupation?	
Quantity of Responses (22)	Participant Detailed Responses
1 Response	Director of Bands/Assistant Professor of Music
5 Responses	High School/Music Educator/Band Director
2 Response	Middle school Music Teacher
1 Response	I currently teach Instrumental Music (Band and Piano) to middle aged students.
1 Response	My current occupation is a Caterer. I retired from Music Education to pursue another career.
1 Response	Middle school Band director
1 Response	I am currently a senior Music Education Major still attending college.
1 Response	Band Director for the last 23 years to present
1 Response	Assistant principal
1 Response	High School/Music Educator/Choir Director
2 Responses	Band director
1 Response	Former Music Educator now Principal
1 Response	Hospitality Sales Director. Not a music education professional due to failure of the Praxis: Music Content (5113)
1 Response	Truck driver
1 Response	Professor, Department Chair
1 Response	N/A

Participant/Respondents educational background data combined with respondent' current occupation status serves as evidence that Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge testing results have no definite determination of music education occupational status or future education status regarding testers acquiring music teacher/band director jobs whether at the private or public-school sector as a result of educator demand because of today's teacher shortage and the educational profession's current staffing struggles.

#### Interview Responses/Data

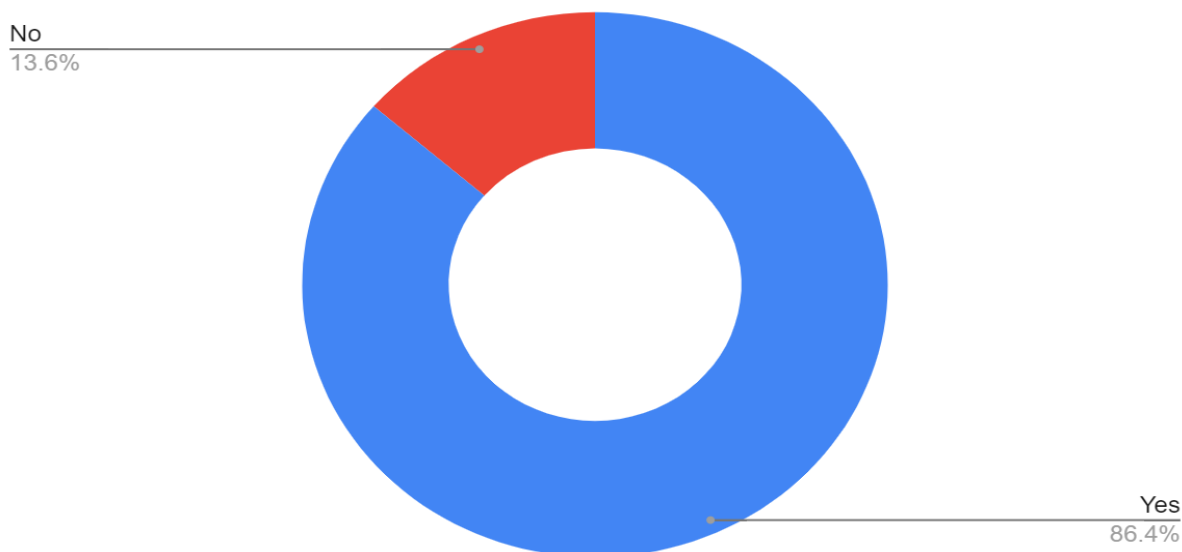
Gaining authentic and honest responses from participants was highly encouraged to ensure the authenticity of the data collected. One of the methods implemented as a means of making participants feel comfortable, thus forthcoming with their testing and educational experiences was ensuring confidentiality throughout the interview process. Participants were found to be forthcoming during the interview/surveyal process to the extent that they openly expressed past and current emotions conjured from the questions asked within the survey. Furthermore, the data collected showed that an overwhelming number of participants studied and believed that they were prepared to take and pass the exam prior to their Music Specialty: Praxis exam testing experiences.

Table 4 presents participant responses to question three of Appendix F, the survey questionnaire in the form of a pie graph. Data extracted from participants, regarding question three, displays that 86.4 % of participants, in addition to the courses completed within their perspective teacher education program and prior student teaching or teaching experience, studied for the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam before taking the exam. Data also recognizes that 13.6% did not study before taking the exam, thus relying on the knowledge gained throughout their perspective teacher education programs. Analyzation of the results from Table 3 combined with

the data presented in Table 4: Participant Praxis: Music Content (5114) exam Test Tracking suggests that regardless of teacher education curriculum guidelines, course materials, educational materials and procedures, and student study tactics, teacher candidates continue (d) to fail the music teacher certification exam, many times, on more than one occasion, thus creating negative emotional, academic, and professional experiences for all involved. When teacher education/teacher program students are not successful in passing the exam, a “trickle down” effect is enacted back through the teacher education program causing all responsible for preparing the student academically and professionally to reassess the situation. Not only does the student begin to encounter emotional despair but teacher programs fail to graduate the student in the expected graduate matriculation window according to Louisiana graduation expectancy guidelines, thus, also, putting pressure on the teacher education program and the university department involved.

Table 4: Participant study habits for Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam

Count of Did you study for the exam, prior to taking the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?



Additionally, all participants believed that this study is warranted and was necessary for the purpose of, bringing to the forefront, not only the emotional distresses of having to deal with such certification ramifications, but also how those distresses, negative experiences, and unequal expectations impact the lives and careers of so many in the music education profession. The results of the conducted interviews and surveys combined to form the data analyzed, for the purpose of, and presentation in this study. The following tables are examples of the participants' feelings/perceptions relating to how their emotional experiences regarding the exam, have shaped their opinions related to questions sixteen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty presented in the interview (Appendix F). They allow readers to access the innermost emotions of the participants, related to the core purpose of the study.

Table 5: Participant Perception of Teaching

<b>How do you feel your past praxis testing experiences have affected your perception of teaching?</b>	
<b>Quantity of Responses (22)</b>	<b>Participant Detailed Responses</b>
1 Response	They have not changed my perception of the profession. However, being certified now makes me realize that the standards for becoming certified in our state can become a bit overwhelming and feel slightly unnecessary to an extent.
1 Response	The test showed me that it is not the basis of being a great educator. I feel that what is really needed to flourish in the profession, the test does not present.
1 Response	It hasn't affected my perception of teaching itself. Instead, it makes me feel inadequate as an educator due to the fact that I am aware of how much I don't know.
1 Response	It hasn't. I am going to continue to take the exam.
1 Response	I feel that the experience have not affected my perception of teaching, in general. I knew that I just needed to surpass the testing obstacle to get to my goal of becoming a music educator.
1 Response	My past Praxis experiences have made me aware of my own educational deficiencies and expose me to musical content for which I feel I needed to be knowledgeable.
1 Response	It made me reflect to see what I could have done as a teacher to ensure that my students got the information they needed to be successful
1 Response	I feel my past praxis testing experiences have not affected my perception of teaching it takes more than an exam to make an effective teacher.
1 Response	N/A
1 Response	I don't feel that my testing experiences had an effect on my perception of the profession.

1 Response	From my testing experiences, I make it a point to be as detailed as possible in my approach to teaching.
1 Response	It proves that testing does not always correlate to good or bad teaching.
1 Response	The content on the praxis is too broad and does not help you to become a better educator. It helps you to become a better test taker. Unfortunately, that will not help you in the field of music education. The test should be created by teachers that are either currently in the classroom or is still connected to the classroom in some capacity.
1 Response	I feel as though all the things we had to study for the Praxis exam is useless. A lot of Praxis exam topics are never covered in the typical junior high and high school music classroom in Louisiana.
1 Response	I feel that those who make decisions regarding certification requirements have no idea what it actually takes to be a successful teacher. I know many people who would have been brilliant music educators who were barred from being certified teachers because they could not pass the exam. Thus, my perception of teaching is based on the premise that some teachers may not have the pedagogical skills, but are excellent test takers.
1 Response	None
1 Response	I'm not able to teach music without passing Praxis: Music Content (5113)
1 Response	I feel that all of the trauma I've experienced is not equivalent to the pay I earn in education.
1 Response	Yes, because of the praxis test my perception of teaching has greatly increased, I also have a new respect for all certified music educators.
1 Response	It made me think that so much focus was directed toward the wrong things
1 Response	It didn't really affect my perception. My institution made it mandatory to pass all parts of the test when I was coming up to be eligible for graduation. The state also added two courses I had to complete prior to graduation (before everything but your specialty had to passed). It was a terrible experience dealing with the education department during that time.
1 Response	It has not had an effect.

Table 6: Participant Perception: Praxis Determination of Graduation

Do you believe that the Praxis exam should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for graduation? Why?	
Quantity of Responses (22)	<b>Participant Detailed Responses</b>
1 Response	I believe that they have no place in determining whether or not a student should graduate. Course work alone throughout the curriculum should speak toward whether or not a student is competent and meets the requirements to be eligible for graduation.
1 Response	No, I do not, I believe what the student achieves during their coursework at the school should be the deciding factor. I personally have seen too many great young scholars' academic careers shortened on the basis of passing an exam. So many students taking pointless classes and using so much money just to stay in school for the sole purpose of passing a test, it's inhumane and cruel.
1 Response	No, because debt continues to increase thus discouraging young scholars even more. This is the exact opposite of fields such as nursing who can graduate, stop debt collection, then become certified.
1 Response	No because music majors spend a lot of time preparing for Senior Recitals, completing 2 curriculums, one on the Music side and about 18 or more Education class then to held back by an always changing, broad based test is totally unfair for any College student.

1 Response	I do not believe that the exams should hold one back from being eligible to graduate.
1 Response	No. Completion of course work based on the curriculum of the state should be the only requirement for graduation.
1 Response	No, because if you've completed the residency program you should be able to graduate because of all the time you've spent in a classroom. In my situation, my passing scores came in on the day of graduation which led to the delay of my degree
1 Response	I do not believe that the Praxis exams should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for graduation because spending 4-5 years in an accredited Music Education program should be more than enough evidence that a student is more than qualified to teach.
1 Response	I think it should. This is a way of testing knowledge of your college career. With that in mind students should be prepared properly to pass it before graduation. Not passing it before graduation would lead to the possibility of not passing it after graduation and simply moving to another career. I think there is more motivation to pass it before graduating.
1 Response	No, because some people are not very good, standardized test takers but are competent education professionals.
1 Response	No. If all the preparation courses are successfully completed, the test should not be the deciding factor in someone graduating. I feel it should operate similar to someone who is studying to become an attorney. If the coursework is completed, you should be allowed to graduate. The test should be in place strictly to become a certified educator as the bar exam is in place to officially become an attorney.
1 Response	No. The test does not correlate with the coursework required to graduate the desired program completed.
1 Response	No. If a student has passed every class and has met all of the requirements of the university then it is unfair for a praxis score to block students from graduating. The test is entirely too hard to mandate that students (who have finished their course studies) shouldn't graduate until it is passed. Some students make it to the end of their studies and cannot take their final classes to graduate until praxis is passed. Instead of sitting out, they waste tuition money registering for classes they don't need just to stay in school in hopes of passing praxis to graduate. Some end up changing their major altogether because they were never able to pass the praxis. That's not fair. The test is too difficult to pass, and the study material needs to come directly from the test.
1 Response	If passing the exam is a requirement, the exam has to be passed even if pre-music educators have shown during the student teaching process that they will be great music educators.
1 Response	The certification exam should not be a determining factor for graduation. If a music education student has passed all the necessary courses in the music and education departments, that student should receive a degree. This statement comes from someone who passed all portions of the praxis on the first attempt. The certification exam should be the determining factor as to whether the candidate is licensed in the state where he it she chooses to practice.
1 Response	Yes, because I feel if it is not required to graduate some will not take afterwards when they could already have passed the exam.
1 Response	No, I do not feel this way especially with some parts of the exam that deal with guessing what music belongs to what period of time. Yes, I believe this information is important but no I do not feel that this information is widely discussed in today's rubric of music education.
1 Response	As long as the Praxis is required by the state of Louisiana, yes, unfortunately. It should be a determining factor for graduation eligibility simply because it will still be required for certification.
1 Response	I do not believe that it should determine your graduation simply because the difficulty of the praxis exam is very high and it's a lot to study for alone. So, trying to study for the praxis alone with music education courses can be unbearable to some people.
1 Response	I think so but also I think the test should be revamped
1 Response	No. I think it's wrong to hold back a student from graduation because of the praxis test. I believe you should know your content, but being a great educator comes with experience, professional development and mentorship.
1 Response	I do not believe that graduation should be based on passing the praxis exam. Due to different variables that have a negative effect on test taking. If someone has successfully completed their program, they should be allowed to graduate.



Table 7: Participant Perception: Praxis Determination of Certification

Do you believe that the Praxis exam should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for certification? Why?	
Quantity of Responses (22)	Participant Detailed Responses
1 Response	Yes but only as it pertains to the modern-day music education. If your ambition is to only pursue a career at the K-12 level and you have no desire to teach AP music or at the collegiate level, there are some portions of the test that, in my opinion, should be excluded. For example, it is doubtful in a majority of settings that you will ever educate your students about figured bass, Alberti bass, portions of the mass, counterpoint, or form and analysis at the K-12 level. You should be gaged on information that will be used on a daily basis such as basic music theory, ear training, sight reading, and the uses and information of technology and resources within the classroom.
1 Response	I believe that this is a multi-faceted question. In regard to Praxis I, I do not believe that it should be a determining factor. The basis of reading, writing, and math portion affecting the possibility of you getting your certification and graduating is asinine. Especially since you take these classes in most college curriculums, it seems redundant. In regard to the PLT and Content portions, while I do believe there is a need for these exams, the content of the exams is what I take into question. I believe the exams should contain more of what you will be experiencing in a classroom setting, not just the data and theoretical approach to the content area.
1 Response	Yes, because I believe you should be a well-rounded and knowledgeable as an educator.
1 Response	No because they do not determine any other Majors.
1 Response	To some degree, yes. I believe that the exams should test your knowledge, skills, and your ability to be able to relate that particular knowledge to learners.
1 Response	Yes. As a music educator, it is your obligation to be knowledgeable of your subject matter. Being knowledgeable of your subject matter places the educator in a much better position to effectively educate those he or she will teach.
1 Response	No, because there are a lot of educators that have degrees in other subjects and are hired with no problem
1 Response	I do not believe that the Praxis exams should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for certification because spending 4-5 years in an accredited Music Education program should be more than enough evidence that a student is more than qualified to teach.
1 Response	Yes. Certified music educators are needed in the classroom. the certification proves that you are qualified in your specific are.
1 Response	No, I believe that if you have completed all other curriculum requirements, a test should not be the sole determining factor of if you can successfully teach or graduate. The test should not have as much weight as it currently has in determining certification.
1 Response	Yes and No. Yes because it could be used as a means of filtering out those who aren't serious about music education. No, because some who pass the exam may just be good at test taking but not so good at application of teaching.
1 Response	No. The test is extremely broad and doesn't align with the curriculum of all university programs as well as covers both vocal and instrumental music which all programs do not require the extensive study.
1 Response	No. A student's Music Education degree should suffice as their teaching certificate. That says to me that the department of education doesn't trust its colleges and universities to train music educators so it created a test that was so difficult and tricky that only a select few that made it to the end would pass it. That's not fair. We did not choose the profession to get rich. We chose it because we wanted to make a difference. Unlike any other major in college, we have to complete two curriculums. One in our content area and one for the college of education. It is not fair for students to complete two curriculums and still have to battle a test at the end that determines whether you graduate as a certified educator.
1 Response	Just like other standardized tests in our country, a standardized test like Praxis cannot determine how well a person will be as a music educator. As a current educator, there are a lot of students who excel and pass all of their classes, but do not do as great on standardized tests.

1 Response	Yes, however, there should be changes to the examination to reflect the candidate's ability to manage a music classroom and effectively deliver music instruction.
1 Response	Yes, it ensures that Music Educators have the basic concepts of Music Education.
1 Response	No, I do not feel this way especially with some parts of the exam that deal with guessing what music belongs to what period of time. Yes, I believe this information is important but no I do not feel that this information is widely discussed in today's rubric of music education.
1 Response	Absolutely not. The Praxis examination is the broadest test set I have ever laid eyes on. The curriculum does not align with the exam, which invalidates the exam in a sense.
1 Response	Yes, I believe it should determine eligibility for teacher certification, but with a few changes to the content on the test. It's a good way to determine teacher certifications Should be tweaked a little to make it more focused on music theory and necessary elements needed to be a music educator.
1 Response	I believe a modern version of the test would be a good determination
1 Response	Yes and no. I think there can be other ways. I don't believe passing or not passing a test determines if you will be an effective educator.
1 Response	No, I do not believe that Praxis exams should determine eligibility of teaching. Many people suffer from testing anxiety which causes them not to do well on the exam.

Table 8: Participant Perception: Praxis Exam Impact on Music Teacher Effectiveness

Do you believe that the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam content has a positive, negative, or no effect on music teacher effectiveness? Why?	
Quantity of Responses (22)	Participant Detailed Responses
1 Response	It has no effect on music teacher effectiveness. The effectiveness mainly comes from prior knowledge, work ethic, and a desire to deliver a quality product to your students. A test only measures where you stand from a knowledge standpoint. It does not teach or show any effective strategies. It is only a benchmark for what you know from text. It does not speak toward what your actual level of performance will be like once you are in a classroom setting.
1 Response	I believe it has no effect, as I can personally say most of what I have had to do as a music educator, the Praxis did not test me on or make any reference about.
1 Response	Positive effect only in the regards that thoroughly and knowledgeable educator is more likely to adapt to their work environment.
1 Response	In my opinion, I believe the Music Content (5113) exam causes so many talented musicians to give up ambitions of teaching the Music craft in the classroom. I personally know so many former Music Educators that have given up Music ed and pursued other avenues just to provide for their families. It affects the African American Students the most when you really look at it. Most testing centers are away from our HBCU's. Students have to drive sometimes several hours to and from the testing centers. I was older than most of my classmates at the time with a full-time job and a family and it was and still is an issue with finding the right time and funding for the testing.
1 Response	I believe that the Music Content exam is very broad and can be extremely discouraging in some areas of the test, however, in my experience, it did not affect my effectiveness as a music educator.
1 Response	Praxis is an assessment of the knowledge a future educator has. Its function is to assess the educator's understanding of the knowledge. That is the sole function of Praxis or any assessment. This assessment alone, in my opinion, has no relevance to teacher effectiveness.
1 Response	It doesn't have an effect because most of the content isn't used in the classroom
1 Response	I believe the Praxis Music Content Exam has no effect on music teacher effectiveness because only time and experience in the profession can determine the effectiveness of a music teacher.
1 Response	Overall, I think it is a negative effect because of the stress of passing it. many students have given up because they couldn't pass the test. Some students simply become overwhelmed with test taking and constantly paying for the exam.

1 Response	I believe it has no effect on music teacher effectiveness because everything learned during the undergraduate process will be your guide in the classroom, not a test that most people forget what was on it or don't even use some of the information placed on the test as a result of music being so broad.
1 Response	I wouldn't necessarily say it's positive or negative, but it can serve as a measuring stick to show future educators what areas they can strengthen their knowledge in.
1 Response	No affect.
1 Response	I believe that it has no effect whatsoever. As stated before, there is very little on that test that K-12 educators will even use in the field. The test is unnecessarily difficult to pass and should be created by current K-12 educators from more than one district. This will ensure that the content presented is <u>pertinent to what is actually needed in the classroom.</u>
1 Response	I feel as though it has no effect on the effectiveness of the music teacher.
1 Response	There are certain aspects of the content exam that, if completed, demonstrate a candidate's experience in the field. However, there are many intangible qualities that a teacher must possess to be successful that cannot be measured by an exam.
1 Response	Positive, it makes the new educator study and prepare themselves.
1 Response	I'm not sure. Maybe a little of both. Positive would obviously be passing the exam. Negative would be preparing to pay more money for another test in an already demanding economy with hopes of graduating one day when the exam is passed or pay again...
1 Response	This exam in no way measures teacher effectiveness. Many are great test-takers, and few are great educators. That exam is so broad that it fails to determine what exactly a possible educator is capable of. Classroom management is 50% of teaching, and that exam simply cannot measure one's effectiveness in that domain.
1 Response	Negative. Music content (5113) exam can be very discouraging and a pain to deal with, and will cause lots of people to shy away from the music teacher profession because they can't pass it, <u>which can put their job in jeopardy or even prevent them from getting one.</u>
1 Response	The current version has a negative effect because of the emotional distress
1 Response	I think it depends on the individual. I believe the experience of teaching, professional development, and mentorship is <u>how you gain your effectiveness as an educator.</u>
1 Response	Negative, due to the fact that many of the items on the exam are not relevant to the curriculum set forth in Louisiana.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions**

### **Study Overview**

Louisiana certified educators, to become certified, are required to fulfill many federal and state stipulations, including passing standardized teacher certification examinations. This work provides authentic feedback from past and present test takers of the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge certification exam and educates about the short-term and long-term emotional, psychological, and mental impacts on intended music professionals because of the demands of Louisiana's pre-educator standards. This chapter presents a summarized version of the study, the purpose of the study, and its findings as a result of the research conducted. Additionally, the chapter allows readers to recap all the aspects presented over the course of the research process.

### **Summary of Study**

This study investigated the emotional, psychological, and mental effects of Louisiana teacher preparation, testing, and certification mandates. Additionally, it explored the short-term and long-term effects of the process of becoming a certified educator according to State of Louisiana standards. The researcher utilized the interview method to attain research data from individuals who had previously taken the Music Content Knowledge certification exam for the purpose of achieving teacher certification in Louisiana to investigate the emotional, psychological, and mental effects on education professionals, teacher perception of the education profession and Louisiana's certification practices/mandates as a result of their certification experiences, and to what extent does constant test failure negatively impact pre-educators desire to become a music educator. The researcher's intent for the study is to bring awareness to the obstacles encountered by intended music educators in Louisiana to cause productive change as it pertains to teacher certification mandates in the state.

### Summary of Purpose

This general qualitative inquiry study's purpose was to examine the inconsistencies of the present processes of the state of Louisiana teacher certification practices, assist stakeholders in the development of a more efficient process in which to prepare and sustain preservice educators in the state, bring awareness to the emotional, psychological, and mental effects that negative testing experiences have on intended teacher/teacher perception of the profession, and to offer fact-based data for the purpose of developing a more efficient music educator system of preparation. Additionally, the research gathered as a result of this study seeks to serve as a voice for all who have been subjected to experiences such as those realized during the study.

### Summary of Analysis

Liberty University, like other SACSCOC accredited institutions of higher learning employ preventative research measures and processes to ensure the safety of not only those who conduct research, but also the persons participating for the purpose of the research. The entity, at Liberty University, responsible for conducting these processes is the Liberty University Institution Review Board (IRB). Thus, the researcher, a Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University, School of Music acquired all necessary approval from the IRB, the thesis supervisor/chair, and the School of Music. Participants, prior to study participation, were recruited through letters, email and phone communications, and in-person conversation. To be transparent and forthcoming so that participants could make informed decisions of participation, the researcher was thorough in explanation, regarding the study's participation requirements and purpose. Participants were interviewed about questions aligned with their past experiences pertaining to taking the Praxis II: Music Content knowledge exam, their teacher certification "journey," and their feelings as a result. To ensure confidentiality, all applicant data were stored

in secured areas and coded so that only the approved researcher and the thesis committee chair could conduct analytical procedures.

### Summary of Results

The study's intent to examine Louisiana's music teacher certification testing practices and individual testing experiences to make a connection between it and the certified music teacher shortage in the state is guided by three research questions:

The first research question examined the challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in Louisiana. Results of this study revealed that in addition to curriculum alignment defaults among universities and the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam, a major issue of contentment amongst test takers and undergraduate music educator candidates is the curricular and certifiable weight that the exam holds regarding graduation and certification. Furthermore, data reveals that the negative experiences encountered as a result of the pressures of understanding the academic and professional ramifications of failing to pass the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam do affect potential music professionals' enthusiasm to become certified as educators or to enter the profession at all. It is evident that many universities music/fine arts departments, though they teach material presented on the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam, because of the demand to prepare future music educators for the demands of "real-world" grades K-12 music environments, focus a larger percentage of teaching efforts towards the more practical elements of the curriculum versus teaching to the test. Additionally, it is recognized that, unlike other specialty area certification exams, the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam is much broader in the material allowed, and thus encountered by testers which explains why a substantial percentage of the participants of the study attempted the exam two or more times.

As a means of gaining a more in-depth understanding of participant background/experience relating to the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam, participants of the study were asked to disclose the total amount of exam attempts, regardless of whether they were successful, eventually, passing the exam or not. Data gathered as a result of the question made evident that, of the twenty-two participants, 81.8% attempted the test more than one time versus 18.2% who passed the exam on the first attempt. Furthermore, the data highlighted the fact that the majority of the former Louisiana teacher preparation program students, regardless of prior academic experiences and curriculum demands, failed to pass the Praxis exam on the first attempt, thus causing them to experience academic, professional, and emotional defeat.

Table 9: Participant Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam Test Tracking

How many times did you take the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?  
22 responses

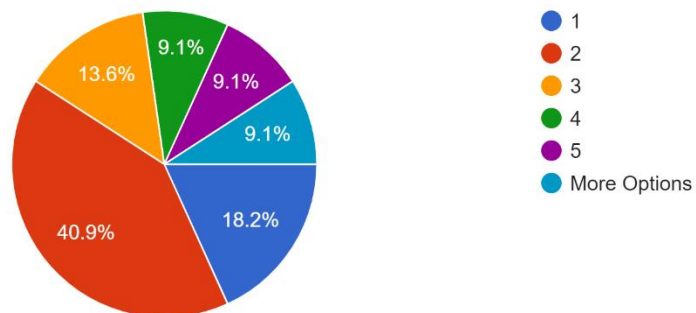


Table 10: Participant Emotions due to Praxis: Music Content (5113) Failure

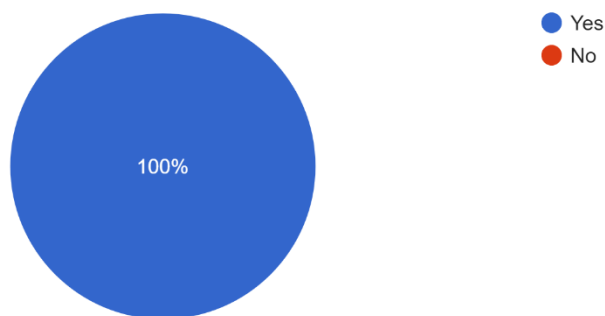
Count of How did you feel, emotionally, after failing the exam, the first time? (For participants who took the exam more than once)



Table 11: Praxis: Music Content (5113)-Participant Testing Communications

Do you know anyone who has not passed the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam, in hopes of becoming certified in Louisiana?

22 responses



The second research question sought to discover/create solutions for the issues uncovered regarding Louisiana's colleges' and universities' music education curriculum and certification completion rate. According to the data collected, an issue that needs to be addressed regarding



music teacher certification practices in Louisiana is that, of collegial departmental educational/academic teaching and course implementation concerning the material presented on the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam. Therefore, officials should work with ETS to change/reconstruct the test to match course focus, requirements, and practices. Officials and music educator professionals could also incorporate courses centered around not only understanding the material presented on the exam, but also the makeup, intentions, and diagram of the exam to increase the student pass/fail rate. Additionally, because the test is unfavorably broad due to the subject area, professionals should consider condensing the exam to certain music content and material experienced within the United States.

The third research question sought to discover the how the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promotes the preparation and future success of intended music educators. According to participants of the study, the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promotes preparation for the test instead of the preparation and future success of intended music educators. Additionally, they feel as if the exam is constructed to examine learner knowledge about designated music knowledge chosen from the extremely broad subject of music, not aligned, many times, with the curriculum from which they have been groomed. Furthermore, the data shows that the test does allow for further music educational learning experiences, as it incorporates a broad variety of material related to the subject of music and the profession. Failing the test caused test takers, because of the chance of not graduating, embarrassment, and not gaining teacher certification, to search for more subject-related information, methods of testing, methods of learning, and professional assistance. Thus, the exam while promoting stronger preparation practices, does not, with certainty, promote/ensure the future success of intended music educators.

The utilization and analysis of a series of experiential questions presented in the form of a survey revealed valuable information for music professionals to debate, discuss, and possibly implement as a means of improving music educator curriculum, examining, and certification programs and practices. Data reveals that the music educator certification exam and practices by which certification is determined are flawed, thus needing improvement. It also reveals that an increasing amount of music teacher candidates encounter or have encountered an influx of detriment and controversy during testing/certification experiences in Louisiana. Though participants contend that their experiences did not change their perspective of the profession many agreed that their experiences caused uncertainty in their belief that the music profession was the right life choice for them.

Individual perception is a crucial factor that must be recognized when discussing the matter of decision-making during all instances in which people have the freedom of choice. Rothman and Salovey contend that “the influence of framed information on decision making is determinant on individuals, initially, internalizing an advocated frame, to which performing a behavior is perceived as risky.”<sup>112</sup> Table 12 serves as visual evidence of the claims presented in the previous paragraph. It impacts readers by presenting a visual of the participants’ feelings regarding how their emotional experiences regarding the exam shaped their thoughts related to question eleven presented in the interview.

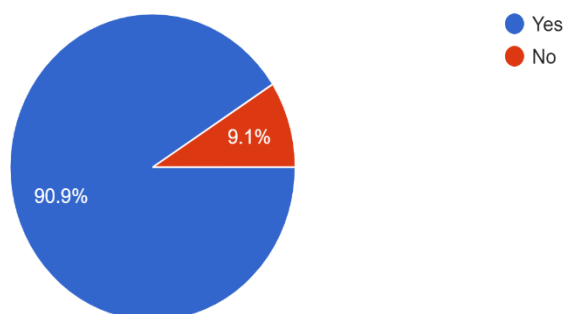
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<sup>112</sup> Alexander J. Rothman and Peter Salovey, “Shaping Perceptions to Motivate Healthy Behavior: The Role of Message Framing,” *Psychological Bulletin* 121, no. 1 (1997): 3–19, <https://doi.org/10.1037//0033-2909.121.1.3>.

Table 12: Individuals Decision on Music Education as their Profession

Do you believe that the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge exam affects peoples' choice to pick music education as a profession?

22 responses



### Discussion of Results

Guided by three hypotheses, in addition to the research questions presented, this study proved to be resourceful in that the data discovered uncovered, otherwise, undisclosed information regarding tester/pre-educator emotional experiences as a result of teacher certification processes in Louisiana. Study data proved that hypothesis one is accurate. Data supports the idea that Louisiana's teacher certification and testing practices often discourage individuals from seeking to become certified educators according to Louisiana standards. Furthermore, the data presented highlights the emotions encountered by individuals subjected to said practices.

Hypothesis two was unconfirmed due to the lack of substantial evidence presented in the study. Though evidence presented within the study uncovered inconsistencies within Louisiana's teacher certification and testing practices, exact corrective practices could not, undeniably, be determined. Thus, professionals should continue to investigate the matter discussed as the core of this work. Upon examining the responses of respondents regarding questions that encouraged

them to respond emotionally, it is evident that provisions must be enacted to eliminate pre-educator/tester emotional distress due to professional/certification uncertainty.

During the interview, participants were asked if they experienced any emotional distress due to their experience/experiences with the teacher certification exam, as a means of gauging their emotional position throughout the process of attempting to overcome the testing hurdle. The data gained as a result of this question exhibited that emotional distress was encountered by 72.7% of participants versus 27.3% who believed that they were not negatively affected by the testing experience. The interview process also made evident that individuals who attempted the test, in an effort to complete graduation requirements or to gain certification for occupational purposes, experienced a higher level of emotional distress than the persons who passed the exam on the first attempt. Participants who experienced emotional distress testified moments of lack of confidence, discouragement, sadness, and other emotional disparities while going through the testing process/experience, as shown in the next Table, Table 13.

Table 13: Participant Praxis: Proof of Emotional Distress

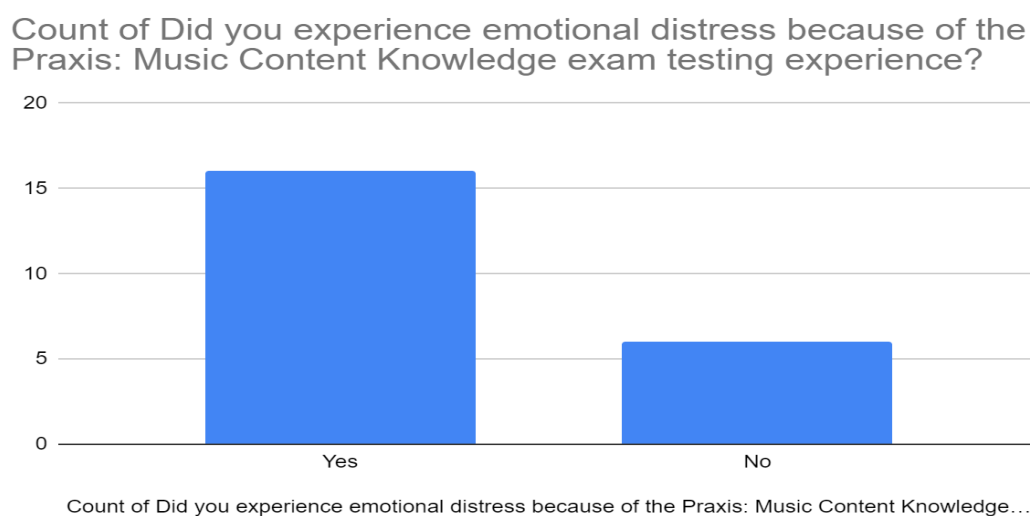
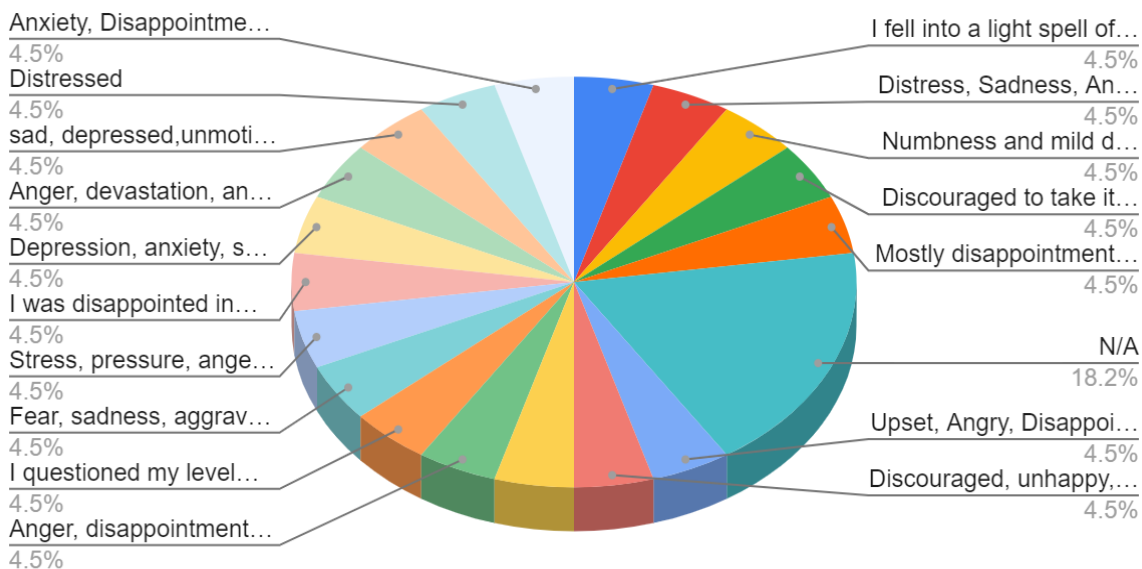


Table 14 reflects a more thorough perspective of the data presented in Table 13, allowing readers to understand each participant’s individual response to survey question twelve. Table 14 also highlights not only the participants’ emotional experiences but also allows them to empathize with them, and encompass the emotional disparities encountered, by method of relatability. Participants noted during the interview/surveyal process that much of the emotional distress encountered was immediate because of the perceived notion that they were fully prepared for the exam before testing. Some individuals also attested that before taking the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam, they had never experienced such failure on a standardized exam or any other academic venture.

Table 14: Participant Praxis: Music Content (5113) experience Emotional Response

### Histogram of Count of What are some of the emotions felt as a result of failing the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?



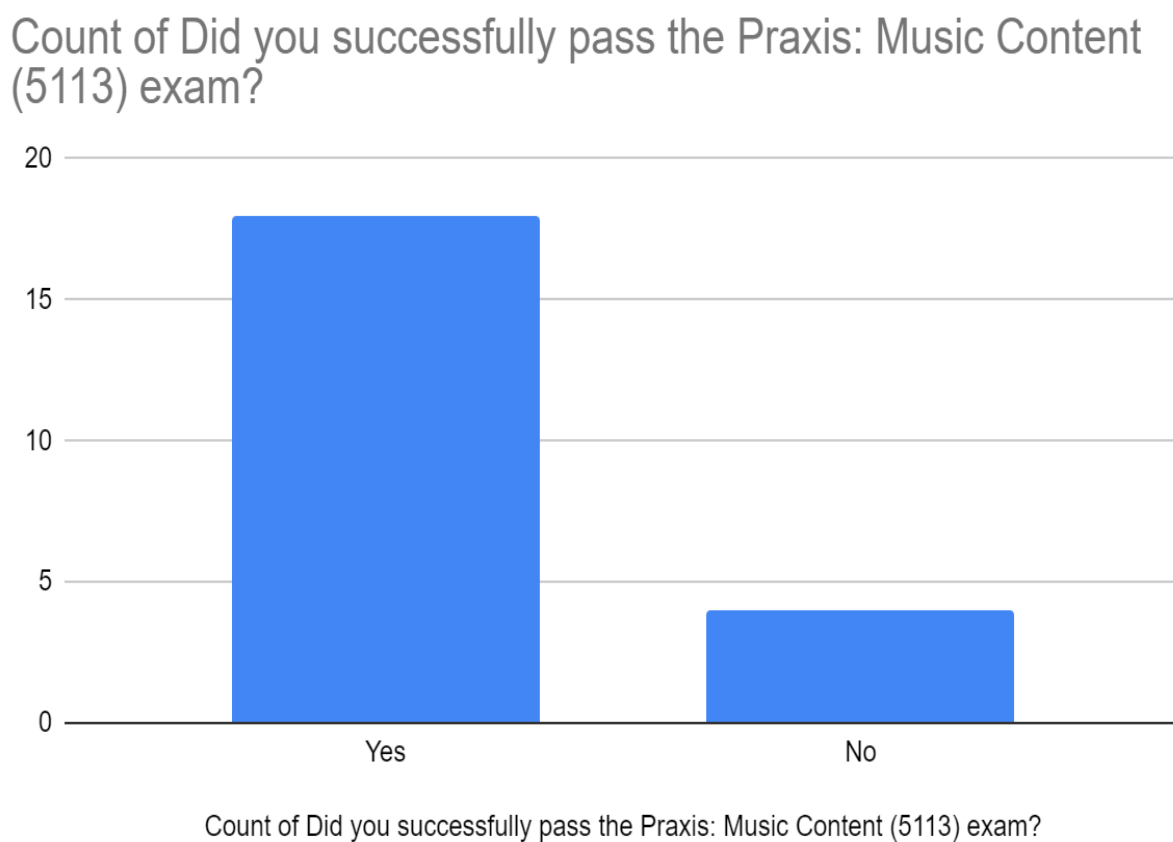
According to the data, the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam does promote preparation for future professional endeavors as the experience of preparing for the exam

combined with the recognizable pressures of curriculum, graduation, and certification demands/stipulations causes test-takers to study as much music content as possible in the effort of ensuring success. Contrarily, the results combined with the understanding of current public and private school trends of hiring non-certified professionals for teacher positions, otherwise occupied by certified professionals, also show that successfully passing the exam promotes teaching efficiency. Additionally, data suggests that whether individuals have attempted the exam more than once or passed the exam on the first attempt does not ensure complete knowledge and preparedness of or for the music education profession. Thus, no matter the success rate of an individual on the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam, upon entering schools during the first year of teaching, no one is exempt from having to gain knowledge through experience. The most noticeable advantage that the individuals who completed a Louisiana university music curriculum and passed the exam versus those who completed the curriculum only is the confidence gained from the title “certified.”

Table 15 represents the data gathered regarding participant testing outcomes related to the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam. The data highlights that 81.8% of participants, eventually, were successful in passing the exam. Data also shows that 18.2% of participants have not yet been successful in passing the exam. The data presented in Table 7 combined with the data analysis of Table 2: Participant Detailed/Individual Responses: Educational Background presents evidence that though participants who have not successfully passed the exam or have gained teacher certification, Louisiana Public School Districts and private schools are hiring them, whether conditionally or unconditionally. This type of professional behavior can not only be viewed as inconsistent practices but also serve as a negative influence on students majoring in music education within Louisiana colleges and universities, thus making them believe that it is

possible to teach in Louisiana's schools without an actual music education degree which is the only degree offering within Louisiana colleges and universities that demands teacher certification, thus the requirement of passing the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam.

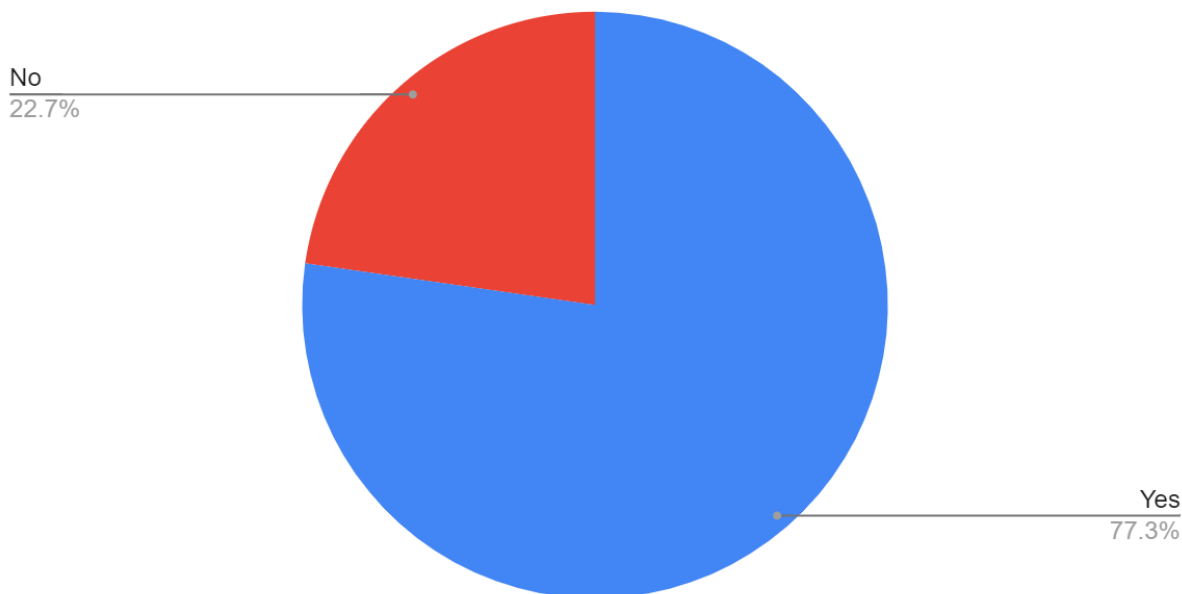
Table 15: Participant Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam Pass/Fail Rate



The data also shows that many intended music educators, regardless of testing results, are acquiring, teacher certification through other teacher certification routes offered in Louisiana. Though beneficial to the education profession, such instances have negatively impacted teacher certification programs' completion rates, making it difficult for program administrators to maintain an accurate account of program completers.

Table 16: Currently Certified or Uncertified

Count of Are you or have you been a certified music educator, according to Louisiana music education certification requirem...



### Research Limitations

Due to the specificity of the interview process, limitations were presented. Thus, the researcher, through perseverance and determination, maintained constant communication with study participants which allowed for adaptation and adjustment to the situations presented during the study. Researchers attest that “knowledge of the most reported limitations is fundamental in providing essential information to help develop best practices for future research.”<sup>113</sup> Most, if not all, of the study participants, are connected to the education profession, in that they all had different professional schedules due to their school district’s or work site’s structure. (Block schedule vs Period scheduling)

<sup>113</sup> Fabiane F. Morgado et al., “Scale Development: Ten Main Limitations and Recommendations to Improve Future Research Practices,” *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica* 30, no. 1 (2017): 2–2, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-016-0057-1>.



Additionally, many participants were either band directors, choir directors, musicians, or school administrators, all professional roles that require rigorous work hours or deal with unavoidable educational student occurrences, thus, at times, presenting interview scheduling difficulties/distractions. To eliminate limitations, the researcher and participants worked together to schedule participant interviews before or after institution/school/participant work hours. Additionally, study questions/the survey was disseminated to respondents utilizing email including a Google form/document, allowing participants to complete the survey at their leisure. Any limitations presented during the study were promptly addressed to maintain the fluidity and consistency of the research process.

#### Implications for Practice

This study, by focusing on the psychological and emotional effects of negative testing experiences regarding the Praxis II: Music Knowledge Content exam on intended/education professionals in Louisiana, provides information that allows education professionals and all other stakeholders to conduct informed decisions in the effort of modifying/repairing the teacher certification practices in Louisiana. As this study's implications are practical, they will assist education professionals of all levels in not only understanding the effects of teacher certification mandates but also in deciding curriculum guidelines and requirements. Additionally, intended/music educators, because of the awareness of the material/results discussed in this study, will be better prepared in not only recognizing personal emotional and psychological issues but also in dealing with or healing others who have encountered similar experiences.

Individuals seeking to become music educators in Louisiana and Louisiana university music supervisors may consider the data presented in the study to better prepare for the process before them and for those persons who are under their tutelage psychologically and

academically. Additionally, music supervisors and faculty members charged with preparing students for music teacher certification can utilize the study results to make conscious decisions regarding the modification of teaching materials, curriculum plans, music education programs, and testing practice materials. Having a more informed understanding of the possible negative or positive ramifications as a result of the examination process allows those involved to better prepare themselves for what is to come, thus the knowledge becomes the expectation. Furthermore, music professionals/academic counselors may gain awareness of possible student trauma as a result of negative testing experiences/outcomes and be able to administer proper intervention procedures.

In 2009, the Louisiana Board of Regents distinguished its college and university programs whose academic/graduation completion rates were floundering according to Board/state guidelines.<sup>114</sup> In 2011, the Board further embraced the “New Low-Completer Program Review”.<sup>115</sup> Louisiana’s Low-Completer Program is a process in which the board recognizes college/university department degree programs that fail to graduate a designated percentage of majoring students during a specified cycle.<sup>116</sup> Since then, Louisiana college and university departments have strived to ensure that freshman majors not only are successful academically but more importantly, graduate within their designated academic completion cycle. Thus, for Louisiana university music departments, music education majors’ Praxis exam results become more detrimental to not only the student’s future but also the future and sustainment of the music education degree programs.

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<sup>114</sup> “Regents Halts New Programs and Identifies Underperforming ... - Louisiana,” University Of LOUISIANA SYSTEM, January 8, 2009, <https://www.regents.la.gov/assets/docs/2013/03/lowcmlp11809.pdf>.

<sup>115</sup> “UL System Embraces New Low-Completer Program Review,” UL System, December 19, 2017, <https://www.ulsystem.edu/news-and-events/ul-system-embraces-new-low-completer-program-review/>.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

This conundrum, combined with curriculum standards, music, and education department stipulations, a lack of general studies course offerings, particularly Math and English because of university and College of Education standards for education majors, and Praxis exam woes can lead to vocal and instrumental music education program depletion. This study, thus, will make university stakeholders, administration, and music education faculty aware of not only the possible pitfalls of the department but also the underlying factors music education students, of the present, are forced to maneuver through academically and the pressures for all.

Educational institutions, university music programs, and teacher education/certification programs not only in Louisiana but nationwide shall be augmented due to the increase in professional self-awareness and self-care with respect to the certification process and Praxis testing experience, thus the promotion of “Emotional Labor.” As understood by researchers of teacher self-care, “Emotional Labor,” in reference to the education profession, is the management or neutralization of educator emotions for the enhancement of educational goals.<sup>117</sup>In layman’s terms, as pre-educators and teachers address any emotional or psychological trauma they have experienced, whether as of testing or other, they become more emotionally and psychologically stable which will reflect in the manner in which they teach in the classroom.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

The nucleus of the education profession are the educators who day in, and day out give “themselves” for the betterment of the students, school district, and community, thus Louisiana, in addition to the rest of the nation, must make a valiant effort to ensure that educators’ emotional, mental, and physical health is in the best state possible. Thus, the replication of this study on a

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<sup>117</sup> Jamey Kelley et al., “The Reported Self-Care Practices of Music Educators,” *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 31, no. 2 (2021): 69–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10570837211056615>.

greater scale is evident. Expanding this study to other states within the nation and upgrading the number of participants would allow for a greater understanding of the impact of teacher certification and testing demands on not only pre-educators and teachers but also how their experiences or trauma affects individual perception of the education profession, pre-educator and teacher performance, and pre-educator and teacher emotional and psychological health. Furthermore, the study could be replicated or altered and implemented in any area within the world that requires individuals seeking to become educators, in any field/subject area, to pass an exam(s) to secure complete certification. It is evident, because of the current teacher recruitment and retention struggle of the profession, that something different must be done to help increase, not only the number of certified teachers in the public and private school sector, but also the number of teachers and staff.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB EXEMPTION/APPROVAL

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 18, 2023

Kendall Damond  
Keith Pace

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1718 The Lack of and Discouragement of Certified and Intended Music Educators due to the State of Louisiana Teacher Certification Requirements.

Dear Kendall Damond, Keith Pace,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,  
**G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair*  
**Research Ethics Office**

## APPENDIX B: POST-OP SURVEY QUESTIONS

Following the interview, participants will be asked to complete a post-op survey regarding your experience for the purpose of the study. It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

1. Did you answer all questions honestly and openly?
  - Yes
  - No
2. How concerned are you about the topic/issues presented in the study?
  - A great deal
  - A lot
  - A moderate amount
  - A little
  - None at all
3. How comfortable did you feel answering questions during the initial interview process?
  - Extremely Comfortable
  - Very Comfortable
  - Somewhat Comfortable
  - Not so Comfortable
  - Not at all Comfortable
4. Do you feel that the questions of the survey were appropriate?
  - Yes
  - No

5. What did you like about the study/interview?

6. How satisfied are you with the interview process?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

7. What do you intend for the study to make better regarding music educator testing procedures?

8. Do you have any suggestions for the direction of the study?

9. How clear was the presentation of information regarding the entire process of the study?

- Extremely clear
- Very clear

- Somewhat clear
- Not so clear
- Not at all clear

10. How do you feel about the processes and procedures regarding the study?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

11. Would you like to have a copy of the final study/product?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your participation.

## APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT EMAIL/LETTER

Dear Potential Participant,

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 (D.M.E.) and to better understand the issues associated with music educator certification testing and the short-term and long-term psychological effects to potential music educators in Louisiana. The purpose of my research is to highlight the issues of the teacher preparation and certification processes in the state of Louisiana and assist stakeholders in the development of a more efficient process in which to prepare and sustain preservice educators in the state, and to bring awareness to the dysfunctional cycle of which Louisiana is governed pertaining to what is considered acceptable to become a certified music educator in the state. Thus, I am writing to invite you to join my study, as your prior experiences will assure this study's effectiveness and impact on Louisiana's teacher preparation, test practices, and the music education profession.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and have been subjected to Louisiana's certification processes, thus testing requirements for the purpose of becoming certified music teachers/educators. You must have taken the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam, which is the content specialty provision. Additionally, you must have attended a SACSCOC-accredited university, NASM-accredited undergraduate or graduate music program, or have been enrolled in an alternative certification program in the state of Louisiana. Participants should be professionals currently working in the junior high, high school, or university level of the music education profession. However, it is anticipated that many will be either current music educators, undergraduate teacher candidates, performers, or former music professionals.

Participants will be asked to participate in an in-person, audio/video-recorded interview. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications will be utilized for the purpose of face-to-face simulation. Additionally, participants will be asked to complete a post-op survey regarding their experience at the end of the interview process for the purpose of the study. It should take approximately 1 hour to complete the interview and 20 minutes to complete the survey. 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. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview. A consent document will be sent to you a week prior to the interview and will be available to you if you meet the study criteria at the time of the interview. 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 or email it to [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Kendall J Damond

Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University, School of Music

Contact: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]



## APPENDIX D: VERBAL/PHONE SCRIPTS

Hello Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, Doctor of Music Education degree (D.M.E.) to better understand the issues associated with music educator certification testing short-term and long-term psychological effects on potential music educators in Louisiana. The purpose of my research is to identify the challenges faced by students seeking music education degrees and music teacher certification in the state of Louisiana; seek solutions to assisting music educators, professionals, and state legislation in increasing the music education curriculum completion rate; and highlight in what ways does the Praxis II: Music Content Knowledge exam promote the preparation and future success of intended music educators. If you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, and have been subjected to Louisiana's certification processes, thus testing requirements for the purpose of becoming certified music teachers/educators. You must have taken the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam which is the content specialty provision. Additionally, you must have attended a SACSCOC-accredited university, NASM-accredited undergraduate or graduate music program, or have been enrolled in an alternative certification program in the state of Louisiana. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an in-person, audio/video-recorded interview. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications will be utilized for the purpose of face-to-face simulation. Additionally, participants will be asked to complete a post-op survey regarding your experience at the end of the interview process for the purpose of the study. It should take approximately 1 hour to complete the interview and 20 minutes to complete the survey. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you like to participate? [Yes] Great, can we set up a time for an interview? Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications will be utilized for the purpose of face-to-face simulation, and for convenience. [No] I understand. Thank you for your time.

A consent document will be given to you at the time of the interview or emailed to you, a week prior to the interview, depending on your preference. 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. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

## APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORMS

**Title of the Project:** The lack of and discouragement of certified and intended music educators due to the State of Louisiana teacher certification requirements.

**Principal Investigator:** Kendall J Damond, 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 have been subjected to Louisiana's certification processes, thus testing requirements for the purpose of becoming certified music teachers/educators. You must have taken the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam which is the content specialty provision. Additionally, you must have attended a SACSCOC-accredited university, NASM-accredited undergraduate or graduate music program, or have been enrolled in an alternative certification program in the state of Louisiana.

Participants, because of the nature of the music education profession, should be professionals presently working in either the junior high, high school, or university level of the music education profession. Many will be either current music educators, undergraduate teacher candidates, performers, or former music professionals. 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 highlight the issues of teacher preparation and certification processes in the state of Louisiana and assist stakeholders in the development of a more efficient process in which to prepare and sustain preservice educators in the state, will bring awareness to the dysfunctional cycle of the process by which what is acceptable to become a certified music educator in the state of Louisiana is governed.

### 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 an in-person, audio/video-recorded interview that will take no more than 1 hour. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications will be utilized for the purpose of face-to-face simulation.
2. Complete a post-op survey regarding your experience during the interview process for the purpose of the study. The survey will take no more than 20 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 the improvement of the music education profession by way of improving music educator preparation practices, thus ensuring that students who are involved in music within Louisiana schools receive the highest level of education attainable. Additionally, the research and results gathered for the study, by improving testing procedures for Louisiana teacher candidates, will increase the number of certified educators in Louisiana's school system, thus ensuring that Louisiana's society receives proper/effective education.

### **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 codes.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and in a locked safe. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings gathered for research purposes will be stored on a password locked computer for five years until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts. All recordings will then be deleted/erased. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

### **Researcher Position of Authority**

The researcher serves as a professor at Grambling State University. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, data collection will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated, a research assistant will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers before the researcher receives results. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

### 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 you 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 Kendall James Damond. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED], [REDACTED], or at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Keith Pace, 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](mailto: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 along 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 audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Subject Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Date

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your educational background?
2. How many times did you take the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?
3. Did you study for the exam, prior to taking the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?
4. Did you successfully pass the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?
5. How did you feel, emotionally, after passing the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?
6. How did you feel, emotionally, after failing the exam, the first time? (For participants who took the exam more than once)
7. How did you feel, emotionally, after failing the exam the second time? (For participants who took the exam more than once)
8. Are you or have you been a certified music educator, according to Louisiana music education certification requirements?
9. What is your current occupation? If not a music education professional, please explain why.
10. Do you believe that Praxis: Music Content (5113) testing experiences affected your decision to leave the profession?
11. Do you believe that the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge exam affects peoples' choice to pick music education as a profession?
12. Did you experience emotional distress because of the Praxis: Music Content Knowledge exam testing experience?
13. At what time during your journey to become a certified music educator did you begin to become emotionally/psychologically affected by the realization of Louisiana's music educator/certification requirements? Did it cause anxiety?
14. What are some of the emotions felt as a result of failing the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam?
15. Do you know anyone who has not passed the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam, in hopes of becoming certified in Louisiana?
16. How do you feel your past praxis testing experiences have affected your perception of teaching?
17. How do you feel your past praxis testing experiences have affected your perception of the music education profession?
18. Do you believe that the Praxis exams should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for graduation? Why?
19. Do you believe that Praxis exams should determine if pre-music educators are eligible for teacher certification? Why?
20. Do you believe that Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam content has a positive, negative, or no effect on music teacher effectiveness? Why?

## APPENDIX G: RECRUITMENT: FOLLOWUP EMAIL/LETTER

Dear Potential Participant,

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 (D.M.E.) and to better understand the issues associated with music educator certification testing short-term and long-term psychological effects potential music educators in Louisiana. Two weeks ago, an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to contact me if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is February 23, 2024.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, and have been subjected to Louisiana's certification processes, thus testing requirements for the purpose of becoming certified music teachers/educators. You must have taken the Praxis: Music Content (5113) exam which is the content specialty provision. Additionally, you must have attended a SACSCOC-accredited university, NASM-accredited undergraduate or graduate music program, or have been enrolled in an alternative certification program in the state of Louisiana. Participants will be asked to participate in an in-person, audio/video-recorded interview. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facetime, and other methods utilizing e-conference communications will be utilized for the purpose of face-to-face simulation. Additionally, participants will be asked to complete a post-op survey regarding your experience at the end of the interview process for the purpose of the study. It should take approximately 1 hour to complete the interview and 20 minutes to complete the survey. 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. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview. A consent document is attached to this letter/email and will be available to you if you meet the study criteria at the time of the interview. 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 or email to [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Kendall J Damond  
Doctoral Candidate with Liberty University, School of Music