

# Highways and Byways: Options for Professional and Musical Growth for Each Stage of Your Career

**Dr. Blair Williams**  
Assistant Professor of  
String Music Education,  
Texas Tech University  
blair.williams@ttu.edu

**Rachel Dirks**  
Director of Orchestral Studies  
Cello Instructor  
Kansas State University  
rdirks@ksu.edu

**Liz Dinwiddie**  
Performing Arts Dept. Chair,  
Ashley Hall School,  
Charleston, SC  
dinwiddie@ashleyhall.org

**Dr. Lindsay Fulcher**  
Assistant Professor of  
String Music Education,  
University of Northern Colorado  
Lindsay.Fulcher@unco.edu

*The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get on to it, and the perseverance to follow it. - Kalpana Chawla*



## Personal Professional and Musical Roadmaps: On-ramps, Off-ramps and Intersections



**What are the Green Light/Yellow Light/Red Light aspects of your current professional and musical position(s)? How do you avoid the construction or how do you breeze down the highway?**

**Red Lights/Construction**

*How do you self-identify? TEACHER, MUSICIAN, CONDUCTOR, DIRECTOR, etc. or a mixture at different times? What are your goals for your current professional and musical position(s)?*

---



---



---



---

## Career Growth Options for Your Professional and Musical Life

Christensen and Fessler (1992) Career Stages	Career Growth Options
<b>Preservice</b>	Teaching experiences: lessons, sectionals, ensembles, String Project, within music education coursework
<b>Induction</b>	Seek a mentor, attend PD (local, state, national), play/conduct/make music!!
<b>Competency Building</b>	Attend conferences, join/volunteer/lead local & state music education organizations, considering going back to school
<b>Enthusiastic and Growing</b>	Open a private studio, start a new performance project, apply for students to perform at state and national festivals, seek out travel experiences and new teaching experiences, apply to present educational sessions at local and state music conferences

<b>Career Frustration</b>	Seek professional peer support, jump start your enthusiasm with an exciting experience (see below), prioritize students, self-care
<b>Stability</b>	Become a mentor, continue seeking new information through conferences, local PD or digging into new coursework, share your knowledge with your colleagues both locally and beyond through PD and conferences
<b>Career Wind-Down</b>	Adjudicate festivals, observe student teachers, substitute teach, teach private lessons, mentor, share your knowledge as widely as possible (website, newsletter, blog)

Christensen & Fessler (1992), Angeline (2014)

## Options for Enhancing Your Professional and Musical Career

- Summer workshops
  - State ASTA workshops
  - State/national workshops (OSU String Teacher Workshop, Michigan String Educators Workshop, Texas Orchestra Directors Association Summer Conference, Retreat for Violin and Viola Teachers at Indiana University)
  - Specific method workshops
    - Suzuki certification
    - Kodaly certification
    - Orff certification
    - MLT (GIML in Michigan) PD levels
    - Alternative styles
    - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification
    - Rolland Workshops
    - Conducting Workshops
    - Private lessons or Chamber Music experiences
  - Conducting Symposiums
    - Collegiate
    - Symphony Orchestra sponsored
    - International
- Conferences
  - National
    - ASTA
    - NAFME In-Service
    - Midwest Band and Orchestra Conference
  - Regional
    - College Music Society
  - State
    - State MEA conferences
    - State ASTA meetings/workshops
- Degree Options
  - Summer masters
  - Full time masters
  - Online masters or Ph.D.
  - Hybrid masters and Ph.D. (summer in-person, school year online)
  - Ph.D.



## Limitations for Degree Seeking Options: What do you need to consider?

- Funding/TA position and duties
- Location (teacher and workshop/degree)
- Timing
- Length of time commitment to successfully earning degree
- Travel
- Family
- University requirements
  - GRE
  - Licensure changes
  - Entrance exams/interviews
  - Fellowship/Assistantship applications



## Advice and Insights: Informal Learning

- D. Thornton: Graduate School, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqRFKhYbmV4>
- Conway (2008)--"Findings support past research in that teachers perceived informal interactions with other music teachers as the most powerful form of professional development. Findings also suggest that professional development needs of music teachers may change throughout their careers" (p. 7).
- F. Ricci: How to Change Careers When You're Lost, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUtx-wC5mqA>

## Plan Your Journey: Now where do you want to go? What are your goals for the future?

---

---

---

---

## Selected References and Resources

- Angeline, V. R. (2014). Motivations, professional development, and the experienced music teacher. *Music Educators Journal*, 101(1), 50-55.
- Bauer, W.I. (2007). Research on professional development for experienced music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17(1), 12-21.
- Burkett, E. I. (2011). A case study of issues concerning professional development for rural instrumental music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 21(1), 51-64.
- Conway, C. (2008). Experienced music teachers perceptions of professional development throughout their careers. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, No. 176, 7-18.
- Conway, C., Eros, J., & Stanley, A.M. (2009). Perceived effect of the master of music in music education on P-12 teaching practice. *Research Studies in Music Education: Society for Education, Music, and Psychology Research*, 31(2), 129-141.
- Christensen, J.C. & Fessler, R. (1992). *The teacher career cycle: Understanding and guiding the professional development of teachers*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gillespie, R. & Hamann, D. L. (1999). Career choice among string music education students in American colleges and universities. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 47(3), 266-278.
- Ha, J. (2017). The careers of three experienced teachers: Some observations. *International Journal of Music Education*, 35(4), 601-620.
- Hesterman, P.K. (2012). Growing as a professional music educator. *General Music Today*, 25(3), 36-41.
- Madsen, C.K. & Hancock, C.B. (2002). Support for music education: A case study of issues concerning teacher retention and attrition. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 50(1), 6-19.
- Miksza, P. & Berg, M. H. (2013). Transition from student to teacher: Frameworks for understanding preservice music teacher development. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 23(1), 10-26.
- Pellegrino, K. & Millican, J.S. (2014). Influences on string teachers' career decisions. *String Research Journal*, 5(1), 87-108.
- Russell, J.A. (2008). A discriminant analysis of the factors associated with the career plans of string music educators. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 56(3), 204-219.
- Standerfer, S.L. (2007). Preparation for the national board for professional teaching standards certification as music teacher professional development. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17(1), 33-41.
- Timmons, J. (2013). *The musician's journey: Crafting your career vision and plan*. New York: Oxford.