Research Article

Investigating paradoxes in the music teaching profession

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Abstract
Teachers are regularly confronted with paradoxes in their profession: clashes between different sets of values, their roles and their personal authenticity, the desire to be open but also detached, and the willingness to encourage students to have their own opinion but at the same time to obey and adapt. In this article, we investigate paradoxes in the music teaching profession with the aim of identifying those that are inherent to the field of music education and do not depend on a specific place or cultural context. To comprehend these paradoxes, we conducted a narrative study focused on the experiences of music teachers as presented through their own stories. This narrative study of 12 music teachers who worked with 10- to 15-year-old students in comprehensive schools was carried out in four European countries. The study applied a three-stage narrative interview strategy that asked teachers to share cases from their experience that implied paradoxes in their professional work. Based on this study, three umbrella categories of paradoxes were identified: paradoxes on curriculum negotiation and co-negotiation with students, free action in a regulated environment, and the double identity of music teachers. The study results offered insights applicable to music teacher education which can be summarized as a proposal to expose prospective music teachers to the paradoxes in their future profession and to discuss strategies that might help them manage these paradoxes.

Keywords
children and adolescents, music education, music education curriculum, music teacher education, narrative inquiry, pedagogy, qualitative methods, research

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Introduction

Teaching music in schools is a challenging task. Alongside the positive aspects of the profession, music teachers often face difficult tensions when their epistemological expectations are not met in the realities and everyday practices of music teaching and learning in school (e.g., Cleaver & Ballantyne, 2014). Many such pressures result from so-called paradoxes, or tensions between two or more elements that individually appear logical but are contradictory when combined (Lewis, 2000, p. 761). These paradoxes are the starting point for this article reporting on a study carried out in 2021. It was important for us as researchers to investigate this phenomenon from an international perspective; therefore, we invited music teachers in our home countries to share possible paradoxes they experienced in their careers as music teachers in schools. We collected and compared data from four countries (Austria, Cyprus, Lithuania, and Switzerland) with diverse music education traditions. In this way, we attempted to examine paradoxes in the music teaching profession from an international perspective for the first time. The aim of the current study was twofold:

1. To investigate whether there are common paradoxes in the music teaching profession that do not depend on a specific place or educational and cultural context.
2. To offer suggestions for better preparing prospective music teachers to deal with the tensions arising from those paradoxes.

Defining the term paradox

The term *paradox* is derived from the Ancient Greek word *parádoxo*, which means "against opinion." It denotes "a person, thing, or situation that has two opposite features and therefore seems strange" (Kluge, 2011, p. 682). The term also describes "a statement containing two opposite ideas that make it seem impossible or unlikely, although it is probably true" (Kluge, 2011, p. 682). Educational literature also uses the concept of paradoxical tension, which according to Fairhurst et al. (2002) stands for a "clash of ideas, principles, and actions as well as any subsequent feelings of discomfort" (p. 506). Paradoxical tensions incorporate contradictory but interwoven concepts that exist simultaneously and persist over time (Schad et al., 2016; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Tensions in teaching situations—which in the broadest sense go back to the concept of opposites—are described in educational and philosophical literature in combination with at least two other terms: dilemma and antinomy. While the word *dilemma* denotes a predicament, the word *antinomy* describes the "conflict of two opposing judgments that can be proven with equally compelling reasons" (Kluge, 2011, p. 201).

For the present study, we decided to examine specifically the paradoxes in music teaching rather than the tensions found in any type of teaching. The term "tensions" is too broad and difficult to categorize, whereas the term "paradox" is well-defined in the relevant educational literature (Bratanic, 2002; Freer, 2011; Froehlich, 2006, 2007; Noordhoff, 2012). For our purposes (especially the improvement of music teacher education), it seemed appropriate not to delve too deeply into the differences between antinomy and dilemma, since we wanted to emphasize the phenomenon of (paradoxical) tensions in music teaching. Furthermore, the term paradox is used more frequently in everyday language than the very closely related word antinomy (at least in the four countries examined), which is more often used in the German-language educational literature. In this way, we could explain the core question equally well to the interviewees from the four European countries.

Paradoxes in education

Teachers and educators are regularly confronted with paradoxes in their profession (Hirsch, 2018; Jarvis, 2012; Palmer, 2007). They see themselves challenged by almost insurmountable pairs of opposing concepts, such as teaching and learning or theory and practice. Böhm's (2005) pedagogical dictionary lists several opposing concepts such as freedom and constraint, release and obligation, leading and letting grow, fulfillment of the present and orientation toward the future, support and counteraction, and fostering and sorting out (p. 33).

Researchers such as Froehlich (2006), Rimppi et al. (2016), and Tröhler (2017) describe further paradoxes that teachers may experience in their profession, such as the clash between different sets of values, teaching roles, and personal authenticity, or the willingness to encourage students to have their own opinion and at the same time ensure that they obey or adapt. In German literature, Helsper (2002) distinguishes between 11 antinomies including the "antinomy of justification," the "antinomy of proximity," and the "antinomy of autonomy," which are also of great relevance for the description of paradoxes in music education. As Jarvis (2012) points out, all paradoxes are located in the paradox of the human condition in general: in his eyes, "there can be no freedom without constraint, no certainty without uncertainty, no truth without falsehood, no joy without sorrow, no sense of peace without the threat of war, and so on" (p. xi). On the contrary, not all of the paradoxes mentioned above are experienced by a teacher every day. Which paradoxes a teacher faces depend on personal, social, cultural, and situational variables. Dealing with tensions also depends on several variables, most notably teachers' ethical perspective and moral judgment. Ethical perspectives and moral judgments could also be described as the "expression of an attitude" (Schlömerkemper, see Hirsch, 2018, p. 137), and when these convictions are combined with a sensitivity to the tensions of an antinomy, they open up the possibility of adopting other perspectives in relation to entrenched patterns of thought (Hirsch, 2018, p. 137).

Paradoxes in music education

Music teachers are constantly confronted with paradoxical situations. Music is one of the academic subjects in school where teachers face tensions reflecting society's broader cultural trends. They may have to choose between prioritizing Western classical music or the music present in modern musical life (Koskela et al., 2021); between pursuing mastery of canonical music or emphasizing creativity, novelty, and new traditions (Swann et al., 2017); between obeying the historic rules of musical interpretation or making individual choices or decisions (Jones, 2005); between historically informed performances or personal expression in performance (Moberg, 2018); and between educational stereotypes or alternative discourses (Onsrud et al., 2022). Most music teachers are educated in conservatories or universities, which are the citadels of Western classical approaches to education: they focus on the knowledge and performance of Western classical music, where teaching is based on the mastery of musical notation and performance skills, and where the canons of quality and educational values are formed (Bowman, 2005; Froehlich, 2007). The curricula for prospective music teachers typically focus on teaching "recipes," while the diversity of problem-solving techniques, goal-oriented activities, and musical learning styles play a secondary role (Froehlich, 2007; Kastner, 2020). As a result, teachers often find themselves experiencing an evident tension between what they have been taught, and what knowledge and skills are needed in educational practice (Bowman, 2005; Kastner, 2020).

These tensions persist throughout the entire professional career of a teacher. The influence of various institutions (higher education institutions, professional organizations, educational

policy institutions) representing the paradigm of classical education is felt in various contexts of music education (Froehlich, 2007). These institutions pay great attention to canonicity and the primacy of theory over practice (Warner, 2014). They are responsible for providing teaching and learning resources and setting standards of professional activity that may not be consistent with educational practice. Therefore, teachers are constantly forced to consider whether the educational process or the musical product is more important; whether the teacher's actions should be aimed at improving music performance or engaging all students in music learning (Freer, 2011); and whether all students should access unified curricula or curricula that recognize the diversity of young people's musical interests (Koskela et al., 2021).

Methodology

To identify the general paradoxes in the music teaching profession, we focused on the experiences of music teachers. Our method of inquiry followed the narrative approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), focusing on how individuals assign meaning to their experiences through their stories (Moen, 2006). When telling stories, people recall what has happened, arrange their experiences into a sequence, find possible explanations for them, interpret events and their meanings, and thus shape individual and social life (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Riessman, 1993, 2008) In this way, narrative is "a powerful mode of thinking that helps the individual make sense of their being-in-the-world" (Hiles et al., 2009, p. 56).

Using narrative allowed us to deepen our understanding of teachers' experiences and "recognise that different perspectives, voices, [and] experiences exist and can inform" (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p. 2). We viewed the narratives within the framework of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), focusing on the idea that people become who they are based on the social contexts in which they have participated. This enabled us to hear teachers' voices and relate their personal experience to their social and institutional settings (Wertsch, 1991). We collected stories from music teachers about paradoxes in their profession and used them to gain a more insightful understanding of how music teachers operate and reflect in the complex social, cultural, and institutional context of their profession.

Participants and data collection

Narrative interviews were conducted with 12 music teachers working in upper primary and secondary schools with 11- to 15-year-old students in four European countries. Each of the four researchers interviewed three experienced teachers in their country. The music teachers invited to participate in the study were informed about the aims of the research and completed a letter of informed consent for participating in the study, as well as for recording the interviews, in keeping with ethical principles.

For data collection, we followed the recommendations for narrative studies (Czarniawska, 2004; Riessman, 1993, 2008; Rosenthal, 2004). We ensured that teachers had the opportunity to share their experiences with the researchers. Before their first interview, teachers were asked to remember three to four cases from their professional work where they experienced a paradox, in the form of two or more things that were equally important to them.

The five-stage narrative interview strategy (Schütze, 1982) was applied: preparation, initiation, main narration, questioning phase, and concluding talk. In five cases, one interview was enough to acquire the data. In the other cases, we arranged a second meeting to gather additional information or clarifications when the need emerged after the first interview. The first interview lasted an average of 2 hrs, while the second was shorter, ranging from half an hour to 1 hr, depending on the additional information that was needed.

A total of 35 narratives were collected. All the narrative interviews were recorded and transcribed, and later translated from the native languages of the respondents into English. Since the study was carried out in four different countries and four different languages, the data collection and analysis procedures were discussed in detail by the researchers and applied uniformly throughout the study.

Data analysis

Riessman (2008) suggests three analytic stances regarding narratives: thematic, structural, and performative. We were interested in the thematic aspects of the story content and did not analyze the performative features of the telling or the conceptual structure of the text. To analyze the data, we used a bottom-up approach to data coding; we had no preconceptions about what the codes should be, but allowed them to emerge from the data. We followed the six-step logic proposed by Schütze (1982) for analyzing narratives: detailed transcription of the verbal material, separation of the text into indexical and nonindexical material, analysis of the ordering of events for each individual, identification of the basis on which to reconstruct paradoxes, comparison between individuals, and recognition of collective trajectories. We employed a step-by-step procedure for qualitative text reduction (Bauer, 1996), where units of text were gradually reduced until sentences were paraphrased into several keywords. Once the essential emergent categories had been identified, we could compare them, see duplicates, and identify the most important ones: those that were common to teachers from all four countries and experienced as paradoxes in the music teaching profession.

Presentation of the narratives

To present the results, we established that narratives should reflect the reality experienced by music teachers, not judged to be true or false, but proposing particular representations or interpretations of moments in the teachers' professions (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). In the "Results" section, we present three paradoxes. To respect both the expressive dimension of narratives and the problem of reference, we begin the presentation of each paradox with a reduced narrative. We then describe the tensions experienced by a music teacher relating to a specific problem in a specific context. Finally, we discuss similar perspectives found in the narratives from other countries.

Results

Paradoxes in curriculum negotiation and co-negotiation with students

How can we create a relevant music curriculum for students? How can we become open to learning from and with our students? How can we bring the lived musical experience of our students into our music classroom? These questions were raised by the interviewees when narrating the paradoxes they faced in their music teaching careers. Below is the story shared by Irena, a music teacher from Cyprus:

> In my career as a music teacher, I have often met 11- and 12-year-old students telling me, "I am not playing the recorder." They consider it childish. Others complain that we move slowly in class . . . and those who have never played the recorder before are frustrated with the limited repertoire one can play with a narrow range of melody notes. So I try to find repertoire that is among the students' preferences, hoping that this will allow me to keep everyone interested. I was working with 12-year-olds on

recorders and we were playing the notes G, A, B, and C. I knew they liked the song Dance Monkey, as I could hear them singing it in the corridors. So I decided to teach it on the recorder, and indeed it turned out to be motivating for the students. Some students played by ear and others through notation. But they all played and enjoyed the activity. (Irena, Cyprus)

In this paradox, Irena decides not to follow the standard or more "traditional" songs or pieces for practicing three to four notes on the recorder. For her, finding ways to gain students' interest and engage all in performance activities was important. Including music that her students liked turned out to be motivating and engaging. She also managed to differentiate her instruction, balance the different readiness levels of the students, and give all students a worthwhile and enjoyable music performance task.

Another teacher underlined the need for music teachers to be able to make their own decisions on what and how to teach in their lessons, and not to have to strictly follow curriculum guidelines when they differ from what their students need:

According to the curriculum, I should be much further along, but the musical basics are often missing . . . I have to set my own targets for my music lessons, even though there is an existing curriculum. (Maria, Switzerland)

Martin, another music teacher from Switzerland, also aimed to meet the interests and needs of his students. He shared a conversation he had with one of his students who had a strong background in Western classical music, and was overwhelmed by music lessons that focused on popular music. Martin realized that it was difficult to reach every student effectively:

I am in my seventeenth year as a music teacher; I started teaching after graduating from jazz school. I have a cool group of students in 8th grade. In this class, there is a student with a Western classical music background. Sometimes she doesn't understand my lessons as I come from a jazz/pop music background and I mainly teach pop music because this music is closer to the students. I taught a lot of film music and then announced the new theme: hip-hop. The class was enthusiastic. After the lesson, this pupil came up to me and asked, "Mr. T, isn't there a curriculum you should teach? My fellow students are doing Baroque and Renaissance, not hip-hop with an iPad." (Martin, Switzerland)

A number of paradoxes in this study referred to conflicting conceptions of curriculum. The thoughts and tensions discussed by our interviewees raised questions such as: do I strictly follow the curriculum guidelines or can I organize my lessons according to the needs of my students? How do I explain my decisions to inspectors, parents, and children concerning what, when, and how I teach? How binding are the music curriculum and official guidelines? A field of tension opens up for teachers as soon as they perceive the curriculum as a binding and restrictive framework that they must deal with in everyday music teaching.

Paradoxes of free action in a regulated environment

The interviewees also mentioned restrictions due to narrow framework conditions in other areas. An experienced music teacher and musician, Martin described the tension between music as a free form of interaction and his pupils' desires for tighter guidelines:

For me, considering how I practise music, music is something very free. However, the more free space you allow to your students, the more restricted they become by themselves. . . . For example, I give them a worksheet to work on individually. . . . In a way, this is a free style of learning. But they are often not able to fulfil this assignment at all. They might discover something completely different, but it is not

reproducible and does not correspond to the task. I have to guide them very closely, or else they are overwhelmed. That's how freedom is lost. That's why I've noticed that I don't give them as much freedom as I used. (Martin, Switzerland)

Martin noted that throughout his long professional practice, and as a consequence of prior experiences, he ended up giving his students less freedom than he used to, although music is "something very free." This situation led to tensions between the teacher's idea of the free environment he wanted to offer his students when making music and the reality in the classroom.

Should I follow the guidelines or be creative and autonomous as a music teacher? As described by Martin, the curriculum is often at odds with students' musical experiences and with teachers' expectations of creative music-making. The two opposing points of the paradox in the following quotation contrast restrictive curricular requirements on one hand, with the creative freedom of the teacher on the other hand:

I do not want to start my year with Byzantine music or Ancient Greek music as the guidelines suggest; I want to teach the way I want and the units I want. I used to be more creative when I did not have strict formal guidelines. (Stella, Cyprus)

Similarly, other music teachers described the paradoxes arising when their pedagogies and philosophical stances were challenged as they taught music in real classroom situations. As an early-career teacher, Elisabeth from Austria tried to offer her students the highest level of teaching following the curriculum requirements. She ended up teaching detailed musical analysis that her students found overwhelming and could not appreciate. She admitted that she had therefore adopted quite the opposite approach in her current teaching, taking the liberty of defining pools of learning content with her students.

Christina from Lithuania also shared her story, explaining how her philosophical ideas about music teaching and learning were challenged when she had to deal with real students in real classrooms:

I dreamt of applying the ideas of constructivism and humanism in my lessons and creating an environment for free people. However, when I started working, I quickly realised that my ideas and my practical possibilities are fundamentally different. Instead of big ideas in the philosophy of education, which I believe in, I deal with everyday problems in the classroom—how to manage the classroom situation, . . . how to evaluate their work, how to ensure constructive communication in the classroom. (Christina, Lithuania)

These examples show that teachers feel the paradox between their desired freedom in music teaching and the restrictions imposed by school regulations and student attitudes. The teachers mentioned the term *freedom* in different contexts and associated with different poles of a paradox. Their narratives repeatedly raised the matter of identifying and experiencing the tensions that stem from the gap between expectations and reality or between official guidelines and students' readiness levels and music classroom logistics.

Paradoxes in the double identity of a music teacher: Between performer and teacher

The conflict between music teachers' double identities was reported many times during various interviews. A closer look at two narratives will reveal the forms in which this conflict could be experienced in school:

We were preparing for a class performance with 5th grade students. When I was asked to prepare a musical performance for a school event, I immediately decided on this class. I wanted the audience to say how beautifully the 5th graders sang, and what a great teacher prepared them. But things turned out to be more complicated than I thought. While we were singing in the classroom, everything looked great. As I began preparing for the public performance, I started thinking about what the students and their singing would look like during the performance. Unexpectedly, I discovered that their singing was not exactly what I would like. I started seeing the students through a different pair of glasses. I got nervous, strictly ordered them to stand straight, and demanded more accurate intonation. I behaved like an angry teacher. The students sang pretty well during the show, but they were no longer the cool 5th graders I had admired until then. (Daiva, Lithuania)

Daiva recounted how, after having built close relationships with her fifth-grade students, she experienced tension in preparing the students for a performance. She observed her students from a different perspective: that of a performer. As a teacher, Daiva enjoyed close relationships with her students through lessons, and appreciated their motivation to learn. However, when preparing for the performance, she began to worry about the outcome to be achieved, the reception of her students' performance by the audience, and her colleagues' evaluation of her musicianship. In this situation, she became nervous and demanding. The tension between her identities as a teacher and performer strongly affected her.

Music teachers from other countries also faced the problem of dual identity. Irena from Cyprus offered a narrative similar to that of her Lithuanian colleague, which also revealed tension between the identities of teacher and performer:

The conflict emerges from having to prepare school performances and teach your subject (no extra time for choir preparation). It is a matter of negotiation and what your beliefs are. I insist that music is not a subject where you need to present your students ten times a year. So I ask the administration for the option to present each group once a year. (Irena, Cyprus)

Here, the tension comes from her duty as a teacher, imposed by the school administration, to prepare her students for musical performances 10 times a year. Giving musical performances and learning music in the classroom have different purposes, so the pressure to focus on the first becomes a challenging task for the teacher. Her priority is her lessons, and she views her duty as a musician as working with her students in the general context of music education at the school.

Caroline from Austria also shared a story about the external pressure to be a performer first and a music teacher second. She felt that she had been judged by her school administration and colleagues based on the quality of her students' musical performances. Such examples testify to the tension between a teacher's musical and educational practices. This tension can manifest itself in various situations—in both lessons and extracurricular activities—when teachers work with one student or group, when they develop and implement their curriculum, and during important school events.

Discussion and conclusion

Bratanic (2002) points out that traditional pedagogy does not "recognize paradox in education" and names "the mode of thinking, based on a mechanical paradigm, which separates head from heart, facts from feelings, theory from practice, teaching from learning" (p. 58) as the reason for this lack of recognition. Nonetheless, paradoxes are real phenomena, and a natural component of the music teaching profession. In this article, we have highlighted three essential paradoxes that occur across cultural and educational contexts.

The first paradox, on curriculum negotiation and co-negotiation with students, arose from stories told by music teachers describing tensions they experienced at the crossroads between planned and lived music curricula. According to Goodwin and Kosnik (2013), "when teachers are curriculum-makers, they are contingently responsive to the needs and interests of students, not just state mandates" (p. 340). Unfortunately, there seems to be a widening gap between students' experience of school music and how they engage with music in their daily lives. Our findings reveal music teachers' concerns regarding the tension they feel when, on one hand, they want to implement the music curriculum, but on the other hand, they want to respond to their students' readiness and interests. This was most evident in the narratives of the music teachers from Cyprus and Switzerland, where the music curriculum is considered binding, even though all four countries in the study have official music curriculum guidelines that teachers are expected to follow. Although many countries around the world have more open and negotiable music curricula that allow flexibility in music teaching and learning, the interviewees from Cyprus and Switzerland strongly felt the need to deviate from the official curriculum and search for ways to make their lessons more relevant and meaningful for their learners. These challenges directly impact how teachers implement curricula and reveal a plethora of tensions at the interface between the planned and the lived music curriculum (Economidou Stavrou & O'Connell, 2022).

In the second paradox—on free action in a regulated environment—teachers identified a field of tension between the less tightly prescribed learning situations in their classrooms and the regulated environment of their schools. This contrast is particularly evident in a study by Westerlund et al. (2021), which investigated teaching within a narrowly regulated framework of cultural specifications. For Koskela et al. (2021), this challenge to the teachers goes hand-in-hand with the social deconstruction of the teaching-learning situation. Viewing the teaching-learning situation as socially constructed at the moment by all participants, each with their own social position, results in a new picture of music education that does not assume a hegemonic, homogeneous structure of class or group. When social issues are juxtaposed with result-oriented tasks, paradoxical situations arise for students and teachers (Rimppi et al., 2016). Students should be allowed to bring their individual stories, actions, and opinions into the classroom. Palmer (2007) asks teachers to place these little stories in the larger context of music as a discipline so that students' stories can be honored but also take shape in context: "the teacher must keep using the big story to reframe the little ones" (p. 83).

In the third paradox, the analysis of the narrative data highlighted the tension between music teachers' dual identities as teachers and performers. Although the identity and the roles of a music teacher are not limited to these two, the music teacher as musician and educator was repeatedly discussed by our participants. Negotiating these roles was considered a crucial aspect of becoming an effective music teacher, despite the tension between them (Haning, 2021). This tension significantly impacts teachers' values and behaviors, predetermines the nature of their participation in the educational process, and affects their interactions with colleagues and students (Ballantyne & Grootenboer, 2012; Carrillo et al., 2015). As revealed in our study, teachers did not usually feel the tension between these two identities within the classroom context. They felt themselves to be masters of the educational process and were sensitive to what was taking place in the classroom. Here, their identities were flexible and dynamic, and depended on the teaching content, student activities, and lesson goals. Tensions between the identities of performer and teacher arose when they were valued by "external others": colleagues, parents, or school administration. Teachers were expected to facilitate high-quality student music performances, and demonstrate the ability to lead student musical groups.

Therefore, they felt tension when their students had to demonstrate a musical result beyond the boundaries of the classroom curriculum.

The three paradoxes of the music teaching profession described in this study have great significance and reflect both individuality and universality. During the data analysis phase, it became apparent that despite the diverse music education contexts in the four countries, the participants described and discussed the same paradoxes. The novelty of this study lies in this surprising realization. Paradoxes of curriculum negotiation and co-negotiation with students, free action in a regulated environment, and the double identity of a music teacher are experienced by music teachers in different countries and different cultural and educational contexts. However, these paradoxical tensions did not prevent teachers from continuing their professional careers. On the contrary, most stories provided by music teachers were told as examples where tensions were resolved constructively.

Implications for music teacher education

What do the collected stories presented in this study tell us about music teacher education? It is important that prospective teachers learn to endure the paradox of person and profession, as teaching always means living with ambiguity and inherent uncertainty (Noordhoff, 2012). For our study, this existential dimension (Bratanic, 2002) means that even greater attention must be paid to the phenomenon of paradoxes in music teaching and, subsequently, in the education of music teachers.

While studying at university, prospective music teachers should be given opportunities to identify the various paradoxes in their future profession and discuss how they can deal with the tensions that arise. Preservice teachers need to analyze how their mentors deal with uncertain and paradoxical situations in the music classroom (Froehlich, 2007), and teacher educators should support the different perspectives from which a paradoxical situation can be approached. If teachers prioritize reflecting on their professional activities and constructing music teaching in relation to their work, they will have more opportunities to discover their personal priorities and to develop their professional identity. When prospective teachers understand the content and condition of their selfhood, they may recognize their students' selfhood. When they explore their paths to and passions for teaching, they are invigorated to struggle on behalf of their students under challenging conditions and in times of pressured accountability. When prospective teachers negotiate learning to teach in classroom settings, they may develop autonomy and authenticity while also learning from experienced practitioners. The opposing poles of a paradox could become a starting point for creative thinking if they can be viewed in multiperspective (Helsper, 2002) as situations that stimulate flexible innovation (Hirsch, 2018).

The results of our study highlight the importance of developing the performer and teacher identities of prospective music teachers and supporting them in becoming ready to overcome the tension created by their coexistence (Hoffmann-Ocon, 2009; Trent & Lim, 2010). Music teacher education can provide opportunities for future music teachers to identify, experience and discuss other identities that music teachers may take on in their profession, including entrepreneur, composer, music arranger, and recording engineer. Music teacher education should also seek ways to assist teachers in moving beyond merely "delivering" the curriculum, to a deeper understanding whereby they can develop the confidence to reflect on and implement meaningful and inclusive classroom practices (Economidou Stavrou & O'Connell, 2022). Readiness to bridge the gap between school music curricula and students' lived musical experiences will help make school music more relevant and meaningful to students. Music teacher

educators can help prospective music teachers become aware of the paradoxes they might face and discuss strategies to creatively and productively learn and gain from them. Recognizing the different paradoxes is the first step to accepting them as constitutive of the music teaching profession and helping to deal with them creatively. Discussing alternatives will broaden future music teachers' perspectives, develop their creative and problem-solving skills, and develop spaces to foster agency (Onsrud et al., 2022).

Limitations of the study

Like any other research undertaking, our study has certain limitations. In our study, music teachers working with upper primary and secondary school students were invited to present cases where they experienced tensions. Teachers teaching music to younger or older students might have identified other paradoxes. Likewise, different paradoxes might have emerged if we had interviewed teachers in music schools or professional freelance music teachers. The present findings proved that tensions arose in specific situations, such as when making decisions about the curriculum or organizing concerts. A more detailed analysis of each situation could be a rich area for further research. In this article, however, we have limited our analysis to three paradoxes in music teaching. Other paradoxes could be studied separately to reveal different reasons for their emergence and possible resolutions. Future research on paradoxes in the music teaching profession could be "a step in dealing with them constructively" (Froehlich, 2007, p. 8) and a way to contribute to productive professional practice.

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