

## **Navigating Competing Demands Within Music Teach Education: Biesta's Three Domains of Educational Purpose**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this practitioner article is to present Biesta's three domains of educational purpose as an adaptable, pragmatic framework that provides stakeholders with language for navigating the complex endeavor of music teacher education in the United States. First, we describe how neoliberal policy has obscured questions of purpose and contributed to an overemphasis on qualification in music teacher education. Then, we argue for the importance of encouraging the emergence of preservice teachers' subject-ness and offer our utilization of Biesta's lens as examples of how multidimensionality of purpose might function in practice. Our applications include curricular reform within the confines of accreditation requirements, preservice teachers' capacity for critique, and the use of Pinar's *currere* as an iterative, open-ended assessment.

### **Navigating Competing Demands within Music Teacher Education: Biesta's Three Domains of Educational Purpose**

According to some scholars, education, teaching, and teacher education are “essentially contested concepts” (Elliott & Silverman, 2015, p. 9, referencing Gallie, 1956). They are ever-changing, value-laden social phenomena that involve differential power relationships among multiple stakeholders embedded in global, national, and local sociocultural and political environments. Music education and music teacher education (MTE), with varied strands of culturally embedded musical traditions, are particularly contested. Heated debates over the defining nature and value of music education as aesthetic (Reimer, 1989/2019), praxial (Elliott & Silverman, 2015), remixed (Allsup, 2016), activist (Hess, 2019), or something not yet named continue to dominate philosophical discourse and subsequent implications for MTE.

The disagreement over the essences of music, music education, and MTE has co-occurred with conflict regarding specific instructional approaches. For example, some have claimed that the large ensemble is an outdated model of music education (e.g., Kratus, 2007), while others have responded with arguments for the relevance of band, choir, and orchestra (e.g., Miksza, 2013). This debate, like others, has had direct implications for MTE. While many institutions of higher education continue to offer conservatory-style MTE in which preservice teachers participate in large ensembles and classical studio lessons, some universities have begun expanding teacher preparation through practices such as incorporating popular music-making in methods courses (e.g., Davis & Blair, 2011; Powell et al., 2020).

Conflicts like these are reminiscent of Palmer's (2007) description of the chasm between proponents of teacher- and student-centered instruction that opened during a faculty meeting he attended.

On one side were the scholars, insisting that the [course content] is primary and must *never* [emphasis added] be compromised for the sake of the students' lives. On the other side were the student-centered folks, insisting that the lives of students must *always* [emphasis added] come first even if it means that the [content] gets short-changed. The more vigorously these camps promoted their polarized ideas, the more antagonistic they became. (p. 13)

Perhaps Palmer's purpose was not only to draw attention to the tension created from clashing viewpoints, but to recognize that these viewpoints coexist within educational discourse. Conflicting values often seem to fracture the music education space, which may stem from efforts to justify the role of it within schools and society. But Rolle (2017) has pointed to a

deeper struggle, suggesting that “at stake is not the legitimacy of music education as a school subject (itself a difficult issue) but the question of how we make—have to make—everyday choices as music educators” (p. 88).

The complexity of values within the profession has been consistent throughout educational history, pointing to the necessity for educators to navigate a multiplicity of values as the cornerstone of an ongoing professional ethos (Ravitch, 2013). Accordingly, the ways in which one sees the purpose of music education will consist of evolving viewpoints as contexts naturally shift throughout time. In the pluralist, postmodern discourse prevalent in teacher education scholarship in the United States, the idea that any singular value of music education (and thus resulting pedagogies) will always have its limits. Pluralism necessitates room for various points of view, but making such space has been challenging.

In response to these complexities, Biesta (2015, 2016) devised a framework of three domains of educational purpose to provide stakeholders with language for engaging with and navigating the challenges of education in democratic, pluralist societies. The purpose of this practitioner article is to interweave Biesta’s domains with practical concerns of music teacher educators (MTEs) in the U. S., demonstrating its utility and inviting further incorporation of Biesta’s thought into the field. First, we describe how neoliberal policy has obscured stakeholders’ engagement with questions of purpose on MTE. Then, we offer our utilization of Biesta’s lens as examples of how multidimensionality of purpose might function in concrete settings.

### **The Neoliberal Context of Music Teacher Education**

The tension within the profession described above is due, in part, to neoliberal policy demands for music teacher educators (MTEs) to produce material evidence of undergraduates’ preparedness for the classroom. Neoliberalism is a market-based ideology that emphasizes individuals’ freedom to compete for resources through governmental deregulation (Harvey, 2007). The Reagan administration’s *A Nation at Risk* report represented a salient intrusion of neoliberal reasoning into U. S. education policy in the 1980s (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Manna, 2010). Authors of the report warned that the country’s dominance within the global market was declining due to deficiencies in public education, and they used business logic in setting goals for schooling. Since that time, education policy (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002) has opened spaces for private organizations to enter the educational market. For example, many states offer voucher programs, diverting funds from public schools to private and charter schools. According to Harvey (2007), the primary aim has been to intensify competition in pursuit of quality—the more players in the game, the greater the competition, and the higher the quality of education. This increase in competition

has contributed to a widespread focus on quantifiable outcomes that are visible and easily comparable.

In this neoliberal context, bureaucrats and policymakers have implemented measurable forms of quality assurance that directly impact MTE. Examples include mandatory credits, students' accumulation of labor-force skills, and undergraduates' time-to-degree (Brown, 2015; Maas et al., 2023). In addition, some stakeholders have adapted and/or created quantitative assessments for PK-12 school music and teacher certification requirements such as the performative edTPA (see Powell & Parkes, 2020), large ensemble music performance assessments, and the Model Cornerstone Assessments, a framework of instruction and assessment that helps educators measure students' learning (National Association for Music Education, 2017). While the intent of these assessments may have been to improve instruction, the exam scores also function as numeric data for legitimating and defending music's place in the educational system. They may also conserve ways of music-making that currently exist in the educational system and intensify music teachers' and students' pursuit of success in performance competitions (Bernard & McBride, 2020; Powell, 2023b; Richerme, 2016). These measures may narrow the scope of MTE curricula, essentially forcing an argument for the "right" way to educate future teachers, with the potential for editing out the nuance and variance that the music education field requires.

Scholars have responded, in part, to the challenges of pluralism and constraints of neoliberal policy by arguing for the worth of school music education as a mechanism of social change. Many have called for music teacher-agents to lead social change through public school music education in service of affirming the diversity present in a pluralistic society (e.g., Hess, 2019). However, the limits of enacting progressive agendas through music and the arts need to be explored in great depth, and the ethics of MTEs intentionally transmitting progressive values is an important area of philosophical exploration (Richerme, 2022). Nevertheless, scholars have widely agreed that criticality and reflexivity are vital parts of preservice music educators' undergraduate preparation, and the need for continued inquiry does not negate the necessity of preparing music educators for navigating the complex social environments of schools (e.g., Ballantyne & Kallio, 2024; Benedict & Schmidt, 2011).

These tensions in MTE necessitate a theoretical framework that allows room for debate within local applications and facilitates dialogue among various stakeholders with their divergent values and commitments. MTEs may benefit from a cohesive lens to guide advocacy efforts for keeping MTE in higher education and to prevent further deprofessionalization and intrusion of private business interests (see Powell, 2023a). It must be flexible, with room for disparate priorities. Biesta's framework could help music education instructors, ensemble directors, studio faculty, and others communicate about multidimensional goals so that we can

collectively and effectively advocate for preservice music educators' needs for nuanced, contextual instruction and evaluation that university teacher preparation programs often provide.

### **Biesta's Three Domains of Educational Purpose**

Dutch educationalist (*pedagog*) Gert Biesta (2015, 2016) provided a robust framework to illustrate how educational practices and processes serve multiple functions and purposes. He organized the interrelated purposes of education into three domains: *qualification*, *socialization*, and *subjectification*. While distinct, the domains work in tandem and educators' efforts in one domain may influence students in the other domains. Additionally, the three domains allow space for both breadth as well as depth in the preparation of future music educators. He has written widely about the three domains, and his views continuously evolve. In this paper, we focus on Biesta's (2015) article and (2016) book because of his stated purpose in both of providing stakeholders (such as MTEs) with language for considering and discussing the purposes of education rather than passively implementing neoliberal aims.

Qualification is often the most discernible domain, occupying a large part of the teacher's praxis in neoliberal societies. Qualification refers to the instruction and acquisition of knowledge and skills. In MTE, education in the qualification domain involves skills and knowledge for teaching, musicking, and working in school settings. Teacher certification processes that involve rated observations reported to state boards of education correspond with the qualification domain. The socialization domain involves preservice educators' becoming part of existing social groups, such as cultures, professions, and traditions. Socialization involves the explicit and implicit (via hidden curriculum; see Apple, 1982) transmission of norms and values, providing continuity to society. Teacher educators knowingly and unknowingly enculturate preservice teachers into predominant conventions and ways of being music educators. For example, socialization in MTE takes place as preservice teachers learn to act, dress, and speak like in-service music educators, as they adopt beliefs and values related to the profession, and as they build a professional network of colleagues and employers. Subjectification represents students' "coming into the world" (Biesta, 2016, p. 85) as unique subjects amongst plurality and difference. It involves their development of initiative, responsibility, autonomy, independence, criticality, and the capacity for judgment (Biesta, 2015). Biesta contrasted subjectification with socialization:

[Subjectification] is precisely not about the insertion of "newcomers" into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders, ways of being in which the individual is not simply a "specimen" of a more encompassing order...Any education worthy of its name should always contribute to processes of

subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting. (Biesta, 2016, p. 21)

In MTE, efforts to encourage preservice teachers to imagine new possibilities for what music education is and to change and remake their practices often exist in the subjectification domain. While socialization characterizes taking on the teacher role, subjectification involves contributing new beginnings to the profession. The difference is between an individual fitting into what exists and offering something unique out of their particular existence in the world. This task is not as simple, as Vita and Campbell (2021) suggested, and MTEs might “do well to proceed with caution” (p. 48) in efforts to be sensitive to the dynamic and contextual manifestations of one's subjectivity. Subject-ness does not emerge in a vacuum, and undergraduates typically arrive in MTE programs with predetermined expectations of what they will learn and who they will become during their coursework. As Dobbs (2014) and Powell and Parker (2017) described, preservice teachers often desire education in the qualification and socialization domains because they want to acquire practical knowledge and skills to become excellent band, choir, and orchestra directors like their former teachers. This anticipated outcome can be at odds with culturally responsive musical practices that are celebrated within a specific context. Further, these expectations are intensified by the neoliberal transformation of a university education into a business transaction between faculty, who are the service providers, and preservice teachers, who are the consumers (Biesta, 2006; Brown, 2015).

Neoliberal ends of education, particularly the emphasis on preparation for existing jobs and social groups, can stymie preservice teachers' growth in the subjectification domain by casting them solely as rational actors, eliminating the reality of nonrational facets of existence and the plurality necessary for subjectivity to emerge (Arendt, 1958; Biesta, 2016). In MTE in the U. S., this reduction of subjectivity is manifest in most colleges' and universities' graduation requirements for preservice teachers to demonstrate the *how* of music teaching but not necessarily the *why*: concert and recital performances, piano barriers, conducting exams, student teaching, and licensure exams, among others. While these experiences are important, they tend to overemphasize the qualification and socialization domains and are grounded in technical-rational assumptions that preservice teachers want to maximize their capacities for existing workforce demands: the knowledge, skills, dispositions, relationships, and professional habits necessary for success as band, choir, orchestra, and elementary general music educators.

However, PK–12 schools are diverse places full of students with backgrounds and interests within and beyond the Western traditions that are inherent in the qualification and socialization domains in most North American MTE programs. Thus, education in the

subjectification domain could be important for encouraging preservice teachers to see beyond their own lived experiences. Further, faculty might consider reflexively preparing preservice teachers to counter marketplace ideology, because it may reduce themselves and their students into alienated objects of human capital (e.g., Bates, 2021; Brown, 2015). This alienation isolates music educators from the real plurality of the world, precluding encounters with difference from which unique beginnings come into existence. The ideological work involved in resisting the dominance of neoliberal discourse in public schooling, in asserting the subject-ness of oneself and future students, suggests that instructors should nurture preservice teachers' deep and expansive growth in the subjectification domain. By accepting subjectification as a purpose of MTE, we may encourage preservice educators to pursue new beginnings of teaching music within and beyond Western traditions and resisting neoliberal ideology. Biesta's framework might help MTE stakeholders navigate the competing needs for future music teachers' preparation and growth in the qualification, socialization, and subjectification domains.

### **Utilization of Biesta's Three Domains in MTE**

Several scholars have used Biesta's domains as a theoretical framework in empirical studies of MTE. Jordan (2022) utilized Biesta's three domains to analyze the tensions in preparing preservice teachers to succeed in the current neoliberal job market *and* to become "change agents capable of improving their educational landscapes" (p. 225). Westerlund et al. (2022) found that intercultural outreach projects can effectively interrupt neoliberal beliefs such as individualism and the logic of teaching in preservice music teachers' development, encouraging them to encounter their own subject-ness in relation to the world. Tucker and Powell (2021) used Biesta's framework to examine values inherent in a university MTE program and provided guiding questions for MTEs to reflect on their curricula. The authors' inquiry revealed that even in an MTE program with explicit values of democracy and social justice, the qualification domain was most cogent in preservice teachers' coursework. In this paper, we extend Tucker and Powell's (2021) starting points for reflection and dialogue by weaving Biesta's theoretical framework into three acute areas of MTE practice: curricular reform, critique, and preservice teacher assessment. We intend for this marrying of Biesta's domains with three topics pervasive in MTE discourse to catalyze imaginations and conversations rather than establish a codified approach or prescriptive model of implementation. First, we address the challenges of curricular reform within the confines of accreditation requirements. Second, we consider the importance of fostering preservice music teachers' capacities for critique. Third, we discuss how Pinar's (1975) *currere* can serve as an iterative, open-ended assessment that leads to varied and broadened perspectives of music teaching while providing requisite evidence of preservice educators' readiness for the classroom. Throughout these three areas, we integrate Biesta's three purposes of education

into MTE as possibilities for its utility.

### ***Curricular Reform***

In the U. S., state legislatures and accrediting organizations oversee course allocations in undergraduate music education degree plans through accreditation processes that emphasize the qualification domain. State governments determine the requirements for general education and teacher certification, and an accrediting body, most commonly the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), divides credit hours among music areas such as theory, history, applied lessons, large ensemble performance, and keyboard competency (NASM, 2023). NASM has sought to provide visionary guidance for “music in education and music...as an artform in the United States” (Barrows, 1999, p. 14). NASM’s (2023) efforts have contributed to the flourishing of music in academia and PK–12 schools, and their standards for accreditation permit space for “each institution [to make] choices about what, among many possibilities, it will offer prospective specialist music teachers” (p. 124). As a policy text, NASM permits creative and contextual interpretations of accreditation standards.

As Richerme (2019) recognized, however, there is a marked difference between policy text and corresponding policy actions. Despite NASM’s flexibility, MTE curricula has existed in a state of “pseudo-standardization” (Aguilar & Richerme, 2019, p. 197), due to forces such as state credit hour caps, state-mandated credit additions, imitation of other institutions, habit, social reproduction, and the profession’s sometimes “limited...beliefs and assumptions” (Cutietta, 2007, p. 13; Colwell, 2007; Mantie & Talbot, 2015). The College Music Society’s (Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major, 2016) manifesto, considered an actionable progressive reform model for undergraduate music education at its origins, has yet to yield widespread change (see Powell et al., 2020). Thus, in the absence of policy actions that utilized NASM’s flexibility, the typical undergraduate music education degree plan includes an abundance of preparation for Western classical music teaching and learning in the qualification domain. Preservice teachers graduate with skills and knowledge for performing in, conducting, and teaching band, choir, orchestra, and Western-centric elementary general music. In alignment with Biesta’s (2015) assertion, the qualification domain, at least in relation to Western classical music, is over-emphasized in many music education baccalaureate programs in the U. S.

This overemphasis in a qualification domain limited to Eurocentric practices may not prepare preservice teachers with the competencies necessary to effectively teach music in a pluralist democracy, and MTEs might seek reform by opening the qualification domain to music beyond Western traditions. As the Music Teacher Profession Initiative (2023) recently identified, a “broad gulf” (p. 18) exists between MTE curricula and “what PK–12 music

educators are charged to implement in their communities” —sometimes classes beyond the band, choir, and orchestra university norms. While systemic change is needed at the national accreditation level to ameliorate the “perceived onerous emphases on areas such as keyboard skills, theory, and history” (p. 18), MTEs may find Biesta’s three domains to be a helpful tool in articulating the problem of a Eurocentric curriculum concentrated on performance skills that likely contributes to national music teacher shortages.

Curricular change is challenging and inextricably linked to other music disciplines and faculty, each with their own priorities and ideas about what qualifications music teachers will need to be successful. However, music faculty are sometimes unaware of licensure requirements, the national teacher shortage, and the impending threat of for-profit alternative certification programs (see Maas et al., 2023; Powell, 2023a). By raising awareness of these issues in tandem with Biesta’s three domains, MTEs may make gains at persuading stakeholders outside of music education programs to engage in degree plan revision because the domain and tradition they are particularly committed to (often, qualification in Western forms) is already well-represented in the curriculum. Additionally, collaborations among music education and other music faculty, such as an arranging project in an instrumental methods course, may help bridge disciplinary isolation and inform both parties of emerging trends in their colleagues’ disciplines (Thornton et al., 2004).

Because of the diversity and pluralism present in many U. S. schools, MTE curriculum might best prepare teachers when it is context-specific and reflects regional culture. For example, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (n.d.) provides an undergraduate music degree that allows preservice educators to specialize in mariachi while earning teacher certification. In a different example, West Virginia University (2024) offers preservice teachers the opportunity to participate in the “WVU Bluegrass Band...[which is] devoted exclusively to the performance of Appalachian music.” While these classes and ensembles prepare preservice educators in the qualification domain by providing them with skills and knowledge for music-making beyond Western classical traditions, they also engage the socialization and subjectification domains by giving them lived experiences in culturally relevant genres. Extended involvement with musical difference, with music cultures outside the Western traditions most common in U. S. schools, could facilitate undergraduates’ consideration of their own place in a plural world and reflections of their own subject-ness in relation to others’ subject-ness.

These experiences may function as interruptions in preservice teachers’ thinking, opportunities for them to encounter difference in which their subject-ness may emerge as they make broader gains in the qualification domain, accruing skills and knowledge beyond the classical forms typical in U. S. MTE. In this way, MTEs might use instruction in the

qualification domain to catalyze deeper education in the subjectification domain. By incorporating more inclusive musical traditions, MTEs might spark preservice teachers' imaginations for what is possible in PK–12 music education, potentially diversifying the field in alignment with the Music Teacher Profession Initiative's (2023) recommendations. Because preservice educators tend to socialize into existing teacher roles, it might benefit them to be open to unimagined possibilities (in the subjectification domain), to becoming a music educator as unique as their sociohistorical, geographical, cultural context. For example, the educator who teaches jazz, beginning band, and songwriting offers something different to the world than one who teaches elementary music, class piano, and music technology. The work to prepare preservice teachers for an infinite combination of necessary skills, dispositions, and roles is complex, and Biesta's domains may help MTEs focus their efforts. Preservice music educators' experiencing, practicing, and reflecting upon a variety of required qualifications and socialized teacher identities could be beneficial preparation for them to join existing realities and imagine new possibilities.

In this section, we described the need for MTEs to expand the qualification domain through incorporating knowledge and skills for diverse musical traditions into coursework while seeking structural reform. Through this example, we seek to heed Dyndahl's (2021) caution against overemphasizing the subjectification domain while working with Biesta's framework. We do not advocate for continued over-emphasis on qualification that serves neoliberal ends; rather, we seek to meet the world as it is and contribute new beginnings through varied degrees of change. We intend for our suggestions here to illustrate how considering the purpose of the qualification domain could lead to changes that both better prepare preservice educators for teaching in a pluralist democracy and more deeply engage them in the subjectification domain.

### ***Capacity for Critique***

Because neoliberalism has become "the commonsense [*sic*] of society" (Apple, 2001, 194), music educators cannot confront or resist it without developing a capacity for critique.

Following Apple (2014), we view

being critical [as] something more than simply fault-finding. It involves understanding the sets of historically contingent circumstances and contradictory power relationships that create the conditions in which we live. (5)

While there are many critical theorists worthy of inclusion in MTE, we focus our attention on Apple's conception of schools as sites of reproduction of *and* resistance to dominant economic ideology. We advocate for MTEs to provide opportunities for their students to begin to see the "larger social patterns and outcomes [that reveal] how the school functions in reproduction" (Apple, 1982, 13). Space and time are central to this perspective because

neoliberal ideologies seek a neutral and ahistorical vision of quality teaching. Without the ability to think critically, preservice teachers may unconsciously reproduce and transmit the logic of neoliberal capitalism that alienates their students and themselves (Apple, 1982; Bates, 2021).

Yet, even with critical theory embedded into a curriculum, preservice music teachers might still miss out on growth in the subjectification domain that facilitates their thinking and acting beyond existing social orders. Invoking critical reflection, which Brookfield (2017) defined as “the sustained and intentional process of identifying and checking the accuracy and validity of our teaching assumptions” (p. 3), might remediate this issue. Unlike traditional reflection, which primarily functions as a cognitive skill in the qualification domain, Brookfield’s definition includes the interrogation of assumptions, which can serve as an interruption that encourages students’ reflection on how their past behaviors, decisions, and experiences connect to societal power dynamics inherent in the plural histories of school music. Additionally, MTEs might take care to interrogate and discuss critical reflection and action at the institutional level, because the term “critical thinking” may signify different meanings among MTEs at the same institution (Tucker & Powell, 2021).

MTEs might consider opening possibilities for emerging music teachers’ capacities for critique by prioritizing their construction and revision of teaching philosophies. Rigorous philosophical approaches to music education are sometimes omitted from MTE coursework due to the constraints of the undergraduate music education degree plan in colleges and universities accredited by NASM. The association (2023) advises that preservice teachers have “knowledge of...philosophies” (p. 125) related to music specializations such as general, vocal/choral, and instrumental music, but does not require the interdisciplinary, philosophical reasoning skills music educators need to think and teach with criticality in a complex, pluralistic society. As a result, music teachers may enter the field with underdeveloped philosophical commitments and limited skills (in the qualification domain) for critique of the power relations inherent in neoliberal education policy and practice, despite music education scholars’ repeated calls for teachers to both construct and reconstruct personal philosophies and engage in argumentation (e.g., Elliot & Silverman, 2015; Jorgensen, 1990).

To address this issue, MTEs might assign readings, discussions, projects, and field work that encourage future music educators to reflect critically, with depth and nuance, about the purpose of school music and the alignment between assumption, intention, and outcome (Benedict & Schmidt, 2011). For example, MTEs could lead classroom discussions that problematize the notion that music is a creative space in schooling in which educators automatically cultivate students’ freedom of expression through musical norms that are inherently good and noble. Benedict and Schmidt’s distinction between *doing* music, in which

students' bodies are controlled and musical gestures are prescribed, and *making* music, where true creativity and liberation flourish, could be a helpful tool for guiding preservice educators to think beyond the assumed universal value of school music for students' creative thinking and expression. Without opportunities to think deeply and philosophically, preservice music teachers may enter the field unintentionally teaching their students to *do* school music, thinking it is creative, when it is closer to an exercise in conformity and reproduction.

For critical reflection to directly involve preservice educators' socialization and subjectification domains, they may be inspired by in-service teacher models of critique and action, and they may benefit from opportunities to practice designing, implementing, and reflecting on their practice in early field experiences. It can be challenging for preservice teachers to imagine ways of being outside neoliberal ends of education and, as a result, they may enter the field navigating critical issues quietly, individually, and behind closed classroom doors (Santoro, 2011). Options outside of professional norms "may tend to be all too hidden if our individual acts of helping remain our primary focus" (Apple, 1982, 13), and students may need multiple opportunities to see how daily decisions contribute to larger historical trends. Conversely, examples of real people who practiced opposition to political, cultural, and sociological norms throughout history could inspire the emergence of preservice teachers' own subjectivity. Thus, MTEs might consider sharing critical PK–12 music educators' stories with preservice teachers in effort to provide alternative visions of socialization into the profession.

The following educators met the plurality of the world with their unique contributions, which were catalyzed by the responsibility they took for prioritizing students' experiences above school music traditions and norms (Biesta, 2015, 2016). Powell's (2017) investigation of Abigail's agency and construction of a school band program that was relevant to her Chicago community might galvanize preservice teachers to think critically about modifying existing forms of music education. Similarly, Tucker (2023) and colleagues' (Tucker et al., 2023) descriptions of music educators (Paul, Darin, and Dave) who rejected normative contest structures and created more educationally-sound, community-engaged festivals could open preservice teachers' imaginations to new possibilities in the field. These teachers chose to stop entering students in jazz (Tucker, 2023) or band competitions (Tucker et al., 2023), events that are manifestations of neoliberal logic at work in music education. Instead of complying with existing social orders, the educators provided collaborative experiences that better served their students and communities, and their stories may inspire future educators' unique contributions to the world in the subjectification domain. Additionally, Schmidt and Smith's (2017) exploration of Michael's, a novice string educator, pursuit of culturally responsive instruction could demonstrate the nuance and patience required to prevent burnout while challenging normative practices. Music educators who act reflectively like Abigail, Darin,

Dave, Michael, and Paul exist in many parts of the country and could aid preservice teachers in forming identities and imaginations grounded in critical reflection and action in all three of Biesta's domains.

### *Currere*

Preservice music teachers' creation and consistent revision of a *currere* is another tool for encouraging them to engage with critical reflection and action in Biesta's domains. The *currere* is a reflexive process in which preservice educators "recreate and regenerate in terms of [their] own consciousness the materials of a curriculum" (Pinar, 1975, p. 403) within the form of a portfolio assessment. The *currere* begins with looking at the past, through prompts of educational memories and experiences, to craft a deep story of an educator's self. Teacher candidates use these memories as anchor points to understand how their pedagogical values, beliefs, and attitudes have been shaped through lived experiences, which then serves as a jumping off point for future professional development. Memories are symbolized through a wide range of artifacts, from videos of performances to written feedback from a teacher to personal photographs, among others, which are typically woven together within an essay.

However, this process is not only a narrative; it is synthesis and analysis from a distance in which preservice educators actively articulate their subjectivity and imagine their future career. The act of connecting the dots of their educational influences through a *currere* can highlight a student's change in their professional initiative, responsibility, autonomy, independence, criticality, and the capacity for judgment (Biesta, 2015), creating a dynamic constellation of teacher identity which varies drastically from portfolio to portfolio. We find beauty in the openness of how a preservice teacher's *currere* can materialize, as it is a "form of free association", similar to a musical improvisation (Gouzouasis & Wiebe, 2018, 3). A *currere*, then, is a phenomenological method in which the preservice educators research their own unfolding professional journey. It is, in a sense, an assessment of the open-ended, uncertain construction of the self-as-music-teacher, incorporating the subjectification domain. We (Olivia and George) used *currere* in the MTE program at our former institution in tandem with tests of skills and knowledge. Preservice teachers' construction of their *curreres* began in the first-year, first-semester introduction to music education course. They wrote simple personal narratives of their music education and personal development. In their second year, they refined, broadened, and deepened their stories, and they composed, arranged, and/or performed musical interpretations of their growth. We instructed students to perform anything that represented their story, journey, and current outlook on themselves as music educators; the only limit was that they could not perform something required for their applied lesson juries. At this mid-curriculum point and again during their student teaching seminars, the *currere* materialized as a portfolio. The preservice educator's work was a mixture of writing,

artifacts, and presentation. Their iteratively written document allowed multiple opportunities for them to consider educational experiences with attention to intersections between the public and the personal, the sole space in which subject-ness can manifest (according to Arendt and Biesta). They supplemented their writing with artifacts from their journey as a student, which could include musical creations, videos of teaching episodes, course projects, or any other objects that had been significant to their professional and personal development.

Most MTE curricula involve some form of benchmark testing or portfolio construction, typically at pivotal transitions to upper-level coursework and entry into the field. These can look similar to the edTPA mentioned above, where preservice educators submit teaching clips that are analyzed in relation to specific predetermined learning outcomes. Other MTE programs have used portfolio assessments that accumulate artifacts throughout multiple classes, like lesson plans, observations, and video clips (e.g., Parkes et al., 2013). These are typically assessed similarly to the edTPA, leaning into reflection of the effectiveness of didactic teaching methods. Effectiveness here is typically validated by a reflection of “real world” practices, as indicated through specified rubric criteria (Wiggins, 1990). Further, many portfolios are distinct from coursework and are prescribed by instructors, meaning students may have little agency into determining which artifacts constitute evidence of effective teaching. Regarding the neoliberal context described earlier, these portfolio assessments involve objective external standards (scored inside or outside local institutions) that may distance a teacher candidate from deeper meanings of their work. While helpful in highlighting a larger curricular cohesion to teacher preparation, these programmatic assessments tend to omit subjectification for qualification- and socialization-centric notions of quality teaching.

Pinar’s (1975) concept of *currere* could be a helpful means of incorporating the subjectification domain into comprehensive preservice teacher evaluation because it opens space for the subject-ness of new beginnings to emerge. Pinar’s process does not involve prescribed standards or scoring; rather, it catalyzes preservice teachers’ active interpretation and re-interpretation of the way their education intersects with their lived experiences. The dominance of rubrics in neoliberal portfolios are instead balanced with an iterative process of reflection, as both the writing and artifacts are presented multiple times to peers within the process of creating a *currere*. This sharing is an important component, because it aids in making meaning of personal ideas and symbols through social construction. Jorgensen (1995) links this portion of the *currere* to power found in educational communities, where “students can engage in dialogue together in order to name their worlds and better understand their realities” (p. 82). The value of a preservice teacher’s work then emerges through articulations of how teacher identity is found both within and outside of localized and professional standards learned throughout coursework and field experience. Unlike the portfolio

assessments described above, a *curre* assessment can center teacher subjectivity as a means to understand teacher effectiveness and student learning.

The revision and extension of preservice teachers' personal narratives, alongside deeply personal musical performances, encourages their critical reflection within and across Biesta's three domains. *Curreres* are open-ended processes in which preservice educators consider their skills in the qualification domain, reflect on their entry into the profession (engagement in the socialization domain), and make reflexive decisions about their identities and goals as they enter the field (growth in the subjectification domain). As a preservice educator's in-progress *curre* is discussed within group settings, themes of subjectivity and ideology emerge as a mirror to foster deep, critical reflection. The process can serve as a salient moment in shifting both musical and pedagogical values from reproducing norms to reimagining what is possible within a music classroom (Tremblay-Beaton, 2018). The focus of *curre* is distinct, as Sellers (2003) explained, "I have taken *curre* to heart because it is empathetic with my picturing of it as a virtual *coursing* of learning, in contrast to the objective teaching-to-learn course of the conventional curriculum concept" (p. 1). In our experiences, preservice teachers have constructed and re-constructed a distinct sense of the particular skills, values, and uniqueness that are most meaningful to their future development as educators through engaging in the *curre* process. In this way, *curreres* represent compelling opportunities for preservice music teachers to synthesize and integrate their development across and among Biesta's three domains of educational purpose.

### Conclusion

Biesta's framework supplies language for stakeholders' dialogue around the multidimensionality of educational purpose in MTE curricula and instruction. It provides an opening for MTEs to direct more of their work and attention toward the subjectification domain, which requires consciousness of neoliberal policy and influence in education. We have presented examples of how MTEs may use Biesta's lens to provide requisite fixed evidence of teacher candidates' preparation to teach and open-ended opportunities for them to grow in meaningful ways. Teacher education is both prescribed and constructed depending on content, context, and domain of educational purpose. Returning to Palmer's (2007) story of conflict between faculty members who prioritized course content and those who focused students' needs, both parties' acceptance of the multidimensionality of educational purpose may have lessened the strife. It is difficult to imagine an instructor without some degree of concern for both students and content.

Biesta's three domains hold great potential for navigating competing demands in MTE. The framework allows for a postmodern, both/and blending and valuing of preservice music

educators' preparation for tradition and innovation, orchestra and modern band, solfege and songwriting. Our ideas are intended as starting points for MTEs to contextualize Biesta's domains to specific institutions; they are one set of examples for applying Biesta's framework in pursuit of a dynamic MTE. Contextual revision is a necessary step when connecting any theory to practice, and we hope to inspire MTEs' utilization of Biesta's framework in a variety of ways, including greater attention to the subjectification domain.

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