

URBAN MUSIC EDUCATION: TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON CRITICAL ISSUES

by

TARIK HASANI ROWLAND SR.

(Under the Direction of MARY LEGLAR)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of current critical issues in urban music education programs. Specifically, the research questions asked were: 1) What are the major challenges and gratifications experienced by urban instrumental music teachers? 2) What teaching strategies best promote musical achievement and engage urban students? 3) What are the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining urban music educators? A review of literature provided information on the characteristics of urban culture, the needs of music education in urban schools, culturally relevant teaching, diversified teacher preparation, the recruitment and retention of urban teachers, and profiles of successful urban teachers.

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to provide a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of teacher perspectives. A survey questionnaire was sent to music educators in the Atlanta Public School system ($N = 70$). In addition, urban music educators ($n = 6$) were interviewed to gain additional insight regarding the specific challenges and practices of urban educators.

Results of the study indicated that:

- Although a major challenge is present in the need to address cultural differences and connect with the students, teachers value the opportunity to instill the values experienced in musical performances—teamwork and the belief that success is possible through hard work and perseverance.
- Successful urban teachers set boundaries and remain consistent in their daily expectations and procedures—while letting students know that they genuinely care about them.
- Music teacher education programs should ensure that all graduates are well prepared to teach in an urban environment and have been exposed to diverse types of school populations.

INDEX WORDS: Urban Music Education, Music Education, Teacher Perspective

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my father, Marcus Maurice Rowland. This is for us. You started the doctoral process and I finished it for “US”. Thank you for your musical support and encouragement.

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parents. I Love you!

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“But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint”
(Isaiah 40:31).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Music education in America has undergone multiple changes since it was introduced into the public schools. Many of these can be attributed to the influence of government, general education, technology, societal trends, or leaders in the field:

Society is continuously changing, with new advances in technology, the latest fashion trends, and constantly evolving educational reforms and social norms. If it fails to adapt and change to meet societal needs, music education risks becoming irrelevant. (Anderson and Denson, 2015, p. 36)

Within the last half-century, educational reforms have both protected music education from irrelevancy and inadvertently threatened it. With the passage of Goals 2000 legislation, the arts were named a core academic subject, "as important to education as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science and foreign language" (MENC: The National Association for Music Education, 2007, p. 131). With this legislative act in place, President George W. Bush, declaring that "too many of our neediest children are being left behind," (United States Department of Education, 2004a, para. 1), passed a second reform act, entitled No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This law was intended to bring all children up to a high standard of educational achievement regardless of their background (Docker, 2012). The main principles of the law are accountability, choice, and flexibility. Inadvertently, the first of these principles worked against music education. The call for accountability, which brought about

significant emphasis on testing in science, reading, and math, resulted in a decline of interest in the untested subjects.

The law called for sanctions on schools and school systems whose scores failed to rise, thus, untested subjects received less funding, less time in the school day, and were sometimes cut entirely. (Docker, 2012, p. 11)

The sanctions affected urban schools the most and, in some cases, prompted desperate measures. As reported in “The Atlanta Public Schools Cheating Scandal” (2015), more than 178 administrators and teachers from 56 elementary and middle schools in Atlanta participated in cheating on the standardized Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. Because test scores determined whether schools met the Annual Yearly Progress Goal required by the federal NCLB Act, they also affected funding, promotions, tenure, federal aid, and school rankings.

For a number of reasons, problems such as this occur most often within urban education: Kincheloe (2010) points out that urban school systems are undermined by ineffective business operations; DeLorenzo (2012) observes that because urban schools depend heavily on federal and state support, delays in legislative action have a ripple effect, making it less possible for urban schools to plan for the following year’s school budget; Erickson (2008) adds that the property tax–based system of public school funding distributes resources unequally between neighborhoods, solidifying existing social boundaries.

Need for the Study

According to the 2010 Census Bureau data, the total urban population in the United States was 249,252,271, claiming 80.7% of the United States population (US

Census Bureau, 2010). In today's society, the growing presence of minority populations has significant relevance to the ethnic composition of the students teachers will teach (McClellan, 2002). As a result, multiple investigations have been conducted on classroom environment and its relationship to student development, student achievement, and teacher effectiveness. In examining the conditions and characteristics of urban school classrooms, several components merit attention (Lind, 1999). The challenges are summarized by Kincheloe (2004):

It is important to note that the challenges facing urban school systems are not entirely unique to metropolitan areas, nor are all urban school systems confronted with the same challenges. Urban schools do, however, share some unique physical and demographic characteristics that differentiate them from suburban and rural school districts. Unlike suburban and rural school districts, urban school districts operate in densely populated areas serving significantly more students. In comparison to suburban and rural districts, urban school districts are frequently marked by higher concentrations of poverty, greater racial and ethnic diversity, larger concentrations of immigrant populations and linguistic diversity, and more frequent rates of student mobility. (pp. 4-7)

The literature specific to music education clearly identifies a need for change: equal access to music education for all students is important because arts education is essential for the creation of well-rounded, engaged citizens of the world (Doyle, 2014). There is demonstrated need for research identifying knowledge and skills that equip music teachers to undertake the distinctive challenges inherent in urban education (Shaw, 1995).

DeLorenzo (2012) warns that if educational quality is pivotal in creating an educated society, then inequality among schools marginalizes those who are most needy in society. In terms of social justice, this has an effect on not only the individual

citizen but also the foundation on which democracy rests (p. 40). Failure to address the disparity of urban music education may result in a generation of students that the music education community consciously neglected. This issue is not a new one.

The status of urban education has been negatively impacted by societal beliefs. Urban students have been adversely characterized and stereotyped. This in turn has directly affected music education programs in urban communities. In 1970, the *Music Educator's Journal* featured a special issue entitled "Facing the Music in Urban Music Education." In this issue, Charles Gary discussed the status of urban music education during a time of high racial tensions and radical change revolving around school integration.

Across the United States, in every city, an educational revolution is underway. The front lines are the ghetto schools. Command headquarters is the administration office. The combat troops are principals, school board members, parents, students, politicians, and teachers--among them music educators. The issue is not simply whether to change, but how much change, what kind, and how fast. Music educators have great stakes in the outcome. As the tug of war strikes the curriculum, the losses and gains will not only affect every subject, but the future of music in the nation. Music teachers--city, suburban, and rural--must face the fact that "there's no hidin' place down here." Awareness breeds good decisions. Understanding begets right actions. Like many other educational ills, aesthetic malnutrition must be identified and treated. In diagnosing the problems and prescribing solutions, music educators exert a revitalizing force on the schools. Their vision in the present crisis is crucial, their wisdom paramount. (Gary, 1970, pp. 34-35)

This provocative article made transparent the problems of music education at the time, especially in urban communities. Unfortunately, although written a little over 40 years ago, many of the same issues are still prevalent: "These inequities challenge the profession to consider not only the complex socioeconomic and cultural reasons why urban music programs might be under-researched, under-resourced, and under-served, but also why this has been allowed to happen" (Fitzpatrick, 2008, pp. 34-35). In "The

Negro Musician in America,” African-American composer William Grant Still (1970)

comments:

When I visit schools in the so called “deprived” areas, I notice that so many of the children are attentive and receptive to what is brought to them--more so, in fact, than in schools in other areas where music is taken for granted. This to me signifies a potential that sensitive teachers can probe and develop (p.161).

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed to investigate first-person perceptions of current critical issues in urban music education programs. Specifically, the following questions guided the study:

1. What are the major challenges and gratifications experienced by urban music teachers?
2. What teaching strategies best promote musical achievement and engage urban students?
3. What are the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining urban music educators?

Overview of Methodology

Selected music educators within the Atlanta, Georgia Public School System served as subjects for the study.

The Atlanta Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in the state of Georgia, serving approximately 52,000 students across 88 schools. The district is organized into nine K-12 clusters with 67 traditional schools, 17 charter schools, two citywide single gender academies and two alternative programs (Atlanta Public Schools, 2018).

The Atlanta Public School System was chosen as the site for the study because it exemplifies many of the perceived challenges faced by large urban systems.

Demographic information from the 2017-2018 school year, published on the Georgia Department of Education website, reports that the Atlanta Public School System has 52,147 students of which 82% are students of color. There are 88 schools, with 75.67% of the student population eligible for free or reduced lunch. Of the 88 schools, 68 are comprised of over 95% free or reduced lunch-eligible students.

Following positive responses to a letter of consent (Appendix A), data addressing the research questions was collected using a researcher-authored Survey of Urban Music Teachers delivered through a Google Doc Survey format (Appendix C). The parameters of the survey were set to allow participants to complete the survey only once. A pilot test of the survey was conducted with a small number of the Atlanta Public System to ensure proper delivery, readability, and ease of understanding. None of the participants in the pilot study were included in the research study. Feedback from the pilot group was used to make necessary corrections on the survey.

Upon satisfactory completion of the pilot, a link to the survey was sent to all the remaining music educators ($N = 70$) in the Atlanta Public School System. The email list of the music educators was obtained from the Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator for the Atlanta Public School System.

Based on survey responses indicating willingness, the researcher randomly selected interview participants representing varying grade levels, amount of teaching experience, and musical backgrounds (band, strings, guitar, chorus, etc.). Interviews were based on The Urban Music Educator Interview Form (see Appendix D).

Definition of Terms

Culture: a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others (Shaw, 2012).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: a way to improve the connection between school music curricula and student cultural identity, with specific suggestions and resources provided for the refinement of both curricular content and teaching (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT): use of the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI): a nonprofit institution that has a minimum 25% Hispanic full-time equivalent enrollment (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Multicultural: a perspective that acknowledges and respects a range of cultural expression from groups distinguished by race or ethnic origin, age, class, gender, lifestyle, and exceptionality (Lundquist, 1991).

Socioeconomic status (SES): the relative position of individuals, families, or groups in stratified social systems where societal values (e.g., occupational prestige, education) are not uniformly distributed (Bornstein and Bradley, 2003).

Title I: Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended, which provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools

with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Title V: program providing grants to assist HSIs to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students. These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As confirmed in the literature, the problems that have arisen in urban education since mid-twentieth century have yet to be thoroughly addressed. Among the topics pertinent to this study that have attracted scholarly interest are the following:

Characteristics of Urban Culture, Needs of Music Education in Urban Schools, Culturally Relevant Teaching, Diversified Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Retention of Urban Teachers, Profiles of Successful Urban Teachers.

Characteristics of Urban Culture

Education in urban areas began to experience a shift in the second half of the 20th century.

Urban school systems in the first half of the twentieth century had a reputation for administrative efficiency, innovative programs, and high educational standards. They provided an avenue for upward mobility for large numbers of poor and immigrant children. The tide turned as the demographics of inner cities changed mid-century and economic conditions deteriorated in a postindustrial age. (McCarthy, 2013, p. 36)

To begin to understand the culture within today's urban environment, several factors must be taken into consideration. According to Hayes (2010), children from low-income families are disproportionately Black or Latino as reported by the National Center for Children in Poverty. Further, more than half of urban students live with parents who are immigrants; nearly two-thirds live with parents who have only a high school diploma or have not completed high school; more than half have at least one

parent who is a full-time, year-round worker; and more than one-third of their parents work in a service industry. Additionally, seventeen percent are without health insurance, and sixteen percent experience persistent hunger (p. 30). Also, partially due to limited resources and underprepared teachers, urban students do not acquire appropriate skill sets in school, resulting in even lower placement on the distribution of testing achievement compared to non-urban youth in the United States (Gottfried and Johnson, 2012).

Six cultural factors affect how inner-city teachers and administrators make decisions about educational activities and services:

- The majority of inner-city children are financially disadvantaged and qualify for free or reduced cost breakfast and lunch at school.
- The residence of most of these children is a rental apartment or home in a densely populated neighborhood.
- The mental and/or physical health problems of parents, foster parents, and grandparents contribute to stress and insecurities that students exhibit at school.
- The lack of access to an automobile is an obstacle that creates ongoing stress and necessitates the daily juggling of time, appointments, activities, and priorities for the parents and guardians of school children.
- Children learn to fend for themselves and protect friends and siblings with the knowledge and skills they acquire from the school, family, streets and community resources.
- Children live with a sense of immediacy in terms of physical and social gratification and may have difficulty with deferred rewards or seemingly intangible life goals. Images of themselves in adult roles may range from low expectations to fantasy careers and wealth. (Ford, 2006, p. 34)

Educational equity also presents a challenge for urban education. As stated by Pew Charitable Trust, (1998) the issue of equity is particularly crucial for large urban districts in the United States, as they encompass approximately 25% of all school-age students, 25% of all poverty students, 30% of all English language learners, and nearly 50% of all minority children (Pew Charitable Trust, 1998). Statistical research continues

to provide astonishing data about the differences in the quality of education between suburban and urban school districts. According to the National Center on Educational Statistics (1996), urban students attend schools with larger enrollments than suburban students and are less likely to complete high school on time. In a stressful and often unsafe environment, urban students struggle to perceive the relevance of traditional curriculum and pedagogy, while longing for success and opportunities to express their creativity (Ellsasser, 2008).

Needs of Music Education in Urban Schools

Urban education is typically considered a problem area in need of more administrative support, additional curriculum resources, improved student motivation, and better teacher retention (McCarthy, 2013, p. 36). In addition, urban schools are frequently underfunded, understaffed, and overpopulated (Hinckley, 1995, p. 32). In spite of these handicaps, Doyle (2014) reports that students of low socioeconomic status (SES) who participate in the arts have better social and academic outcomes than those who do not.

In general, researchers agree that teachers in urban schools must give special attention to developing socio-political competence in their students. Music teachers therefore cannot be content to focus solely on musical content at the expense of controversial issues related to race, ethnicity, and culture, but must be prepared to handle uncomfortable conversations that may arise when long-held beliefs of students are challenged, assumptions questioned, or stereotypes confronted (Shaw, 2012, p. 78).

Urban music programs can provide relevance, high expectations, and variety. Non-traditional music experiences such as gospel choirs, salsa bands, mariachi bands, and synthesizer ensembles may appeal to the diverse interest of inner city students. Regardless of the school location or the demographics of the school population, teacher expectations should be high and programs, while attractive and relevant, should be musically challenging (Hinckley, 1995).

Culturally Relevant Teaching

As pointed out by a number of researchers and authors, cultural concerns have become increasingly important for those who teach students with backgrounds different from their own. Culturally relevant teaching, which depends largely on the beliefs of the teacher, has become a necessity for success within urban education (Shaw, 2012).

“Culturally relevant” teacher beliefs are those that signify value for diverse cultures and a willingness to interrogate common presumptions about teaching and education in general, urban students in particular, and the educational use of music outside of the Western classical canon. These beliefs can lead to “culturally relevant” teacher actions, defined by the researcher as actions that communicate value for individual student culture, endeavor to infuse said students’ cultures into relevant, meaningful learning, and allow students to critically examine musical, societal, and cultural issues. (Doyle, 2014, p. 45)

This type of instruction allows students to perceive what they are learning as pertinent and connected to their values and those of their community.

Culturally responsive teachers do not limit themselves to addressing only the cultures of those present in the classroom, but address cultural diversity from multiple perspectives. They seek to deepen students’ understanding of, appreciation for, and value of cultures other than their own. In an ethnically and racially mixed classroom, each musical experience might simultaneously validate some students’ cultures while broadening others’ cultural horizons. (Shaw, 2012, p. 77)

To successfully connect with students, Gurgel (2015) suggests that music teachers must conduct a self-examination to develop an appreciation for experiences, emotions, and perspectives that are outside of their own; that engaging and challenging instruction, resulting in continual musical learning and achievement, must accompany and intersect with the development of warm relationships; that cultivating a strong student-teacher relationship must involve a self-reflective journey to understand one's own cultural preferences for interaction, behavior, and music-making (p. 78).

Related to the above, Gay (2002) lists five essential components of CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching):

1. Developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity;
2. Including ethnic and culturally diverse content in the curriculum;
3. Demonstrating caring and building learning communities;
4. Communicating with ethnically diverse students; and
5. Responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (p. 106).

Shaw (2012) observes that urban music educators who use musical repertoire emphasizing culture and heritage are able to convey a sense of empowerment and pride.

Teaching from repertoire that validates students' cultural backgrounds develops students' cultural competence, which "refers to the ability of students to grow in understanding and respect for their culture of origin." Developing cultural competence through music provides students who perceive a disconnect between home and school cultures ways to navigate between those cultures, to be bicultural, and to be bi-musical (p. 76).

Diversified Teacher Preparation

Mark & Gary (2007), emphasize that music teacher education did not change appreciably until the 1960's, when societal conditions mandated a total overhaul of teacher education. It was during this decade that the Civil Rights movement began to affect the education system. Before this time, traditional teacher education programs paid little attention to future teachers of minority children, with most programs catering to the needs of American middle-class children (p.326).

Music teacher preparation programs also must meet the challenge of preparing educators for diverse classroom settings (Anderson & Denson, 2015, p. 36). In the early 1990s, authors reemphasized that music teaching throughout the U.S. needed to foster new methods, materials, and teaching styles to meet the needs of a multicultural society. The premise that music teacher education must establish a balance between a Eurocentric and an ethnocentric course of study was at the heart of this reform movement (Henderson, 1993; McClellan 2002). In 1990 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education had made demands that teacher preparation programs stress diversity and demonstrate it as integral to the faculty and the students, as well as to the teacher education curriculum (Hood, 1994). Echoing the mandate, Gordon (2000) suggested that better preparation for working with "at-risk" students and in multilingual, and multicultural settings was necessary in teacher education programs, and that all teachers should have experience with inner-city students.

Preparing future educators warrants greater understanding of the needs of minority students, the social context of multicultural education, and the perceptions and concerns of pre-service teachers in the enculturation process. Research regarding the needs of minority students indicates that understanding the backgrounds from which the students come, their values

toward various achievement, and the kind of lifestyle to which they aspire are important factors which contribute to successful teaching in all environments. (McClellan, 2002).

In addition to other hardships, urban school systems experience a great amount of teacher turnover. One out of every two teachers in urban schools leaves within five years (Kincheloe, 2010, p. 6). Poverty-stricken inner-city schools find it difficult to retain teachers when school systems in surrounding suburban areas offer teachers more competitive salaries, better maintained schools, higher-achieving students, and less demanding work conditions. (Kincheloe, 2010).

Partly because of the demographic trends in secondary music education, most prospective teachers tend to be Caucasians from suburban, low-poverty areas (Doyle, 2014, citing Kelly, 2003; Pembroke & Craig, 2002; and Robinson, 2012). Especially in music, teachers tend to come from the middle to upper socioeconomic categories (Doyle, 2014, citing Gardner, 2010; Kelly, 2003; Pembroke & Craig, 2002). Additionally, preservice teachers are generally trained in college to teach in the Western classical tradition and create music programs similar to those they have experienced (Doyle, 2014, citing Wuttke, 2011). Culture shock can occur when a non-minority, traditionally-trained educator becomes responsible for an urban program with minority students as majority, and less than ideal resources and support. This possible disconnect between music educator and student-musician is critical. Urban music educators must make strides to relate and connect with their students. Examinations of music participation in urban areas have indicated that teachers who integrate multicultural musical styles, offer non-traditional ensembles, or teach courses that relate directly to local student interests are able to significantly increase elective participation in music, thus giving

more students the opportunity to experience musical success (Doyle, 2014, citing Abril, 2009; Albert, 2006b; and Legette, 2003).

There are several factors that may affect urban students, such as race, ethnicity, cultural background, and socio-economic status. Also, Important is the competence and cultural responsiveness of the teacher.

It would be an absurd leap, however, to assume that only black teachers can teach black students or a similar comparison with Latino teachers. What students of color especially need most are competent music teachers who show cultural responsiveness to the difficulties they face. Essentially, music teachers must know more about the special needs of black and Latino students. Although these needs may seem more pressing in the urban setting, there are many students of color in our suburban schools who also benefit from culturally responsive teaching and special encouragement to advance their musical studies. (DeLorenzo, 2012, p. 42)

Recruitment and Retention of Urban Teachers

According to Bruenger (2010), there are two general areas of concern for job applicants. One is economic incentives such as salary and fringe benefits. The second is the applicant's perception of whether he or she will be able to achieve what he or she wants to as a member of the organization--specifically, the psychological fulfillment that stems from how well the applicant's values match the organization's and the degree to which the characteristics of the work environment suit the applicant (Bruenger, 2010, citing Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury, & Baits, 1997). Another important factor is identified in labor market research: teachers seeking their first jobs tend to apply in school districts located in close proximity to where they grew up (Bruenger, 2010, citing Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005).

The low rate of teacher retention in urban schools is a significant barrier to the achievement of educational equity. According to National Center for Educational Statistics, teachers in high-poverty public schools are twice as likely to transfer to another school as their colleagues in low-poverty public schools. This high teacher turnover rate causes many students in high-poverty urban public schools to spend their academic careers watching a parade of new teachers pass through their classrooms on their way to “good schools” with “good students” (Ellsasser, 2008). Music program continuity may also suffer from turnover of teachers, some leaving the profession and some transferring to suburban schools. The phenomenon of teacher flight from high-poverty schools undermines every other reform effort (DeLorenzo, 2012, pp. 40-41).

Several recommendations for teacher retention in urban schools revolve around the need to develop an educational philosophy. Ellsasser (2008) suggests that it is important to “challenge teacher candidates to develop a philosophy of education as a means of coping with the pathology of urban schools and to engage in the practice of revising that philosophy through regular participation in a community of educators committed to reforming urban schools.” Reimer (1989) claims that systematic attention to the development of a professional philosophy should occur during undergraduate education (p. 5). He further states that college students’ need to feel that life is significant, that actions do matter, that good causes can be served and good influences be felt, can be met more effectively and immediately by a sound philosophy than by any other aspect of their education (p. 5).

Profiles of Successful Urban Teachers

Urban teaching success may be determined by how teachers navigate the dynamic cultures of their particular classroom environments and the broader communities in which they are situated (Fitzpatrick, 2008). Many urban teachers find classroom management to be a challenge. Fiese and DeCarbo (1995) observe that before any teaching can take place, the teacher must have the respect of the students and control of the teaching/learning environment (p. 28).

However, despite challenges and disparities, many urban music educators find their work to be a source of deep satisfaction and pride (Bernard, 2010, p. 53). While several varied factors may be taken into consideration when defining successful teaching, many urban educators consider their successes in terms of the opportunities that they are able to provide for their students (p. 55).

Music educators who work in city schools are able to provide their students with musical opportunities that they otherwise might not receive. Through in-class activities, instrumental music programs, and interactions with artists and cultural organizations, children who attend city schools can enjoy many new and exciting musical opportunities. (p. 56)

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

This chapter provides information on the methods used in the study to investigate current critical issues in Urban Music Education programs. The following questions were explored, as they pertain to the Atlanta Public School System.

1. To investigate the challenges and gratification music teachers of urban programs experience.
2. To examine teaching strategies that promote musical achievement and engage urban students musically.
3. To provide insight on recruiting and the retention of urban music educators.

Population and Sample

The population for the study ($N = 70$) was comprised of music educators within the Atlanta, Georgia, Public School system.

The Atlanta Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in the state of Georgia, serving approximately 52,000 students across 88 schools. The district is organized into nine K-12 clusters with 67 traditional schools, 17 charter schools, two citywide single gender academies and two alternative programs (Atlanta Public Schools, 2018).

Public demographic information from the 2017-2018 school year, provided by the Georgia Department of Education website, was obtained to provide a detailed description of the school district student population. According to the data provided, the Atlanta Public school system has 52,147 students of which 82% are students of color.

There are 88 schools with 75.67% of the student population eligible for free or reduced lunch. Of the 88 schools, 68 are comprised of over 95% free or reduced lunch eligible students. The Atlanta Public Schools employs 6,300 employees and has a one billion-dollar annual budget.

Research Design

Both a quantitative and qualitative research methodology was employed to provide a comprehensive analysis of teacher perspectives associated with critical issues in urban music education. Quantitative data were obtained through a researcher-authored questionnaire, Survey of Urban Music Teachers (Appendix C); qualitative data were gleaned through participant interviews. The survey was constructed using a Google Doc Survey format. A pilot test was constructed to ensure proper delivery, readability, ease of understanding, and appropriateness of length. Parameters of the survey were set to only allow participants to complete the survey only once. None of the pilot study participants were included in the survey. No changes were made on the survey as a result of the pilot test.

A link to the survey and a participation consent form (Appendix A) were sent to all the music educators in the Atlanta Public School System ($N = 70$). Email addresses were supplied by the System's Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator, with only two were returned "not able to be used". Two weeks after the first mailing, a reminder was sent to teachers who had not responded.

Guided by survey responses indicating willingness to participate in an interview (Appendix D), the researcher selected six participants. Members for the interview group

were selected to represent variety in teaching levels, length of experience, and musical background (band, chorus, orchestra, guitar, etc.) Interview sessions were done in-person and by phone and were recorded using a Samson Go Mic connected to an Apple computer using the Garage Band Application. They were then transcribed into written format.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of current critical issues in urban music education programs. The research was guided by the following questions.

1. What are the major challenges and gratifications experienced by urban music teachers?
2. What teaching strategies best promote musical achievement and engage urban students?
3. What are the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining urban music educators?

Data Analysis

Atlanta Public Schools music teachers ($N = 70$) were sent the study's consent form and survey through a Google Doc survey link. Of these teachers, 49 completed the survey creating a 70% return rate. The Urban Music Educator Survey (Appendix C), collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The data were summarized as follows:

Summaries of Quantitative Items

Data in this section are displayed according to item type. Some items are purely categorical; results of these are reported using frequency tables (indicating the number and percent of respondents who fall into each category). Others are categorical, but with a numeric order (e.g., Likert type items). The results of these are reported with

frequency tables as well as summary statistics (mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum). Either report method may be considered appropriate, depending on the specific information that is of interest. Answers to the survey responses, illustrated via tables, are presented as follows.

As demonstrated in the first table, there were more male respondents to the survey than female.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	20	40.8
Male	28	57.1
Prefer Not To Answer	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The large majority of respondents (87.8) reported their race to be Black/ African American.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Black/ African American	43	87.8
Caucasian	4	8.2
Hispanic	1	2.0
Prefer not to answer	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (63.3%) indicated they grew up in a primarily urban environment; only 4 respondents grew up in a rural environment.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondent Childhood Environment

Childhood Environment	Frequency	Percent
Rural	4	8.2
Suburban	14	28.6
Urban	31	63.3
Total	49	100.0

There was a balanced variety of childhood parental incomes reported among the respondents.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondent Childhood Parental Income

Childhood Income	Frequency	Percent
\$0-\$30,000	10	20.4
\$31,000-\$50,000	15	30.6
\$51,000-\$80,000	15	30.6
\$81,000+	9	18.4
Total	49	100.0

The majority of participants (51%) have master's degrees with 12 (24.5) earning degrees above the master's.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondent Highest Degree

Highest Degree	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors	12	24.5
Masters	25	51.0
Specialist	9	18.4
Doctoral	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

The most common amounts of experience among the respondents are 8 to 15 years, followed by 16 to 20 years.

Table 6. Distribution of Years of Teaching Experience

Years Taught	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	5	10.2
4 to 7	6	12.2
8 to 15	18	36.7
16 to 20	11	22.4
21+	7	14.3
Missing	2	4.1
Total	49	100.0

The most common grade level taught was high school, with 47% of respondents teaching high school only or a combination of middle and high school.

Table 7. Distribution of Grade Taught

Grade Taught	Frequency	Percent
Elementary	13	26.5
Elementary, Middle School	1	2.0
Middle School	12	24.5
Middle School, High School	4	8.2
High School	19	38.8
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (51.0%) listed band as a teaching assignment; this is followed closely by general music at 46.9%. (Note that the categories in Table 8 do not equal 100%, as each respondent could provide more than one response.)

Table 8. Distribution of Teaching Assignment

Teaching Assignment	Frequency	Percent
Band	25	51.0
Choral	9	18.4
General Music	23	46.9
Music Technology	3	6.1
Music Theory	1	2.0
Percussion Ensemble	1	2.0
Strings	10	20.4

Nearly all respondents (98%) were certified to teach music education.

Table 9. Distribution of Certification in Music Education

Certified in Music Education	Frequency	Percent
No	1	2.0
Yes	48	98.0
Total	49	100.0

The most common number of years teaching in an urban setting is 8 to 15 (30.6% of respondents); however, the next most common level is 1 to 3 years (22.4%), indicating there may be a group of teachers who remain long-term and a group who does not.

Table 10. Distribution of Years Teaching in Urban Setting

Years in Urban Setting	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	11	22.4
4 to 7	9	18.4
8 to 15	15	30.6
16-20	9	18.4
21+	5	10.2
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (85.5%) teach at a Title I school.

Table 11. Distribution of Title I Status of Respondent Schools

Title I	Frequency	Percent
No	7	14.3
Yes	42	85.7
Total	49	100.0

The majority (59.2% of respondents) teach at schools where 91-100% of students receive free/reduced lunch.

Table 12. Distribution of Free/Reduced Lunch Students at Respondent Schools

Percent Free/Reduced Lunch	Frequency	Percent
0-24%	4	8.2
25-49%	5	10.2
50-74%	3	6.1
75-90%	7	14.3
91-100%	29	59.2
Missing	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The majority (81.6% of respondents) teach only at a public school.

Table 13. Distribution of School Type of Respondent Schools

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Charter	3	6.1
Public	40	81.6
Public, Charter	2	4.1
Public, Magnet or School of the Arts	3	6.1
Public, Private School	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The most common response (61.2%) was that the majority population of students at the school is only Black/African American. Note that some respondents may have interpreted a question about the “majority” of students differently from other respondents, as there were a number who included 5 separate categories as the “majority.”

Table 14. Distribution of School-Level Student Population Majority Race/Ethnicity

Majority Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Black/African American	30	61.2
Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino	8	16.3
Hispanic or Latino	1	2.0
White/Caucasian	1	2.0
White/Caucasian, Black/African American	3	6.1
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino	2	4.1
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander	1	2.0
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

The most common response (69.4%) was that the majority population of students in the school music program is only Black/African American. Note that some respondents may have interpreted a question about the “majority” of students differently from other respondents, as there were a number who included 4-5 separate categories as the “majority.”

Table 15. Distribution of Music Program-Level Student Population Majority Race/Ethnicity

Majority Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Black/African American	34	69.4
Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino	4	8.2
Hispanic/Latino	1	2.0
White/Caucasian	2	4.1
White/Caucasian, Black/African American	5	10.2
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino	1	2.0
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian	1	2.0
White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American/Pacific Islander	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (89.8%) are part of one of the race/ethnicity groups that they included in the majority population of the school. Note that the respondent was included in the majority race/ethnicity as long as they indicated they were in ONE of the races/ethnicities they used to describe their student population.

Table 16. Distribution of Respondent in School-Level Student Majority Race/Ethnicity

In School Majority	Frequency	Percent
No	4	8.2
Yes	44	89.8
Missing	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (85.7%) are part of one of the race/ethnicity groups that they included in the majority population of the school's music program. Note that the respondent was included in the majority race/ethnicity as long as they indicated they were in ONE of the races/ethnicities they used to describe their student music program population.

Table 17. Distribution of Respondent in Music Program-Level Student Majority Race/Ethnicity

In Music Program Majority	Frequency	Percent
No	6	12.2
Yes	42	85.7
Missing	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

The majority of respondents (63.3%) teach Music Appreciation/General Music; this is followed closely by Band, which is taught by 49.0% of respondents. Note that the categories in Table 17 do not add up to 100%, as each respondent could provide more than one response.

Table 18. Distribution of Classes Taught

Classes Taught	Frequency	Percent
Band	24	49.0
Chorus	11	22.4
Orchestra	10	20.4
Music Appreciation/General Music	31	63.3
Music Technology	9	18.4
Theory	7	14.3
Guitar	5	10.2
Piano	1	2.0

Only 14.3% of respondents reported that they were required to teach non-music classes.

Table 19. Distribution of Teaching Non-Music Classes

Non-Music Classes	Frequency	Percent
No	38	77.6
Yes	7	14.3
Missing	4	8.2
Total	49	100.0

The majority (65.3% of respondents) clearly indicated that they felt their facilities were adequate for a successful music program.

Table 20. Distribution of Adequate Facilities

Facilities Adequate	Frequency	Percent
No	8	16.3
Somewhat	6	12.2
Yes	32	65.3
Missing/Unclear	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

There are a variety of levels of satisfaction with the level of administrative support at the respondents' schools for their music program.

Likert Scale Response Key				
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Table 21a. Distribution of “Satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	7	14.3
2	10	20.4
3	13	26.5
4	12	24.5
5	7	14.3
Total	49	100.0

Summary of satisfaction with administrative support. The mean is the average value across the 49 respondents (3.04, which is basically neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). The median is the 50th percentile, or the value that would be exactly in the middle if all of the responses are lined up from smallest to largest (3, which is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). The standard deviation of 1.27 is a measure of how different the typical respondent is from the average (plus or minus), but is not necessarily very meaningful for a Likert-type item. The smallest response anyone provided was a 1, and the largest was a 5.

Table 21b. Summary Statistics of “Satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	3.04	3	1.27	1	5

Responses tended to be neutral to negative (30.6% of respondents replied with a 2, which is “dissatisfied”).

Table 22a. Distribution of “Satisfaction with the level of community and parental support at your school for your music program”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	8	16.3
2	15	30.6
3	13	26.5
4	10	20.4
5	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

The typical responses are between a 2 and a 3, again showing that respondents are somewhat dissatisfied with the level of community and parental support for their music program.

Table 22b. Summary Statistics of “Satisfaction with the level of community and parental support at your school for your music program”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	2.69	3	1.16	1	5

There is something of a dichotomy with respect to support from core subject area faculty; 22.4% of respondents replied with a 1 (very dissatisfied), but 26.5% replied with 4 (satisfied).

Table 23a. Distribution of “Satisfaction with the level of support for your music program from core subject area and non-music faculty at your school”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	11	22.4
2	7	14.3
3	15	30.6
4	13	26.5
5	3	6.1
Total	49	100.0

There is an overall average “neutral” view of support from core subject area faculty, with an average response of 2.8 and a median response of 3.

Table 23b. Summary Statistics of “Satisfaction with the level of support for your music program from core subject area and non-music faculty at your school”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	2.80	3	1.24	1	5

There is a relatively high perception of success teaching music in an urban school setting; 65.3% of respondents answered with a 4 or 5 (satisfied and very satisfied). No respondents answered with a 1.

Table 24a. Distribution of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting”

Response	Frequency	Percent
2	4	8.2
3	13	26.5
4	25	51.0
5	7	14.3
Total	49	100.0

The average level of satisfaction is a 3.71, which is on the positive side.

Table 24b. Summary Statistics of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	3.71	4	0.82	2	5

We also see a high level of reported success in teaching music in an urban setting. Note, the difference between this question and the previous one is not very clear, and it has resulted in similar (but not perfectly identical) results

Table 25a. Distribution of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting”

Response	Frequency	Percent
2	3	6.1
3	12	24.5
4	28	57.1
5	6	12.2
Total	49	100.0

Demonstrating a perception of success.

Table 25b. Summary Statistics of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	3.76	4	0.75	2	5

A variety of perceptions with respect to how well the respondents' teacher education programs prepared them to teach in an urban setting.

Table 26a. Distribution of "How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?"

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	6	12.2
2	11	22.4
3	13	26.5
4	9	18.4
5	10	20.4
Total	49	100.0

There is a neutral overall perception with respect to preparation to teach in the urban environment (average of 3.12 and median of 3).

Table 26b. Summary Statistics of "How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?"

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	3.12	3	1.32	1	5

The majority of respondents (75.5%) indicate that they teach in a classroom (this included responses of classroom, music classroom, band room, and chorus room). The three other responses included "a square box," "school shop," and "on a music cart."

Table 27. Distribution of Teaching Facility Type

Setting	Frequency	Percent
Classroom/Music Classroom	37	75.5
Stage	4	8.2
Other	3	6.1
Missing/Unclear	5	10.2
Total	49	100.0

There are a variety of levels of satisfaction with the equipment in the music program.

Table 28a. Distribution of “How satisfied are you with the equipment that you have for your music program?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	3	6.1
2	12	24.5
3	12	24.5
4	14	28.6
5	8	16.3
Total	49	100.0

There is an overall neutral level of satisfaction with the music program equipment (mean of 3.24, median of 3).

Table 28b. Summary Statistics of “How satisfied are you with the equipment that you have for your music program?”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	3.24	3	1.18	1	5

A variety of levels of satisfaction with the funding received for the music programs.

Table 29a. Distribution of “How satisfied are you with the funding that you receive for your music program (text books, sheet music, materials and supplies)?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	10	20.4
2	10	20.4
3	14	28.6
4	10	20.4
5	5	10.2
Total	49	100.0

An overall neutral level of satisfaction with the level of funding received for the music programs (average of 2.8, median of 3).

Table 29b. Summary Statistics of “How satisfied are you with the funding that you receive for your music program (text books, sheet music, materials and supplies)?”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	2.80	3	1.27	1	5

There are a variety of levels of satisfaction with class sizes and scheduling for the music programs.

Table 30a. Distribution of “How satisfied are you with the class sizes and scheduling for your music program?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	13	26.5
2	13	26.5
3	9	18.4
4	10	20.4
5	3	6.1
Missing	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

There is an overall slightly negative level of satisfaction with class sizes and scheduling, with an average score of 2.52 and a median of 2 (dissatisfied).

Table 30b. Summary Statistics of “How satisfied are you with the class sizes and scheduling for your music program?”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
48	2.52	2	1.27	1	5

There is a dichotomy in satisfaction with the level of student discipline at the school; 38.8% were very dissatisfied (score of 1) while 30.6% felt neutral. Only 12.2% provided answers of 4 or higher (generally they are not satisfied with the level of discipline).

Table 31a. Distribution of “How satisfied are you with the student discipline at your school?”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	19	38.8
2	9	18.4
3	15	30.6
4	5	10.2
5	1	2.0
Total	49	100.0

There is an overall dissatisfaction with the level of student discipline, with an average score of 2.18 and a median of 2 (dissatisfied).

Table 31b. Summary Statistics of “How satisfied are you with the student discipline at your school?”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	2.18	2	1.13	1	5

There are a variety of levels of agreement with the statement that the students' parents/guardians strongly value music education.

Table 32a. Distribution of “The parents/guardians of your students strongly value music education”

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	6	12.2
2	15	30.6
3	13	26.5
4	13	26.5
5	2	4.1
Total	49	100.0

The overall level of agreement with the statement about parents/guardians is basically neutral (average of 2.8, median of 3).

Table 32b. Summary Statistics of “The parents/guardians of your students strongly value music education”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	2.80	3	1.10	1	5

There is a strong agreement with the statement that the students in music classes have challenging home environments (49% strongly agree).

Table 33a. Distribution of “The students in my music classes have challenging home environments”

Response	Frequency	Percent
2	5	10.2
3	13	26.5
4	7	14.3
5	24	49.0
Total	49	100.0

There is an average of 4.03 and a median of 4, again showing general agreement with the statement that the students in music classes have challenging home environments.

Table 33b. Summary Statistics of “The students in my music classes have challenging home environments”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	4.02	4	1.09	2	5

There is a strong agreement with the statement that understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important,” with 79.6% of respondents strongly agreeing.

Table 34a. Distribution of “Understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important”

Response	Frequency	Percent
3	1	2.0
4	9	18.4
5	39	79.6
Total	49	100.0

There is a very high average of 4.78 and a median of 5, again for strong agreement with the statement that understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important.

Table 34b. Summary Statistics of “Understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important”

N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
49	4.78	5	0.47	3	5

Relationships Between Quantitative Items

In this section, relationships between pre-selected pairs of items are described with accompanying statistical information. The type of description and the statistical test used depend on the type of variables involved.

In Table 35, the responses to the question “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?” differ according to whether or not the teacher was a member of the ethnic majority in their particular classes (band, choral, general music, etc.). Note that the focus is on music students instead of the entire student population because there were only 4 teachers who did not belong to one of the school’s majority populations. The percentage of respondents who answered with a 4 or a 5 is higher for those who are part of a majority population (19.0% + 23.8% = 43.8%) than for those who are not (only 16.7%). The gamma statistic γ is a measure of correlation across the two questions; it can be as low as -1, or as high as 1. (If the value is a 0, that means there is no correlation across the two questions). This statistic is appropriate for two situations: examining the correlation across two ordered variables (such as “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?”), or correlation of an ordered variable with a dichotomous (two-level) variable, like whether or not one is a member of the majority population. In this case, the positive value of γ indicates that those who are part of a majority music student population are more likely to feel that their teacher education prepared them to teach in an urban school. The p-value of 0.026¹ is small, relative to the commonly used significance level of 0.05, and so it may be concluded that **there is a statistically significant difference in ratings of teacher education program preparation by a teacher’s majority status at the 0.05 level of significance.**

¹ The p-value may be interpreted directly; the value of 0.026 means that if there is no true relationship between these two variables for all music teachers in this population, there is only a 2.6% chance that a correlation as large as the one here is due to the particular music teachers in this sample.

Table 35. "How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?" by Member of Majority Student Music Population

Music Majority		1	2	3	4	5	Total
No	Count	3	2	0	1	0	6
	% within						
Yes	No	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	Count	3	9	12	8	10	42
	% within						
	Yes	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	19.0%	23.8%	100.0%
γ	0.724						
p	0.026						

The responses to the item "Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting" differ according to whether the teacher is a member of one of the groups they indicated was a majority group within their student music program. The rating of success does tend to be higher for teachers who are part of the majority student music population at their school. The gamma statistic of 0.714 confirms this; the p-value of 0.048 is less than the significance level of 0.05, and we conclude **there is a statistically significant difference in ratings of urban music setting success by a teacher's majority status at the 0.05 level of significance.**²

Table 36. "Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting" by Member of Majority Student Music Population

Music Majority		2	3	4	5	Total
No	Count	2	2	2	0	6
	% within					
Yes	No	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	Count	1	11	23	7	42
	% within					
	Yes	2.4%	26.2%	54.8%	16.7%	100.0%
γ	0.714					
p	0.048					

² Note that the survey asked a separate item regarding success relating generally to the music program; however, the second question was worded slightly different from the first, written as "Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting." Given the very similar answers that were received, this was determined to not actually be a separate question.

The responses to the item “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?” differ according the teacher’s childhood environment. there are only a very small number of respondents from rural childhood environments. Therefore, the gamma statistic and statistical test only compare the urban and suburban environments. From the table, and from the gamma statistic, we can see that those who were raised in an urban environment were more likely to feel that their teacher education program prepared them to teach in an urban school. With a p-value of 0.003, we conclude **there is a statistically significant difference in ratings of teacher education program preparation between urban and suburban childhood environments at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 37. “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?” by Childhood Environment

Childhood Environment		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Rural	Count	1	1	0	2	0	4
	% within Rural	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Suburban	Count	4	4	4	1	1	14
	% within Suburban	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	7.1%	7.1%	100.0%
Urban	Count	1	6	9	6	9	31
	% within Urban	3.2%	19.4%	29.0%	19.4%	29.0%	100.0%
Y		0.606					
p		0.003					

The responses to the item “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting” differ according the teacher’s childhood environment. There are only a very small number of respondents with a rural childhood environment. Therefore, the gamma statistic and statistical test only compare the urban and suburban environments. From the table, and from the gamma statistic, we can see that those who were raised in an urban environment were more likely to feel that they have been successful in teaching music in an urban school setting. With a p-value of 0.009, we conclude **there is a statistically significant difference in ratings of success between urban and suburban childhood environments the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 38. “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting” by Childhood Environment

Childhood Environment		2	3	4	5	Total
Rural	Count	1	0	1	2	4
	% within Rural	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Suburban	Count	2	6	6	0	14
	% within Suburban	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Urban	Count	1	7	18	5	31
	% within Urban	3.2%	22.6%	58.1%	16.1%	100.0%
Y		0.617				
p		0.009				

The responses to the item “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?” differ according to the teacher’s childhood parental income. There is not an obvious pattern that shows either increasing or decreasing ratings of preparation for teaching in an urban school as childhood income increases. This is verified by the gamma statistic of 0.031 (which is close to 0) and the p-value of 0.838. We conclude that **there is not a statistically significant association of teacher education program preparation and childhood income at the 0.05 level.**

Table 39. “How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?” by Childhood Parental Income

Childhood Parental Income		1	2	3	4	5	Total
\$0-\$30,000	Count	0	2	3	3	2	10
	% within \$0-\$30,000	0.0%	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	100.0%
\$31,000-\$50,000	Count	2	5	5	1	2	15
	% within \$31,000-\$50,000	13.3%	33.3%	33.3%	6.7%	13.3%	100.0%
\$51,000-\$80,000	Count	3	3	3	3	3	15
	% within \$51,000-\$80,000	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
\$81,000+	Count	1	1	2	2	3	9
	% within \$81,000+	11.1%	11.1%	22.2%	22.2%	33.3%	100.0%
Y		0.031					
p		0.838					

The responses to the item “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting” differ according to the teacher’s childhood parental income. There is no clear pattern showing an increase or decrease in perceived success for teaching in an urban school setting as childhood parental income increases. This is again confirmed by the gamma statistic of just 0.084 and a p-value of 0.646; we conclude **there is not a statistically significant association between perceived success teaching in an urban school setting and childhood parental income at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 40. “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting” by Childhood Parental Income

Childhood Parental Income		2	3	4	5	Total
\$0-\$30,000	Count	1	2	6	1	10
	% within \$0-\$30,000	10.0%	20.0%	60.0%	10.0%	100.0%
\$31,000-\$50,000	Count	1	5	8	1	15
	% within \$31,000-\$50,000	6.7%	33.3%	53.3%	6.7%	100.0%
\$51,000-\$80,000	Count	1	4	7	3	15
	% within \$51,000-\$80,000	6.7%	26.7%	46.7%	20.0%	100.0%
\$81,000+	Count	1	2	4	2	9
	% within \$81,000+	11.1%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	100.0%
Y		0.084				
p		0.646				

The relationship of number of years spent in an urban teaching environment by the highest degree obtained. There is maybe a hint of a pattern that as the level of education increases, the amount of time spent in the urban teaching environment increases. The gamma statistic is positive (0.314), indicating there is some positive relationship between the two within this data set. However, the p-value of 0.079 is not statistically significant (it is not quite less than 0.05); we therefore conclude **there is not a statistically significant association of years teaching in an urban environment and highest degree obtained at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 41. Year in Urban Teaching Environment by Highest Degree

Highest Degree		1-3	4-7	8-15	16-20	21+	Total
Bachelors	Count	5	2	3	2	0	12
	% within Bachelors	41.7%	16.7%	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Masters	Count	4	5	9	5	2	25
	% within Masters	16.0%	20.0%	36.0%	20.0%	8.0%	100.0%
Specialist	Count	1	2	3	1	2	9
	% within Specialist	11.1%	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	22.2%	100.0%
Doctoral	Count	1	0	0	1	1	3
	% within Doctoral	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	99.9%
Y		0.314					
p		0.079					

The relationship between “Please rate your satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program” and the percentage of students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch. It does not show any obvious trends with respect to the relationship of satisfaction with administrative support and percent free/reduced lunch. The gamma statistic shows there is only a small negative relationship within this data set, and the p-value of 0.284 is not statistically significant. We conclude **there is not a statistically significant association of satisfaction with administrative support for the music program and the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 42. "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program" by Percent Free/Reduced Lunch

Percent Free/Reduced		1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-24%	Count	1	0	0	1	2	4
	% within 0-24%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%
25-49%	Count	1	0	2	1	1	5
	% within 25-49%	20.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
50-74%	Count	0	1	0	2	0	3
	% within 50-74%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
75-90%	Count	1	1	3	1	1	7
	% within 75-90%	14.3%	14.3%	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
91-100%	Count	4	7	8	7	3	29
	% within 91-100%	13.8%	24.1%	27.6%	24.1%	10.3%	100.0%
Y		-0.207					
p		0.284					

The relationship between "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of community and parental support at your school for your music program" and the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch. It does appear there is a greater percentage of low ratings (1s and 2s) as the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch increases; there is also a lower percentage of high ratings (4s and 5s) as the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch increases. There is a relatively large, negative gamma value of -0.644 to confirm this, and a very significant p-value that is < 0.001. We conclude that **there is a statistically significant, negative association of satisfaction with the level of community and parental support for the music program and the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch.**

Table 43. "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of community and parental support at your school for your music program" by Percent Free/Reduced Lunch

Percent Free/Reduced		1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-24%	Count	0	0	0	3	1	4
	% within 0-24%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
25-49%	Count	0	1	1	2	1	5
	% within 25-49%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
50-74%	Count	0	0	2	1	0	3
	% within 50-74%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
75-90%	Count	2	0	3	2	0	7
	% within 75-90%	28.6%	0.0%	42.9%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%
91-100%	Count	6	13	7	2	1	29
	% within 91-100%	20.7%	44.8%	24.1%	6.9%	3.4%	100.0%
Y		-0.644					
p		<0.001					

The relationship of "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of support for your music program from core subject area and non-music faculty at your school" with the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch. There does not appear to be a clear relationship of satisfaction with support from core subject and non-music faculty and the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch. The gamma statistic is negative, but small, and the p-value of 0.292 is not significant at the 0.05 level. We conclude **there is not a statistically significant association of satisfaction with support from core subject and non-music faculty with the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch.**

Table 44. "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of support for your music program from core subject area and non-music faculty at your school" by Percent Free/Reduced

Percent Free/Reduced		1	2	3	4	5	Total
0-24%	Count	1	0	1	0	2	4
	% within 0-24%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
25-49%	Count	2	1	1	1	0	5
	% within 25-49%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
50-74%	Count	0	0	1	2	0	3
	% within 50-74%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
75-90%	Count	1	0	3	2	1	7
	% within 75-90%	14.3%	0.0%	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	100.0%
91-100%	Count	7	5	9	8	0	29
	% within 91-100%	24.1%	17.2%	31.0%	27.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Y		-0.208					
p		0.292					

The relationship "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program" and "How satisfied are you with the funding that you receive for your music program (text books, sheet music, materials and supplies)?" It does appear that satisfaction with the level of administrative support for the music program generally tends to increase as the satisfaction with funding increases. The gamma statistic is positive and moderately large at 0.457, confirming this relationship. Finally, the p-value of 0.003 is significant, and we conclude that **there is a statistically significant, positive association of satisfaction with level of administrative support and satisfaction with funding provided to the music program at the 0.05 level.**

Table 45. "Please rate your satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program" by "How satisfied are you with the funding that you receive for your music program (text books, sheet music, materials and supplies)?"

Funding Satisfaction		1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	Count	5	1	2	1	1	10
	% within						
	1	50.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	100.0%
2	Count	1	4	1	4	0	10
	% within						
	2	10.0%	40.0%	10.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
3	Count	1	2	7	3	1	14
	% within						
	3	7.1%	14.3%	50.0%	21.4%	7.1%	100.0%
4	Count	0	2	3	4	1	10
	% within						
	4	0.0%	20.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	100.0%
5	Count	0	1	0	0	4	5
	% within						
	5	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	100.0%
χ^2		0.457					
p		0.003					

The percentage of teachers who teach non-music classes at both Title I and non-Title I schools. 0% of teachers at non-Title I schools teach non-music classes, and 17.9% of teachers at Title I schools teach non-music classes. While the percentage is certainly higher at Title 1 schools within this sample, there is not enough evidence (perhaps due to the small sample of non-Title 1 schools) to show that this difference is statistically significant. Here, we use a Fisher Exact test because the table is showing the relationship of two dichotomous variables (neither one is ordinal). The only statistic here is the p-value, which is not small enough to be statistically significant. We therefore conclude that **there is not a statistically significant difference in the percentage of music teachers teaching non-music classes between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 46. Teaching Non-Music Classes by Title I Status

Title I		No	Yes	Total
No	Count	6	0	6
	% within			
Yes	No	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Count	32	7	39
	% within			
	Yes	82.1%	17.9%	100.0%
Fisher Exact				
p		0.569		

The relationship of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting” and “Understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important.” does not reveal any clear relationship between perceived success in an urban setting and the importance of student cultural values. The gamma statistic is positive but small; the p-value of 0.321 is not statistically significant. This may be due to the fact that many respondents (39 out of 49) all rated the importance of cultural values quite highly. We conclude that **there is not a statistically significant association of perceived teaching success in an urban setting and the importance of understanding and learning students’ cultural values at the 0.05 level of significance.**

Table 47. “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting” by “Understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important”

Importance of Cultural Values		2	3	4	5	Total
3	Count	0	1	0	0	1
	% within 3	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
4	Count	1	4	2	2	9
	% within 4	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	22.2%	100.0%
5	Count	3	8	23	5	39
	% within 5	7.7%	20.5%	59.0%	12.8%	100.0%
γ		0.284				
p		0.321				

The relationship of “Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting” to the perception that the facilities are suitable for teaching music. There is no apparent relationship of perceived success teaching music in an urban environment and the perceived suitability

of the facilities. The gamma statistic is small and the p-value is 0.309, which is not statistically significant. We conclude that **there is not a statistically significant association of perceived success teaching in the urban environment and the perceived suitability of the teaching facilities.**

Table 48. "Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting" by Suitability of Facilities

Suitability of Facilities		2	3	4	5	Total
No	Count	1	2	5	0	8
	% within No	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Somewhat	Count	1	1	3	1	6
	% within Somewhat	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%	16.7%	100.0%
Yes	Count	1	9	16	6	32
	% within Yes	3.1%	28.1%	50.0%	18.8%	100.0%
Gamma		0.232				
P		0.309				

Table 49. Summary of Statistics Results

Variable 1	Variable 2	Test	Y Statistic (if used)	P- value	Conclusion if Significant
Teacher is Member of Majority Music Student Population	Rating of Preparation to Teach in Urban School	Gamma Statistic	0.724	0.026	Teachers who are part of the "majority" group are more likely to rate their preparation higher
Teacher is Member of Majority Music Student Population	Rating of Success Teaching in Urban School Setting	Gamma Statistic	0.714	0.048	Teachers who are part of the "majority" group are more likely to rate their success higher
Childhood Environment	Rating of Preparation to Teach in Urban School	Gamma Statistic	0.606	0.003	Teachers from an urban (v suburban) environment are more likely to rate their preparation higher
Childhood Environment	Rating of Success Teaching in	Gamma Statistic	0.617	0.009	Teachers from an urban (v suburban) environment

	Urban School Setting	Statistic			are more likely to rate their success higher
Childhood Income	Rating of Preparation to Teach in Urban School	Gamma Statistic	0.031	0.838	
Childhood Income	Rating of Success Teaching in Urban School Setting	Gamma Statistic	0.084	0.646	
Highest Degree	Years Teaching in Urban Setting	Gamma Statistic	0.314	0.079	
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch	Satisfaction with Administrative Support	Gamma Statistic	-0.207	0.284	
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch	Satisfaction with Community and Parental Support	Gamma Statistic	-0.644	<0.001	Teachers with higher percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch are less likely to be satisfied with community and parental support
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch	Satisfaction with Core and Non-Music Teacher Support	Gamma Statistic	-0.208	0.292	
Satisfaction with Funding	Satisfaction with Administrative Support	Gamma Statistic	0.457	0.003	Teachers who are more satisfied with the level of funding are more likely to be more satisfied with administrative support
Title I Status	Teaching Non-Music Classes	Fisher Exact Test	N/A	0.569	
Importance of Student Cultural Values	Rating of Success Teaching in Urban	Gamma Statistic	0.284	0.321	

	School Setting			
	Rating of Success			
	Teaching in	Gamm		
Perceived	Urban	a		
Suitability of	School	Statisti		
Facilities	Setting	c	0.232	0.309

Descriptions and Distribution of Themes from Open Ended (Qualitative) Items

The items in this section were asked as open-ended questions. Responses were each examined manually for common themes, and recoded into either one categorical variable (if only one theme was expressed per answer), or multiple yes/no variables (if more than one theme was generally present in responses). Note that this section is subjective, as a different reviewer may have noted different themes in the responses to the questions.

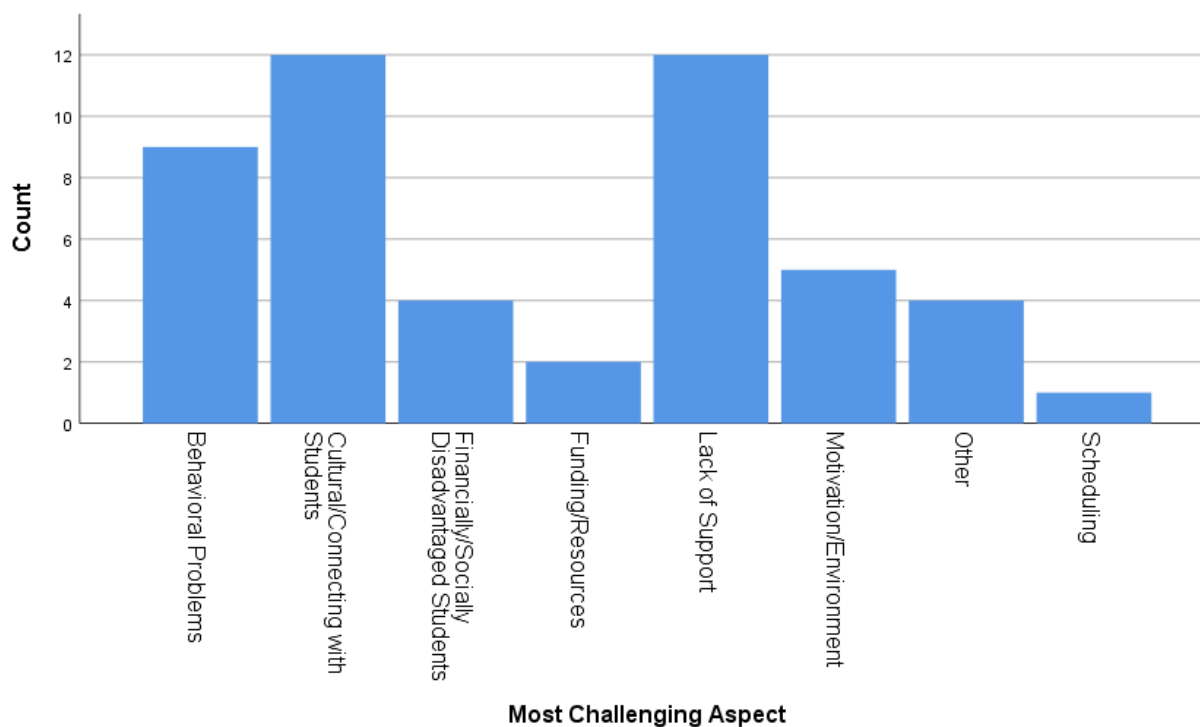
The two most common themes involved in the participants' answers included cultural issues/problems connecting with students, or alternatively a lack of support (which could be from the administration, parents, etc.). Also, commonly mentioned was behavioral problems, with 18.4% of participants mentioning this issue.

Table 50. Responses to "In your experience, what is the single most challenging aspect of your teaching music in an urban setting?"

Most Challenging Aspect	Frequency	Percent
Behavioral Problems	9	18.4
Cultural/Connecting with Students	12	24.5
Financially/Socially Disadvantaged Students	4	8.2
Funding/Resources	2	4.1
Lack of Support	12	24.5
Motivation/Environment	5	10.2
Other	5	10.2
Total	49	100

Figure 1 is a bar chart representing the frequencies of respondents to the question: “What is the Most Challenging Aspect of Teaching Music in an Urban Setting?”

Figure 1. Bar Chart of Most Challenging Aspect of Teaching Music in an Urban Setting



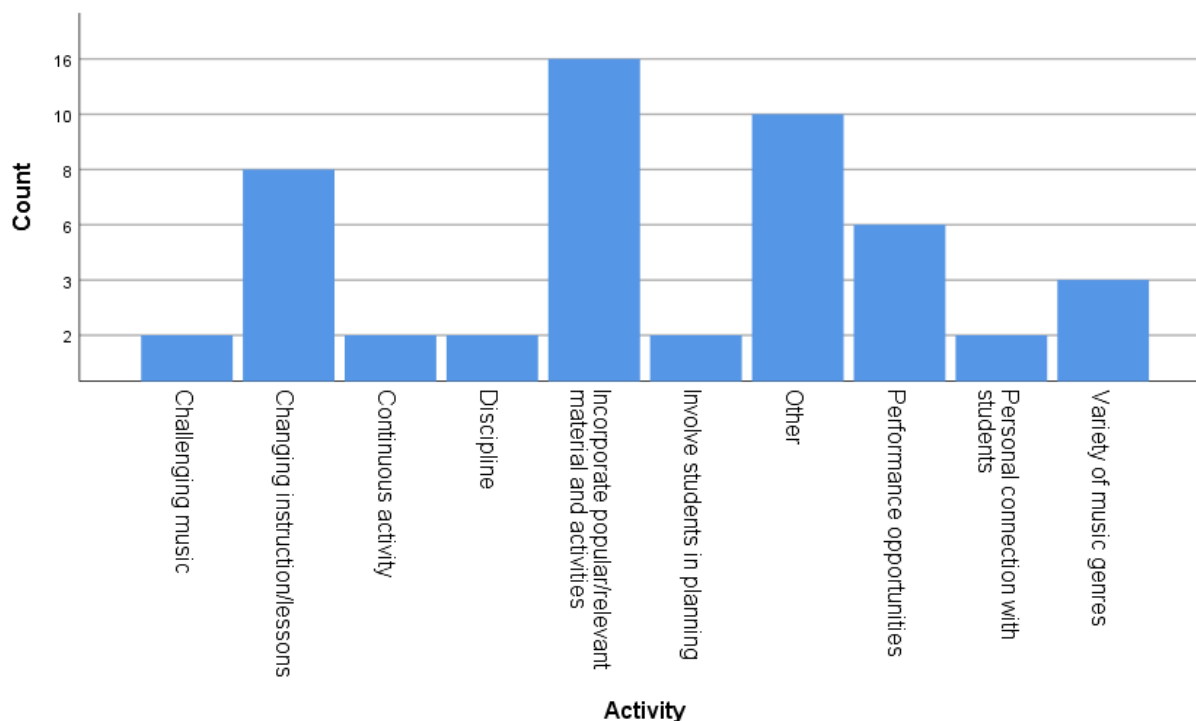
Responses to “What ways do you keep your students engaged and focused musically?” Note that participants could give multiple responses to this question, and so the total number of responses does not add up to 100% as in the previous table. The most common response included the incorporation of popular/relevant material (such as music that the students listen to) and activities (events the students enjoy attending). The next most popular answer was “other,” meaning that many survey participants gave an answer that could not be generalized with those from other participants (a few examples include “musical games,” “playing instruments,” and “I let them know how music can help them in the future.”) Finally, changing instruction/lessons was also quite popular, with 16.7% of respondents indicating that they try to mix up their lessons and their methods of teaching so that the students are not constantly exposed to the same routine.

Table 51. Responses to “What ways do you keep your students engaged and focused musically?”

Ways to Keep Engaged/Focus	Frequency	Percent
Changing instruction/lessons	8	16.7%
Personal connection with students	2	4.2%
Incorporate popular/relevant material and activities	16	33.3%
Performance opportunities	6	12.5%
Involve students in planning	2	4.2%
Variety of music genres	3	6.3%
Discipline	2	4.2%
Challenging music	2	4.2%
Continuous activity	2	4.2%
Other	10	20.8%

Figure 2 is a bar chart that provides the number of participants who gave answers in each category. A single participant could give multiple answers; therefore, the numbers do not add up to the total sample.

Figure 2. Bar Chart of Ways to Keep Students Engaged and Focused Musically



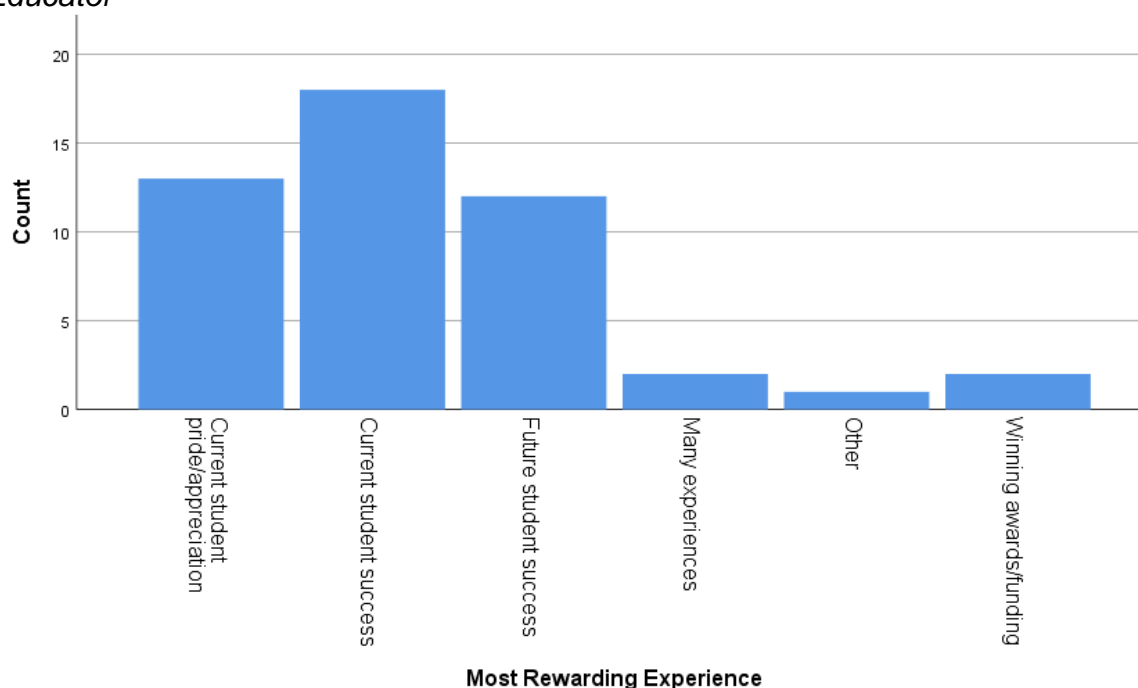
Responses to “Briefly recount your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.” The most common theme was current student success, with 37.5% of respondents describing an experience falling in this category. This includes student growth as musicians, students attending/doing well at adjudication, etc. The next most common categories were current student pride/appreciation (which includes students being proud of their accomplishments and appreciating music/efforts made in the classroom), and future student success (which refers to former students who are now entering college, performing music, etc.).

Table 52. Responses to “Briefly recount your most rewarding teaching experiences as an urban music educator”.

Most rewarding experience	Frequency	Percent
Current student pride/appreciation	13	27.1
Current student success	18	37.5
Future student success	12	25
Many experiences	2	4.2
Winning awards/funding	2	4.2
Other	1	2.1
Total	48	100

Figure 3 is a bar chart representing the frequencies of respondents answering with each type of answer.

Figure 3. Bar Chart of Most Rewarding Teaching Experience as an Urban Music Educator



Each participant could give more than one answer; all 49 participants gave at least one answer, so the percentages are out of 49 people. 40.82% of participants included wording related to the teacher's relationship with the students. This theme was the most common compared to other themes that arose in the participants' answers.

Table 53. Responses to "Describe what you feel makes an urban music educator successful".

Factors for Successful Educator	Frequency	Percent
Relationship with Students	20	40.82%
Encouraging Student Appreciation	7	14.29%
Student Achievement	7	14.29%
Ability to Retain Support	8	16.33%
Ability to Meet Challenges	10	20.41%
Other	11	22.45%

Each participant could give more than one answer; all 49 participants gave at least one answer, so the percentages are out of 49 people. 51.02% of participants included wording related to support, including parental support, community support, and administrative support. This theme was the most common compared to other themes that arose in the participants' answers.

Table 54. Responses to "Describe what you consider to be the characteristics of a successful music program"

Factors for Successful Music Program	Frequency	Percent
Support	25	51.02%
Resources	11	22.45%
Funding	3	6.12%
Discipline	3	6.12%
Qualified Instruction	4	8.16%
Performance	6	12.24%
Student Appreciation	16	32.65%
Student Achievement	8	16.33%
Varied/Comprehensive Curriculum	6	12.24%
Schedule	3	6.12%
Other	15	30.61%

A description of the non-music classes taught for the 7 respondents who indicated they were required to teach non-music classes participants could give more than one answer, and percentages are out of the 7 people. Reading, math, and special education/small group education were the non-music classes mentioned by these 7 participants.

Table 55. Responses to “Non-Music Classes Taught”

Non-Music Classes Taught	Frequency	Percent
Math	1	14.29%
Reading	4	57.14%
Special/Small Group Education	3	42.86%

A description of the ways in which the participants did not feel well prepared; note that while most responses indicated a lack of preparation to teach in an urban environment, some participants indicated that they did feel prepared (at least in some ways) and this was credited either to their education or their own urban background. There were 47 participants who provided an answer to this question, and participants could provide more than one answer. Therefore, each percentage is out of 47. The most common answer was that their education did not give them enough exposure to teaching in the urban environment (23.4%).

Table 56. Responses to “Please explain in what ways you were or were not prepared to teach in an urban environment”

Lack of Preparation	Frequency	Percent
Behavior Problems	7	14.89%
Demographic Differences	5	10.64%
Not Enough Exposure	11	23.40%
Lack of Support	3	6.38%
Lack of Resources	5	10.64%
Classroom Management	3	6.38%
Felt Well Prepared (Education)	8	17.02%
Felt Well Prepared (Urban Background)	5	10.64%
Other	10	21.28%

A description of the participants’ responses to a question about how technology impacts music teaching in the urban environment. 48 participants answered this question, and could provide more than one answer, so percentages are out of 48. More than half of participants indicated that the impact of technology was “big,” was important, or useful (many with no additional explanation). A few participants indicated they use technology in the classroom (10.42%), and others described specific uses of technology in music education (16.67%). A number also indicated that they did not have much opportunity to use technology (due to lack of resources) or that they chose not to use it. Some indicated that technology could be a distraction from music and viewed it partially or entirely negatively (8.33%).

Table 57. Responses to “What impact does technology have on teaching music in an urban environment?”

<u>Impact of Technology</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Big/Important/Useful	31	64.58%
Communication with Students	1	2.08%
Not Provided/Don't Use	10	20.83%
Use	5	10.42%
Distraction	4	8.33%
Specific Uses Described	8	16.67%

A description of the participants' responses about the skills necessary to be successful in an urban music program. Participants could provide more than one answer, and 46 participants provided an answer to the question, so percentages are out of 46 people. The most common answer was related to patience, primarily with students when more description was provided (41.3%).

Table 58. Responses to “What skills do you feel are needed to be successful in an urban music program?”

<u>Skills to Be Successful</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Flexibility	10	21.74%
Patience	19	41.30%
Compassion/Understanding	12	26.09%
Creativity/Resourcefulness	4	8.70%
Planning/Organization	5	10.87%
Classroom Management	4	8.70%
Determination/Resilience	7	15.22%
Communication	6	13.04%
Music/Technical Skills	7	15.22%
Other	17	36.96%

Responses to a question about the reason respondents accepted a music education job in an urban environment. Participants largely provided one factor each, so responses were coded one per participant; 48 participants responded. The most common answer was that the respondents were choosing specifically to support students in the urban environment (62.5%)—of those who gave further explanation, some specifically indicated it was because they were from an urban environment, while others indicated it was a way to help those who were less privileged. The next most common answer (18.8%) related to availability of the position, indicating that there were not other positions that were available that they might have chosen.

Table 59. Responses to “What factor influenced you most to accept a music education job in an urban school?”

Factor Influencing Accepting Job	Frequency	Percent
Availability	9	18.8
Location	2	4.2
Opportunity for Accomplishment	3	6.3
Salary	3	6.3
Support Available	1	2.1
Support Urban Environment	30	62.5
Total	48	100

Responses to a question about the reason respondents remain employed (or would remain employed) in an urban school. Participants largely provided one factor each, so responses were coded one per participant; 48 participants responded. The most common answer was to support urban students (56.3%)—some specifically referred to the urban environment while others said “the students,” but these were all combined into one category.

Table 60. Responses to “What factor currently persuades, or would persuade you to remain employed in an urban school?”

Factor Influencing Remaining in Job	Frequency	Percent
Financial	5	10.4
Other	8	16.7
Progress Seen	4	8.3
Support Received	4	8.3
Support Urban Students	27	56.3
Total	48	100

Responses to the question about the reason respondents would consider leaving the urban environment. Participants largely only provided one factor each, so responses were coded one per participant; 48 participants responded. The most common factor mentioned in the answers was financial—in most cases, salary related, but in at least one the availability of inexpensive housing near the school was listed.

Table 61. Responses to “What is the single most important factor that would motivate you to seek a music education position outside of an urban environment?”

<u>Factor Influencing Leaving Job</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Advancement	5	10.6
Financial	12	25.5
Location/Family	6	12.8
Resources Received	3	6.4
Stress	2	4.3
Student Behavior	3	6.4
Support Received	6	12.8
None	4	8.5
Other	6	12.8
Total	47	100

Responses from those who are not satisfied with the equipment available to them. There were 32 responses to this question, and participants could provide more than one answer, so percentages are taken out of 32. Over half of those who responded (65.63%) indicated that the quality of the instruments available to them was not satisfactory.

Table 62. Responses to “If not satisfied, what equipment is vital to improve your program?”

<u>Equipment Needing Improvement</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Instruments	21	65.63%
Technology	9	28.13%
Storage	2	6.25%
Sound Equipment	3	9.38%
Practice Space	3	9.38%
Funding	2	6.25%

Responses from those who are not satisfied with scheduling or class sizes. Note that some who answered this question were not dissatisfied, but there was not much to report about their responses, so this table was limited to those who were not satisfied. There were 35 responses to this question, and participants could provide more than one answer, so percentages are taken out of 35. Over half of those who responded (51.43%) indicated that scheduling was problematic (either because there were conflicts with other classes of students who might be interested, or class periods were too short/too long). Note that “Students Enrolled” refers to responses where the participant indicated that uninterested students were pushed into music classes, or that certain music classes were treated as “dump” classes.

Table 63. Responses to “Please explain [Satisfaction with class sizes and scheduling for your music program]”

<u>Schedule/Class Issues Needing Improvement</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Schedule	18	51.43%
Class Size	13	37.14%
Students Enrolled	8	22.86%

Responses from those who are not satisfied with the state of discipline at their school. There were 37 responses to this question, and participants could provide more than one answer, so percentages are taken out of 37. The most common answer (37.84% of those who responded) was related to a lack of consistency in terms of enforcement of discipline. The next most common response was related to lack of consequences (32.43%).

Table 64. Responses to “If dissatisfied, what do you consider to be the major cause for lack of discipline; how might it be improved?”

<u>Improvement Needed to Discipline</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Consistency	14	37.84%
Parental Support	8	21.62%
Administrative Support	7	18.92%
Lack of Consequences	12	32.43%
Other	7	18.92%

Interview Participant Summaries

The interview participants indicated on the Urban Music Educator Survey that they would be interested in further contributing in this research study by participating in an interview. Twenty-four survey participants supplied their email address indicating possible interview participation. After contacting the potential interview participants, only six urban educators were able to be interviewed due to scheduling conflicts and the majority not responding back to the follow-up emails. The six participants were given labels to protect their identity.

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **A**:

- Male Middle School Band Director
- 12 years Teaching Experience
- Masters Degree in Music Education

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **B**:

- Male Elementary General Music Specialist
- 1 Year Teaching Experience
- Masters Degree in Music Technology

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **C**:

- Female High School Orchestra Director
- 17 years Teaching Experience
- Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **D**:

- Male High School Band Director
- 15 years Teaching Experience
- Masters Degree in Music Education

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **E**:

- Male Middle School Band Director
- 11 years Teaching Experience

- Specialist Degree in Music Education

Urban Music Educator (UME) Interview Participant **F**:

- Male High School Choral Director
- 10 years Teaching Experience
- Specialist Degree in Music Education

The responses to the Urban Music Educator interview questions provided a more detailed picture of the teacher perspectives on critical issues. Complete interview transcriptions are available in Appendix E. The following summaries, written in the first person by the researcher, include the points made by all the participants.

I. Description of their music program (Establishing a rapport and trust with interviewee)

1. Please tell me about your present music program and the community.

Current music program is six through eight, middle school, approximately 200 students. Primarily in certainly an urban area, fairly affluent - quite a mix of impoverished students as well. It's a predominantly African American School, about 91% and the other 9% is Hispanic. We have a lot of low economic families in this area, so the whole cluster is free and reduced lunch. However, we also have a lot of students here who come from affluent families. It's a good balance, I would say, of students. The present music program here is about 150 kids in the

program. Community is very supportive. My present program is in a Title 1 school, extremely low-income area. We are constantly looking to gain more community support from parents and the community in general.

2. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

The leadership aspect. Looking at a situation, meaning a student, and then realizing that there's something in them that they may not see, and using music as that vehicle to kind of get them there. I come from a family of educators. My grandparents are educators, my parents are educators. I decided to major in music because, like I said, I had never met anyone that looked like me in the orchestra world. So, I wanted to give students an opportunity to learn from someone who looked like them. There was no other career path for me. I'm a musician at heart. When I was in 12th grade, I had the opportunity to assist a younger student that was in 9th grade in reading rhythms and reading music. And once I saw her comprehend the musical concepts that I was told to teach her, that pretty much created a spark within me to want to educate others. I would definitely say my influences come from my high school and college directors. They were just really instrumental in showing me the differences in regards to listening to music as just a music lover, and listening to music to teach it and/or to help other people get a better understanding of it.

II. Teacher Preparation

1. How did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?

I was lucky because I got to do a lot of teaching in college. I was able to get into the classroom and realize that I really enjoyed it while having a major focus on performance. My college experience prepared me in several different ways. The different curriculum for different classes, and as well as the internships and as far as putting us out there and getting our feet wet and putting us in different musical settings. We had great instructors. I feel like I was well equipped with the theory background. I felt like I was very well trained as far as my skill level on my instrument and my music knowledge. I had a lot of pedagogy classes, music theory, different education courses, which prepared me very extensively. I learned real early in my college career how to do what I'm doing now. The music education at my college, honestly, was a missed opportunity for me in terms of going into music education. I had to learn those missing links either through my student teaching experience, or on the job when I first got hired. I would say that college really taught me the fundamentals and gave me all the rhetoric and everything that I needed to actually execute and be knowledgeable of the actual music part of it, just preparing me to be knowledgeable of just a lot of the music theory, the history, and things like that, that comes along with teaching music.

2. How did your teacher education program prepare you for working in urban schools? With disadvantaged populations/youth?

Well, a big part of my certification program was going to see other programs, so I was able to take days off and go check out programs that had success, likely and unlikely - programs that looked like the one what I was currently in at the time

and then programs that I hoped my school would begin to mirror. I'm also fairly somewhat aware of because the school I attended was a predominantly black school as well. As well as seeing what my instructors and professors at my school did as well. The way that they taught us and the way that they prepared us to learn and go out into the world. So that's how they prepared me for the urban school setting. They didn't. I mean, nothing-- matter of fact, all of the classes that we went to. All of the observations and everything was down in a rural area. So, the dynamics of the class is just very different from what I have to deal with on a daily basis here. So, there was none. To be honest with you, a lot of what I learned was on the job. A lot of the courses that we took in college, in undergrad, and grad school were all just pedagogy-based. But there was never anything really tangible that would relate to an urban setting. So, I had to just kind of take and experience and learn from it, and grow, and create my own strategies around that. It did not. Again, in my program, the general education courses were taught. But even in those general education courses, nothing specified an urban education, a true urban educational experience. Nothing prepared us for that. It was pretty much trial and error. We had to learn as we go, and years, and years, and years, of learning as you go. There was no course. There was no session that taught us how to deal with the challenges that we face while working in the urban area. So, in short, so it did not prepare us. I don't think that it was very instrumental in teaching me how to work in urban schools per se. Just because a lot of the textbook information doesn't focus on the understanding of the demographics that you're working within and/or how to differentiate the

manner in which you're teaching the music to students or teaching music to students. A lot of that comes with trial and error. It seems like it's more just gaining your better understanding for self. And building relationships in order for you to kind of get that part across.

3. Does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences? In what ways does it not?

More so no. The current situation is unique. In the teacher preparation programs, you learn off of the ideal. Everything is very cookie-cutter and prepared, especially where I was working while I was getting the certification. In this particular urban environment, there are always things coming out of left field, things you didn't realize. I would say that it matched it somewhat, but in my situation now, at my current school, the environment I would say, would be considered extreme or kind of intensive. And college, they prepared me to teach in a wide variety of schools as well as suburban/rural and especially urban schools. But the degree of urban that my school is now, I was somewhat not prepared for. I want to say I've never been in a school setting so intense, but it definitely has several situations throughout the year that just can't really be foreseen or taught in a classroom setting or college setting. I deal with a different-- well first of all, I deal with students of color. I deal with 100% minority students. Which was not the clientele I had when I observed. To be honest with you, a lot of what I learned was on the job. A lot of the courses that we took in college, in undergrad, and grad school were all just pedagogy-based. But there was never anything really tangible that

would relate to an urban setting. So I had to just kind of take an experience and learn from it, and grow, and create my own strategies around that. My student teaching experience, yes, it does match my current teaching experience, and that's actually why I learned the most during the short time. It was one semester. During that short time of student teaching, I spent six weeks of it at elementary schools, ironically in the system that I work in, and then I spent six more weeks at a high school. And the demographics of those elementary schools and the high schools somewhat mirrors the teaching experience that I work in now. I would definitely say it doesn't only because, like I said before, it doesn't prepare you for a lot of the different situations that come along with the urban environment per se. Because a lot of that is what's in the demographics of the school. Like a lot of poor students or just low-income neighborhoods. And just a lot of the situations that come along with those students. The program doesn't prepare you for that. It just specifically talks about the music part of it. But it doesn't talk about how to infuse the music into those students and how to just gain resources and use resources that you may not have to make that happen. So, I would definitely say it doesn't necessarily prepare you for that part.

- III. Longevity in the profession (Split question based on teaching experience)
 - 1. (Novice Educator 0-5 years experience) Why did you accept the job in an urban environment? Do you plan to stay or leave and why?

I accepted the job for several different reasons. One because I felt that I was ready to step into a classroom full time instead of just substituting and I wanted to use my musical talents and my experiences to have an impact as well as eventually get paid. And I've forgotten my last one, but it was also that I wanted to make an impact. I was also told that the school was a challenge. It was a Title I school, it was a chronically failing school, it was a challenge. And partially, me as a person, I like challenge because I do need to make it stronger. It's something different and it put me out of my comfort zone. I didn't want to be at a school that was-- the resources were there, everything was already there. Because that's not realistic, that's not life all the time.

2. (Experienced educator 5+ years experience) If you could begin your teaching career over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

I would. Because of the things that are important to me, those are the things that I think students in urban environments need the most. Urban environments typically have students that are more transient, they have students that-- there's more diversity. I would not change anything about my experience as far as where I've worked. I have no desire to work with anyone but urban students that look like me. Absolutely. I've had several opportunities to teach in different settings. But for me, I feel like I'm making a bigger impact with students in an urban setting. I feel like students in an urban setting need to have great educators.

People who are passionate about what they do and someone that they can look up to and talk to that can relate to them as well. Yes, I would, because that's where I learned how to teach, in that experience. One thing you learn in an urban environment is that you can't teach all the kids the same. Everybody has their different modality of learning, whether or not it's visual, whether or not it's tactile, whether or not it's digital. And although you did learn that-- and I guess there's general education courses in college, you really learn to apply it, because teaching in the urban area, you have so many other factors you have to take into consideration in terms of reaching the students better, such as behavioral issues. Factors that's outside of the core concept of music, such as, "Did the students eat last night? Did their parents come home last night? How much longer is this student's brother, or mother, or father going to be in jail?" Some of those kind of situations that you really have to deal with, and still try to get your students to learn the instruction. I would say yes, that I would because it has definitely given me tools in regards to teaching music that I don't think I would get outside of the teaching in an urban environment. And it also helped me to understand how to deal, or how to build better relationships with students because no two students are the same. And so, within the urban environment, the diversity of it just really made me a better educator.

IV. Questions about their Challenges and Rewards

1. What is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

Getting the kids to believe in group. Simple. Getting the kids to believe in "we" over "me." And that is something that I think is the most essential, but it is the hardest thing to do - get a kid to believe that they're part of a group and that they can have more when they work with somebody else. If I had to say the single most, I would have to say the behavior, the temperament of the students at an urban school. In an urban school setting. The temperament of the children, it can be very challenging at times to teach music because of the behavior of some of my students. Trying to encourage and continue to sail your program to your supervisors and your district level personnel. To people who say that they are all on board, and supportive, but the reality is they can say that, but everything that they do as far as fiscally and providing resources and just even the amount of support with teacher prep-- any of that stuff, we don't get any of that stuff.

Sometimes when you teach students in an urban setting they don't always know the long-term benefits of being in a music program, so it's always the tug-of-war of music and athletics. Discipline. Discipline, discipline, discipline. We didn't learn how to deal with disciplinary issues. And in an urban environment, that's almost 60% of the challenge. That's 60% of the class, getting that classroom managed. And unfortunately, in an urban environment, that's something we have to deal with, because if you don't have classroom management, it's almost a guarantee-- it is a certainty that instruction will not ensue if the classroom's not managed. I would definitely say resources. It's really hard to come by finances. Title I didn't allow for music's programs to receive funding. And so, it was really hard to just have the resources. Performance groups having uniforms, actually getting music

for your program, good music for your program, building the students to be in the program.

2. Recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

I took three groups to LGPE, Large Group Performance Evaluation. I took as many students that would come to this evaluation. I actually got cards thanking me for pushing them to be a part of the group, "Thank you for taking us out of the building. Thank you for giving us a chance." The reason that made me proud wasn't because of the rating but because they saw somebody who didn't compliment them all the time, who didn't always make them feel good about what they were doing, but they knew that I believed in them. And that's the message I've been trying to get across. When we had our Christmas concert, we invited the community, the family members, the moms, dad, parents, grandmas. Everybody that was involved with the children's lives, their loved ones to the concert. And we had been preparing for it for months and it was my first official concert that I basically put on or put together by myself with the help of a few of my other colleagues, so with all of their hard work, I didn't know how it was going to go, especially being in the urban school setting. I didn't know how they would do performing on stage in front of people because that's a whole different element and aspect of music itself with the performance piece. But after the performance, it was very well received by the community, by the parents, the students weren't used to doing a program like that as far as how they program or

something-- doing a seasonal activity where we get together and we do something positive. I think the most rewarding thing was seeing a student go out of the city for the first time. I took a group of kids -- probably my third year of teaching -- to Orlando. And they said, "Mr. XXXXX, I've never been out of the city. This my first time ever doing it." Using the band is always a great opportunity to give somebody something new, to see something, experience-- And it is a lifelong learning experience for them. My most rewarding experience has to be when our students went to LGPE, and they did really, really well. Really well, meaning they received superiors and excellent. And it was at a time in which it was really difficult school-wise for us to do what is necessary in order for us to achieve that goal. I would say my most rewarding was my students and I just-- we really worked hard in one particular semester in which we won a national award for our performances, in which we had to submit videos of ourselves performing, actually recording an actual rehearsal, actually performing in which we received a national award from a national organization that's well-known throughout the US and abroad. And I think that was probably the most rewarding because the students bought-in to what we were trying to do. And just using a lot of unconventional ways to get the buy-in. And it just allowed for the students to feel accomplished.

V. Urban Teaching Strategies for Success

1. What teacher attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

You've got to know the content, you've got to know the craft, but you have to inspire. You might be the only person that day, as cheesy as it sounds, that's communicating you believe in them. It just might be you. You might be the only one. So you've got to make sure your cup is full, you've got to make sure that you're taking care of yourself so that when you see them, you may have to manufacture energy at first, but knowing that those students, they feel energized about working hard, I think that has to be the biggest attribute. I would say definitely patience, drive, positive thinking or strong mindset. Stick to your routine and stick to what you believe in to do. Patience. Perseverance, because you're going to have lots of obstacles in your way all the time, so you have to be creative enough to work your way around the obstacles. You have to have a vision. You have to know what the foundation is of your program and where it is you want to take it. Patience. Got to have patience. You've got to understand that they're not going to always understand what you say the first time you say it. So, for me, I always try to restate what I say, or ask them do they understand, and then try to restate it in a different way. I think understanding. It's not for the weak-hearted. What I mean by that, you can't go onto this profession in an urban environment timid. You have to go knowing you're in charge, knowing that you know what you know, and knowing what you're going to do is going to work, and going to be effective. I would definitely say you have to have an open mind. You'll have to be a people person. You want to be able to just kind of build relationships.

2. What are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

As strange as it may sound, you have to get out the building. You have some unique challenges, and if those challenges are the only ones you see, then you may forget your vision, you may forget where you intended to take them. You have to go see better programs. You want the students to be great students, so as an educator, you have to practice being humble and being a great student. You have to practice that as well. It's the only way to become a better teacher. In an urban setting, I would say learning the personality of students, just the tendency of the students and their personalities their preferences and as well as classes as well. So just learning the different temperaments and behaviors as well as different behavior strategies. Patience, just having that patience and having that freestyle capability to say, "Hey, okay. Let's try this instead and let's take a step back and try this." I would definitely encourage them to not try to be the children's friend. I think that's a big problem that a lot of young teachers make. Especially when you're just coming out of college and you're teaching high school. You have to set your boundaries. "Don't take it personally." A student comes in the room first thing in the morning and they got a attitude. They're mad about something. Don't take it personal if they run off at you. A lot of times, they don't know how to deal with their attitude. They don't know how to deal with their emotions. Every single student needs to know that you are in control, that this is your class, that they're going to comply with what you say every day. To have a plan in mind in regard to what you want regardless of whatever the goal is. Large

or small, make that goal, and then make a plan to obtain that goal by any means necessary. With you being the resident expert and them being the majority, I would say that it's going to be your job to take the knowledge that you have, gain an understanding of the things that they like, what they listen to, how they react to certain songs, and certain types of music. I can say one of the major factors of disappointment within the urban programs is that many new teachers only go in with what they've learned from the classroom. And try to push it onto a generation that doesn't necessarily want to learn it or have an interest to learn it. So, it's just a matter of being flexible to listen to the students and get engaged and see what they like. And still feed them some of the things that you like so that you can build a quality program because just like with anyone else, once they have a taste for something, they'll want more of it.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perspectives on critical issues in urban music education. Specifically, salient variables were analyzed to ascertain the challenges and gratifications of urban music teachers, the teaching strategies that best promote musical achievement and engage urban students, and the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining urban music educators.

Chapter 1 outlined and discussed historical trends in music education and the educational reforms that have impacted urban music programs. The need for this study was addressed, demonstrating the importance of research on the knowledge and skills that enable music teachers to meet the distinctive challenges inherent in urban education.

Chapter 2 examined a variety of related literature. Studies were categorized and presented as: 1) characteristics of urban culture, 2) needs of music education in urban schools, 3) culturally relevant teaching, 4) diversified teacher preparation, 5) recruitment and retention of urban teachers, and 6) profiles of successful urban teachers.

Chapter 3 described the methodology for the study. Music educators in the Atlanta Public Schools were solicited to participate in the study. K-12 APS music teachers ($n = 49$) completed the Urban Music Educator Survey, which was created specifically for this study to compile demographic and background information about the

participants, determine their specific challenges and gratifications, their teaching strategies, and why they accepted employment and will or will not remain employed in an urban school setting. The survey, consisting of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended items, was developed based on literature from several studies related to urban education, urban music education, and teacher education programs. Additionally, 6 urban music educators provided more detailed insight for the study through interviews.

Chapter 4 discussed the results from the returned survey. Data were presented in table format, which gave frequency of responses to the questions, and means expressed as percentages. Other responses were presented as supplementary lists and figures.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Major Challenges

- The diverse student bodies of many urban schools can be challenging to work with because of the need to address cultural issues and connect with the students.
- The negative mental and emotional mindsets that students sometimes bring into the classroom greatly impact their ability to learn and focus.
- There is a constant prerequisite to meet or address the students' basic needs. Problems include hunger, personal hygiene problems due to household financial

status, the need to constantly counsel or console students on neighborhood violence issues, drug abuse, and the effects of broken families and parental absence due to incarceration.

- Urban school districts often face fiscal difficulties that limit financial support for music programs.
- Parents, students, and the community may need to be convinced of the importance of the school music program.
- Behavior and discipline can present challenges. Based on the data of this study, many urban educators struggle to maintain consistent discipline and deal with a lack of consequences for student behavior infractions.

Gratifications Experienced

- Urban music educators are able to provide exposure and distinct types of experiences to students.
- They have the opportunity to teach and instill the values of musical performances. These values include the importance of teamwork, the value of “we” over “me,” and the belief that rewards are possible through hard work and perseverance.
- They are in a position to change lives through music. Many urban educators commented that through their music programs, students often reach positive post-secondary goals.

Teaching and Classroom Management Strategies

Suggestions made by respondents include the following.

- Invite experienced colleagues to evaluate your situation. Get an outside opinion. Knowledgeable feedback can greatly enhance teacher effectiveness.
- Be patient.
- Don't take negative behavior personally.
- Observe "quality" programs for ideas and to be refreshed. Participate in music professional development workshops and trainings.
- Be humble. Don't let pride get in the way of what's best for the students.
- Never forget that what you do is important.
- Strive to improve the ability to "adapt on the fly", Lesson plans for the day may need to be adjusted based on the school or class climate.
- Get to know the students. let them know that you genuinely care about their well-being.
- Set boundaries and remain consistent in your daily expectations and procedures. Many students rely on their teachers to provide some sort of stability and normalcy in their lives.
- You can't teach all students the same way. Daily differentiated instruction is needed.

Recruitment and Retention

- Teacher Education Programs (TEPs) should require that preservice teachers observe diverse types of music programs (urban, rural, suburban).

- TEPs should make sure students are aware of the potential daily challenges working in an urban environment and provide adequate training and resources to prepare them to be successful.
- Better preparation for teaching in the urban environment may help reduce the high teacher turnover rate in urban schools.
- Many music educators stated that they have chosen to stay employed in an urban setting specifically to support students in that environment. Continued support financially and professionally are also motivating factors.

Recommendations

The present study attempted to address the major challenges and gratifications experienced by urban instrumental music teachers, teaching strategies that best promote musical achievement and engage urban students, and the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining urban music educators. It is essential that further research be done on the perceptions of urban music teachers to extend the findings of this present study. The following recommendations were prompted by the results and conclusions of the study:

1. There is a need for further research on urban music education programs.

Workshops and clinic sessions discussing strategies for working in urban environments and with socioeconomically disadvantaged students should be offered on a regular basis by professional associations such as Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA), National Association for Music Education

(NAfME), as well as the Midwest Band & Orchestra Convention. This could provide valuable knowledge for music educators needing support in urban settings.

2. Despite limited research, the study of urban music education can be significant. As stated earlier, the realization that the failure to address the particular challenges of urban music education may result in a generation of students that the music education community consciously neglected. Therefore, it is suggested that additional research be conducted to assess the needs of urban music programs.
3. Part of this research study was designed to create a wealth of teaching strategies that new or experienced urban music educators could draw from. Additional suggestions for other engaging teacher approaches from other educators teaching in similar educational environments could be helpful to urban as well as non-urban music programs.
4. Teacher education programs should continually be assessed to ensure that suitable emphasis is being placed on preparing pre-service teachers to work in urban environments. This would include providing adequate realistic field experiences that give an accurate view of the urban school setting. Also, continued training and support is needed to retain urban music educators.

5. Additional resources and financial support for programs serving low socioeconomic communities should be extensively explored. Many of the challenges are due to the lack of basic necessities to run a successful music program.

6. The effects that community change and city gentrification have on urban education and music education should be explored. These changes in the urban community play a significant role in causing a transient student population and negative economic changes.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Letter

Dear Band/Orchestra Educator:

My name is Tarik Rowland and I am a candidate for the Doctorate of Education at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled URBAN MUSIC EDUCATION: TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON CRITICAL ISSUES that is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Mary Leglar.

This study was designed to investigate the current critical issues in Urban Music Education programs. Specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions within the music programs in the Atlanta Public School system. To investigate the challenges and gratification music teachers of urban programs experience. To examine teaching strategies that promote musical achievement and engage urban students musically. To provide insight on recruiting and the retention of urban music educators.

Your participation will involve completing an on-line survey and should only take about fifteen minutes. Also, research participants that indicate on the survey that they would like to further participate in an in-depth interview may be contacted. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

For interview participants, the interview will be conducted in person and will be audio recorded. The interview will last about an hour. During transcription, individual identifiers will be removed and replaced with a pseudonym. There will be a key used by the researcher to link the pseudonym to the individual, and will be destroyed after data analysis is complete. All audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used. Institutions will not be identified in the publication of this study. In fact, the published results will be presented in summary form only. This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed. The findings from this project may provide information on Urban Music Education. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me Tarik Rowland at (678) 522-8269 or send an e-mail to trowlan3@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, Athens, Georgia 30602; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

By completing this on-line survey and or interview, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,
Tarik H. Rowland Sr.
Candidate for Doctor of Education
The University of Georgia

APPENDIX B



Tucker Hall, Room 212
 310 E. Campus Rd.
 Athens, Georgia 30602
 TEL 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
 IRB@uga.edu
<http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/>

Office of Research
 Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

March 20, 2018

Dear [Mary Leglar](#):

On 3/20/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE CURRENT CRITICAL ISSUES IN URBAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS
Investigator:	Mary Leglar
Co-Investigator:	Tarik Rowland
IRB ID:	STUDY00005808
Funding:	None
Review Category:	Exempt Flex 7

The IRB approved the protocol from 3/20/2018 to 3/19/2023.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Kate Pavich, IRB Analyst
 Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia

APPENDIX C

SURVEY OF URBAN MUSIC EDUCATORS**SECTION 1****Personal Data**

Your Gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Prefer Not To Answer

What is your race or ethnicity?

1. American Indian
2. Asian/Pacific Islander
3. Black/African American
4. Caucasian
5. Hispanic
6. Multi-racial
7. Other
8. Prefer Not To Answer

Describe the type of environment in which you spent the majority of your childhood.

1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural

What was the approximate total annual income of your parents/guardians during the majority of your childhood?

1. \$0-\$30,000
2. \$31,000-\$50,000
3. \$51,000-\$80,000
4. \$81,000+

What is your highest degree obtained?

1. Bachelors
2. Masters
3. Specialist
4. Doctoral

How many years have you taught?

1. None
2. 1-3
3. 4-7
4. 8-15
5. 16-20
6. 21+

What grade level(s) do you currently teach (check all that apply)

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

What is your current teaching assignment? (select all that apply)

- General Music
- Band
- Choral
- Strings
- Other _____

Are you certified in Music Education?

1. Yes
2. No

How many years have you taught in an urban school setting?

1. None
2. 1-3
3. 4-7
4. 8-15
5. 16-20
6. 21+

SECTION 2

Your Current School and Music Program

Is your current school a Title-I school?

1. Yes
2. No

Approximately what percentage of students in your school receive free/reduced price meals?

1. 0-24%
2. 25-49%
3. 50-74%
4. 75-90%
5. 91-100%

Describe your school (check all that apply)

- Public
- Charter
- Magnet or School of the Arts
- Other _____

What racial/ethnic groups make up the majority of your school's student population?

Please select all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American

What racial/ethnic groups make up the majority of your school's music student population? Please select all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American

What music classes do you teach? Please select all that apply.

- Band (Beginning, Intermediate, Advance, Marching, Jazz)
- Chorus
- Orchestra/Strings
- Music Appreciation/General Music
- Music Technology
- Theory

Guitar

Other

Are you required to teach any non-music classes (i.e. reading, study skills, math, etc.)?

If so, please describe.

Are the facilities where you teach your music classes suitable for student success?

Please explain.

Please rate your satisfaction with the level of administrative support at your school for your music program.

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



Please rate your satisfaction with the level of community and parental support at your school for your music program.

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



Please rate your satisfaction with the level of support for your music program from core subject area and non-music faculty at your school.

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



Describe what you consider to be the characteristics of a successful music program.

Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you feel you have been in teaching music in an urban school setting.

Not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 very successful



Describe what you feel makes an urban music educator successful.

Based on your personal definition of success, rate how successful you have been in teaching music in an urban setting.

Very unsuccessful 1 2 3 4 5 very successful



How well did your teacher education program prepare you to teach in an urban school?

Not well at all 1 2 3 4 5 very well



Please explain in what ways you were or were not prepared to teach in an urban environment.

SECTION 3

Your Music Program Challenges and Your Solutions

Please describe the facilities in which you teach your music classes (i.e. music classroom, stage, auditorium, etc.).

How satisfied are you with the equipment that you have for your music program?

very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



If not satisfied, what equipment is vital to improve your program?

How satisfied are you with the funding that you receive for your music program (text books, sheet music, materials and supplies)?

very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



How satisfied are you with the class sizes and scheduling for your music program?

very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



Please explain

How satisfied are you with the student discipline at your school?

very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied



If dissatisfied, what do you consider to be the major cause for lack of discipline; how might it be improved?

The parents/guardians of your students strongly value music education.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree



The students in your music classes have challenging home environments.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree



Understanding and learning the cultural values of your students is important.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree



In your experience, what is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban setting?

In what ways do you keep your students engaged and focused musically?

What impact does technology have on teaching music in an urban environment?

Briefly recount your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

What skills do you feel are most needed to be successful in an urban music program?

What factor influenced you most to accept a music education job in an Urban school?

What factor currently persuades, or would persuade you to remain employed in an urban school?

What is the single most important factor that would motivate you to seek a music education position outside of an urban environment?

(Optional) If you would be willing to participate in an in-person interview, please supply your email address below.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you would like a copy of the questionnaire results after the study is completed, please supply your email address.

APPENDIX D

Urban Music Educator

Interview Questions

- I. Description of their music program (Establishing a rapport and trust with interviewee)
 1. Please tell me about your present music program and the community.
 2. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

- II. Teacher Preparation
 1. How did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?
 2. How did your teacher education program prepare you for working in urban schools? With disadvantaged populations/youth?
 3. Does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences? In what ways does it not?

- III. Longevity in the profession (Split question based on teaching experience)
 1. (Novice Educator 0-5 years experience) Why did you accept the job in an urban environment? Do you plan to stay or leave and why?
 2. (Experienced educator 5+ years experience) If you could begin your teaching career over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

- IV. Questions about their Challenges and Rewards
 1. What is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?
 2. Recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

- V. Urban Teaching Strategies for Success
 1. What teacher attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?
 2. What are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

APPENDIX E

Interview Transcriptions

Urban Music Educator (UME): **A**

Male Middle School Band Director

Researcher:

All right. Good evening. Thank you for allowing me to interview you today. If you could, please tell me about your present community program and the community.

UME A:

Current music program is six through eight, middle school, approximately 200 students. Primarily in certainly an urban area, fairly affluent - quite a mix of impoverished students as well. There is a theater program at each of the elementary schools, so most students come in with about a year or two of band experience. Quite a few of them have their own instruments; quite a few of them use the school instruments. Currently, there is no band booster program. Definitely looking to change that. And overall participation has been pretty strong this year.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME A:

The leadership aspect. Looking at a situation, meaning a student, and then realizing that there's something in them that they may not see, and using music as that vehicle to kind of get them there. When you see that happen, it's very

rewarding. And you can see how it can touch those other areas too. So, I've always enjoyed playing music. Music has definitely been that medium that I connect best with students on. So being able to do that on a regular basis certainly has its rewards.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. How did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?

UME A:

I was lucky. I was lucky because I got to do a lot of teaching in college. So, after my first year, I did Carolina Crown, a drum and bugle corps, had some really good experiences there, and then decided to major in performance. But once I did that, I started getting lots of teaching opportunities because I wasn't bogged down with extra things like marching band and things of that nature. So, I was able to get into the classroom and realize that I really enjoyed it while having a major focus on performance. I think one of the areas that a lot of directors lose respect from their students is a lot of directors don't play anymore. So, when your students realize that you practice what you preach, I think that aspect of it has served me fairly well. Learning the secondary instruments hasn't really been a problem. It's just a matter of time and staying ahead of the kids. So, with the teaching experience at the different schools, going and working with the marching bands, and ensembles, and chamber groups coupled with going deeper as a

musician, as a player, as a performer, it's definitely gotten me some credibility with the kids that I may not have had had I not been able to play so well.

Researcher:

Yes. All right. How did your teacher education program prepare you for working in urban schools or with disadvantaged populations or youth?

UME A:

Well, a big part of my certification program was going to see other programs, so I was able to take days off and go check out programs that had success, likely and unlikely - programs that looked like the one what I was currently in at the time and then programs that I hoped my school would begin to mirror. So just the act of getting out of the building to see what's kind of possible, especially if you're teaching in an urban area, it can get bogged down because you have some additional responsibilities, additional things when you're down that, if we're honest, it can get a little dark. So, by getting out of the building, maybe even somewhere where those problems aren't present, it can keep you focused on what it is that you need to continue pushing towards. Whether you get there or not is almost irrelevant. But if you can't even see the other side, if you can't see the light, then you have no chance anyway.

Researcher:

Does your teaching and preparation match your current teaching experiences? In which ways does it not?

UME A:

More so no. No, no. The current situation is unique. In the teacher preparation programs, you learn off of the ideal. Everything is very cookie-cutter and prepared, especially where I was working while I was getting the certification. In this particular urban environment, there are always things coming out of left field, things you didn't realize. You didn't take into consideration, "How am I going to help these students that can't find a ride when 75, 80% of the kids have no problems getting there? How can I make sure everybody is included? How can we prep this inclusivity when these students over here are disadvantaged? How can I create group?" And when you have large groups of people and they're still segmented by where they went to elementary school, that presents a problem. There's no way to get the sound that you're looking for because you can never get the entire group together. You don't have those problems in the prep programs. So, figuring out a way to get everybody to buy into group, in hindsight, seems to have been a much better focus. At least a little more time spent there than just on the nuts and bolts or things that you can ask another director.

Researcher:

Okay. Okay. All right. So just a little bit-- how long have you been teaching?

UME A:

About 12 years.

Researcher:

Okay. Okay. So, if you could begin your teaching career all over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

UME A:

I would. Because of the things that are important to me, those are the things that I think students in urban environments need the most. Urban environments typically have students that are more transient, they have students that-- there's more diversity. A lot of times when you're teaching out-- I mean I can recall when I was teaching in the suburbs, there are a lot of people who are very much alike. So, if you're fortunate, if your tool is a hammer and the problem happens to be a nail, then you're in great shape. The problem is when things change. And then environments always change. So, knowing that I can go into an urban environment and I have this particular kind of student and I need to get them to work with this kind of kid who came from a completely different background, that's very close, that's very, very close to what they're going to see in real life. Not to say teaching them in the suburbs or in rural environments isn't relative to real life, but for the kids that I'm around regularly, that's going to help them out when they see that their director cares just as much about this kid that is completely different from this kid. I think that particular environment, I just have more to offer than when most of the kids are pretty much the same.

Researcher:

Okay. So, what would you say is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME A:

Getting the kids to believe in group. Simple. Getting the kids to believe in "we" over "me." It's funny, you can get evaluated by an administrator who doesn't have experience in the arts and they'll look at you like you're a math teacher and they'll expect those same things. However, they won't understand when you have to stop to help this child who is struggling or not even trying when these 40 other kids are doing what they're supposed to do. Because that belief hasn't really gotten through to the kids that, the 40 kids, their experience is hindered by this one kid over here who is going to show up to the concert. And that is something that I think is the most essential, but it is the hardest thing to do - get a kid to believe that they're part of a group and that they can have more when they work with somebody else.

Researcher:

Now, how would you say that's more of a challenge in an urban environment versus suburban?

UME A:

People are more commonly attracted to folks that are just like them. So, you want to get a child who's living in a rundown apartment to feel like they're part of a

group with another student who is going to be going to Aspen for the summer or who already has their flight booked for fall break. That's not normal; it's not natural. And the older you get, the more uncommon it becomes. But typically, in my experience, in the rural areas and suburban areas, those kids, at face value, have a lot more in common. So, getting a group of people who look the same, who come from similar backgrounds to believe that they all want the same thing, in my experience, it just hasn't proven to be as much of a challenge than these students who not only look different but they are legitimately coming from different places, their experiences are different, they see the world completely differently.

Researcher:

So, recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

UME A:

I took three groups to LGPE, Large Group Performance Evaluation. Now, typically, and I think this can go in general, there is a sect of students that you leave at home. You can be in the program, you can play your instrument, you can play our instrument, but we're not taking you in public for whatever reason. Maybe you just started, maybe you don't work hard. But I wanted the students to realize that if I thought that group was actually important, I had to put my money where my mouth is. I had to make sure they got-- "Let's see if you can practice what you preach." So, I couldn't tell them that we're not-- I couldn't say, "You matter but you can't come on this trip." So, I took as many students that would

come to this evaluation. And the funny thing about that is the advanced students that didn't want to play with the second group - the third group was the sixth-grade group - that didn't want to play, they got the exact same rating. And the funny thing about that is the students, they responded very differently. Because one group didn't work as hard as they should have and then went down to their rating. Another group worked incredibly hard and they moved up. And it's funny, with teacher appreciation week just passing, I actually got cards thanking me for pushing them to be a part of the group, "Thank you for taking us out of the building. Thank you for giving us a chance." The reason that made me proud wasn't because of the rating but because they saw somebody who didn't compliment them all the time, who didn't always make them feel good about what they were doing, but they knew that I believed in them. And that's the message I've been trying to get across. I think believing they will become a group, I think that will come and I think they believe it's possible but I think more so, before that happens, they've got to believe that I believe in them. And by taking them out there, knowing that we weren't going to get superiors, we weren't going to get the ratings that maybe the orchestra or the chorus got, but pushing them just as hard, giving them that opportunity, I know for a fact that that sets us up to be in a really good place next year, regardless of whatever ratings will come our way. I now have an entire new population of kids that believe in themselves and they believe in band. Whatever they decide to do with that, that's their business, but if they come back to the band, they're coming back with more confidence. So, it's early

but I'm definitely proud to have made that decision, despite how reckless it may have been.

Researcher:

So, as an urban teacher, what teaching attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

UME A:

You've got to know the content, you've got to know the craft, but you have to inspire. You have to inspire. And that's what's interesting. You've got a group of students in my environment, where I have very affluent but I also have very poor students, you really don't know what's going on at home. You might be the only person that day, as cheesy as it sounds, that's communicating you believe in them. It just might be you. You might be the only one. So you've got to make sure your cup is full, you've got to make sure that you're taking care of yourself so that when you see them, you may have to manufacture energy at first, but knowing that those students, they feel energized about working hard, I think that has to be the biggest attribute. It's not all doom and gloom for sure, but for certain, you have to be able to inspire.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, if you could share some of your tricks of the trade, so to speak, what are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

UME A:

As strange as it may sound, you have to get out the building. You have some unique challenges, and if those challenges are the only ones you see, then you may forget your vision, you may forget where you intended to take them. You have to go see better programs. And you have to tell your students, tell your students if you're not going to be at school Thursday or next week or someday maybe they're having an assembly, let them know you're going to see people who do what you do better than you do. You want the students to be great students, so as an educator, you have to practice being humble and being a great student. You have to practice that as well. It's the only way to become a better teacher. Get out of the building and bring people into the building. That's probably the biggest mistake I made my first three years of teaching. I didn't bring enough people in to come see exactly where we were. Pride, I didn't want people to know what I didn't know, things of that nature. But you bring them in, you tell them, "Y'all can talk about me once you leave, but I need you to fix this right now." Let your students see you being corrected, let them see you take that correction with a positive attitude. Be the example of the best possible student you can be for the kid. It's going to hurt but you should do it.

Researcher:

All right. Well, I really appreciate you taking your time. Is there anything you would love to just, in your urban teaching experience, that you think people need to be aware of? Out of an administrative point of view, from a student going

through a teaching education program, what piece do you think they need to be aware of?

UME A:

More so to the director. Never let anyone else fool you into believing that what you do isn't important. High-stakes testing, behavior issues. I don't like to use the term "core classes." Math, English, Science, Social Studies, I call them "classes", those are important, but you cannot wait for somebody who can't do what you do to tell you that what you do is important. It doesn't work. You're the keeper of the vision. And you're going to have to sell up to your administrators. And if an administrator happens to be listening, as much as possible, just go see what's going on. Don't wait for an invitation. Just go see what's happening and just ask yourself, "Would you like for the rest of your school to function this way?" And I think in most cases, they would probably be interested in that being the case. For the parents, I think the best thing my parents ever did, they didn't let me quit. I didn't have the authority in middle school to decide that I wasn't going to continue playing a musical instrument. I just didn't have that authority at 12 and 13. So if you feel like, as a parent, you know what's best for your child, push them on through and at least push them to do that first year in high school. Those four components, the director, the administrator, the student, the parent, I think if they could just do those little things, the rest of the school would definitely reflect better.

Researcher:

Okay. Well, I really thank you for participating in the urban music educator interview process. Thank you very much.

Urban Music Educator (UME): **B**

Male Elementary General Music Specialist

Researcher:

All right, good evening and thank you for agreeing to participate in my survey.

The first question I have for you is please tell me about your present music program and the community.

UME B:

Okay. My current music program is at an elementary school on the west side, northwest Atlanta area, Adamsville community, primarily the Allen Temple community in the Sierra Ridge community, near Martin Luther King Jr. Drive on the west side of Atlanta. It's a predominantly African American School, about 91% and the other 9% is Hispanic. When I came into the classroom at that school, there were a lot of materials, a lot of instruments, xylophones, African drums, some things of that sort. And the critical resources, as far as lesson planned, already prepared or available there were not much. But there were, like I said, lots of instruments lots of things for the students to engage in with their hands, so that was one of the things that I did have. And a large group of children, lots of energy, definitely thinking fun in the music area. So yeah, that's what I can say about my current teaching environment.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME B:

I come from a family of educators. My grandparents are educators, my parents are educators. Still are educators. I have a strong music background as well in my family. Several of my fathers' siblings play instruments and his father and his father. All of my siblings and cousins, those family members play instruments. Growing up I was heavily involved in music and music ensembles. Piano, bassoon, marching band, Concert band, jazz band throughout college as well. It was something I was naturally good at, naturally able to teach, instruct and engage people in. So, with the opportunity to get paid to do that, I took that opportunity because it was just a natural thing that I had been doing for so long.

Researcher:

Okay, okay. All right, so you mentioned about your college. So how did your college experience prepare you to become a music educator?

UME B:

My college experience prepared me in several different ways. One was the course work. We had a lot of course work that still I can apply in my classroom today as far as basic simple music theory. As well as music history, which I also teach in the classroom as well as just different general knowledge about music and instruments and composers and how music is created and the basic

elements and concepts of music. That was all taught to me in college, as well as the social part of music as far as pop ensembles and the relationship that I built through music and through a program that is a teaching and building ensemble and whatnot. As well as, like I said, the different curriculum for different classes, and as well as the internships and as far as putting us out there and getting our feet wet and putting us in different musical settings. I was taken to the classroom two times during my undergrad years at Florida A&M University and as well as my later years.

Researcher:

Okay. Okay. How did your teaching education program prepare you for working in urban schools or with disadvantaged populations of youth?

UME B:

I'm also fairly somewhat aware of because the school I attended was a predominantly black school as well. My college. So, some of the same problems that-- or problems or issues or aspects that I see in my school, I saw this in college as well and a lot of the student population there, was at my college but came up in a similar urban school setting growing up as well. Through their primary education, K through 12, they were in those settings, so I saw a lot of those, taught us in those urban schools, and I was able to relate to some of the teaching methods that they experienced, and they went through and they learned from. As well as seeing what my instructors and professors at my school did as well. The way that they taught us and the way that they prepared us to

learn and go out into the world. So that's how they prepared me for the urban school setting.

Researcher:

Okay. Does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experience?

In what ways does it not?

UME B:

I would say that it matched it somewhat, but in my situation now, at my current school, the environment I would say, would be considered extreme or kind of intensive. And college, they prepared me to teach in a wide variety of schools as well as suburban/rural and especially urban schools. But the degree of urban that my school is now, I was somewhat not prepared for. I want to say I've never been in a school setting so intense, but it definitely has several situations throughout the year that just can't really be foreseen or taught in a classroom setting or college setting. When some of those things are just situations that just happen. So, some of those situations you just can't prepare for, you just don't really know what's going on, so you really step inside in one of these urban schools, one of these urban areas in the community, so that's what I would say.

Researcher:

Okay. Can you share some of those experiences that you weren't prepared for?

UME B:

I would say the first week of school, just the mindset, the physical and the mental mindset of some of the children in the community, based on some of the issues that go on in urban settings such as poverty and drug and drug addiction, domestic violence, neighborhood violence, racial discrimination. All these things children are exposed to at a very young age in the elementary school setting, so you have children as young as five and six and seven years old that come to school with the same clothes on that they had on maybe three, four days in a row. Smelling of different odors just because their family may not have access to running water or they're not able to pay all their utility or housing bills and due to that the child is affected mentally so some of these children come to school angry for no reason or they come to school hungry, not because they weren't able to eat but there was no food at the house. Mom wasn't able to provide food or whoever their guardian is. Some of these children don't live with their biological parents or their biological family at all, so some of those situations just kind of affect the children mentally and physically as well. Emotionally, socially in different ways, but you see angry kids, upset kids, hurt kids physically and mentally, so some of those things you see in the urban setting that I wasn't quite prepared for, wasn't quite expecting in the school setting.

Researcher:

Okay. So how long have you been teaching?

UME B:

I've been teaching essentially for one year. I substitute taught for two years.

Researcher:

Okay. So, with you being your first full year teaching, why did you accept the job in an urban environment and do you plan to stay or leave and why?

UME B:

I accepted the job for several different reasons. One because I felt that I was ready to step into a classroom full time instead of just substituting and I wanted to use my musical talents and my experiences to have an impact as well as eventually get paid. And I've forgotten my last one, but it was also that I wanted to make an impact. I was also told that the school was a challenge. It was a Title I school, it was a chronically failing school, it was a challenge. And partially, me as a person, I like challenge because I do need to make it stronger. It's something different and it put me out of my comfort zone. I didn't want to be at a school that was-- the resources were there, everything was already there. Because that's not realistic, that's not life all the time. In life, you're not going to always have everything you need and you're not going to have the best situation forever, so I was willing to accept the challenge. I saw the neighborhood, I saw the community, I was somewhat familiar with it where I lived with the area. So, I knew somewhat what I was getting into, but I knew that it would be a challenge that I was willing to accepting. Going to learn from music we had, as a teacher and a person will, so that's why I accepted the job. I plan on leaving because the

school is closing. The school will be closing the end of next year, so I have no choice but to leave at this point. So yes, I will be leaving.

Researcher:

Okay. Why is the school closing?

UME B:

The school is closing because of several reasons. But my interpretation of what I was told, because the school is a chronically failing school, and the district that I am in, the quality that the schools are turning to somewhat be bundled up or minimized down as soon as possible, so they're going to combine my chronically failing school with another chronically failing school and make them into one. So that is why it is closing and all. And other smaller reasons as well that I'm not so clear on or not familiar on but that is the primary reason to my understanding.

Researcher:

Okay. All right, so what would you say is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME B:

The single most challenge-- if I had to say the single most, I would have to say the behavior, the temperament of the students at an urban school. In an urban school setting. The temperament of the children, it can be very challenging at times to teach music because of the behavior of some of my students.

Researcher:

Okay, so if you can recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

UME B:

My most rewarding experience-- well, like I said earlier in the interview, several of the students or the majority of the students or I'm going to say the entire student population comes from poverty or broken homes or not ideal living situations for a small child. So, when we had our Christmas concert, we invited the community, the family members, the moms, dad, parents, grandmas. Everybody that was involved with the children's lives, their loved ones to the concert. And we had been preparing for it for months and it was my first official concert that I basically put on or put together by myself with the help of a few of my other colleagues, so with all of their hard work, I didn't know how it was going to go, especially being in the urban school setting. I didn't know how they would do performing on stage in front of people because that's a whole different element and aspect of music itself with the performance piece. But after the performance, it was very well received by the community, by the parents, the students weren't used to doing a program like that as far as how they program or something-- doing a seasonal activity where we get together and we do something positive. The parents received it well, the students received it well, the faculty and staff received it well, it was a very rewarding moment just to see how

music could bring so many people together and give a positive feeling to so many people, so it was a very rewarding experience.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, what teacher attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

UME B:

I would say definitely patience, drive, positive thinking or strong mindset. Say teamwork definitely. Definitely teamwork. Discipline. Stick to your routine and stick to what you believe in to do. Discipline. Hard work. And communication. Communication is definitely-- communication with the students and with the faculty and staff. So those are some of the characteristics that I think are important in the urban school setting.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. And lastly, my question for you is in a sense that you have acquired maybe some tricks under your belt, your hat. What are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

UME B:

In an urban setting, I would say learning the personality of students, just the tendency of the students and their personalities their preferences and as well as classes as well. Students, the classes as well. Some classes will vary just depending on the different students they have in the class. Or even where the

students come from regionally or I guess, geographically, that can affect the students even within one single school. So just learning the different temperaments and behaviors as well as different behavior strategies. If you're having problems, if the students are having disagreements or you might be having a disagreement with a student. How to resolve it. Just lower the intensity of the situation. Do it quietly or do it discretely so nothing has to escalate or get to an intense level. As well as, I want to say freestyle, so no one has to adapt. So maybe a lesson plan or an activity isn't being taken as well as you might have thought it is or they're not able to learn a concept as quickly as you might want to learn a song or melody or whatever it may be, as quickly as you may have imagined. Patience, just having that patience and having that freestyle capability to say, "Hey, okay. Let's try this instead and let's take a step back and try this." And know how to minimize or water down the lesson plan and the activity so that different students of different ages can get it. As well as building on an activity that you might be able to do for one grade, or one group. And you can add on to that activity doing this or that to make it appropriate for another group or another age level. Or another group or instruments or whatever the situation may be. Different things like that, I feel like are important or strong things or different strategies to know.

Researcher:

Okay. All right, so I want to thank you for being a part of the urban music educator interview. At this time, the interview is over.

Urban Music Educator (UME): C

Female High School Orchestra Director

Researcher:

Okay. I want to thank you for allowing me to interview you for my urban music educator questionnaire. If you can, just please tell me a little bit about your present music program and the community.

UME C:

My present music program has been going on-- I've been here since 2012 and the program consisted of about 18 students. I'm the first full time orchestra teacher that they've ever had here in the building. And so, we expanded from 18 students to about 60 within two years. And we've had a lot of transition with students so we're currently at about-- my advanced ensemble is about 30 strong. And then with the beginners and intermediate and everyone together, it's probably a total of about 60. But that's with a lot of beginners. With the community, it's really versatile over here. We have a lot of low economic families in this area, so the whole cluster is free and reduced lunch. So, all of the students are free and reduced lunch. However, we also have a lot of students here who come from affluent families. It's a good balance, I would say, of students. However, as far as for orchestra, the clientele, this is not the community for orchestra. So, I'm always kind of encouraging and teaching the parents and the community so that they can kind of understand what orchestra's

about, because a lot of them have never actually seen a string instrument in person. Let alone their children having an opportunity to actually play an instrument and learn on a daily basis with a classically trained instructor. Because the instructor that they had in the building before me, was a retired band director who was here to teach general music, piano and one class of orchestra. So, there wasn't a real person here who was actually trained in orchestra to teach it. So, when I came in it was really something new.

Researcher:

Okay. Okay. So, what influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME C:

I started playing the violin in third grade. I lived in this community actually in elementary school, but they had a program back then called Minority to Majority. The M and M program so my brother and sister and I used to have to ride the bus for an hour and a half, two hours each way, just to go to school in the city, in the Buckhead area where the schools were better. The students in my neighborhood, over in this side of town, orchestra was not offered in those elementary schools, however I went to Morris Brandon which is in Buckhead and they had orchestra. So, I just started playing, I had a really great teacher. I had never seen anyone of color teach orchestra until Natalie Colbert, who was the director at Sutton Middle School, she and her husband were the band and orchestra teachers there for over thirty years. And she was the only person of color I had ever met who was an orchestra director, all the way through high

school. So, when given the opportunity, I decided I wanted to go to Georgia Southern.

So, when I got to twelfth grade, I really wanted to major in pre-med. And I was given the opportunity to audition. I had already been accepted to Georgia Southern University. And so when I went and met the conductor, he was black and he was a cellist and he was amazing and he was really-- he kind of encouraged me. If I majored in music, they could guarantee me multiple sizable scholarships. So, on the spot, I decided to major in music because, like I said, I had never met anyone that looked like me in the orchestra world. So, I wanted to give students an opportunity to learn from someone who looked like them.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. All right, so speaking about your college experiences, how did your college experience prepare you to become a music educator?

UME C:

We had great instructors. I feel like I was well equipped with the theory background. I did not get a lot of theory training, which is why I kind of push it really hard in my program. I was pretty good with the technical skills of my instrument, but I had not a lot of knowledge as far as the music theory aspect. So, I really felt like I was prepared well in that aspect. And I think the hardest thing for us to have gathered was the whole classroom management portion of things. I think that has a lot to do with personality and whether or not you can handle-- are you patient enough to deal with today's youth or not. And I think

that that's why I've been successful, just because I'm more of a no nonsense educator so students know when they come in my room, they know what the expectations are which are laid out immediately. But I mean, I felt like I was very well trained as far as my skill level on my instrument and my music knowledge.

Researcher:

Okay. So how did your teacher education program prepare you to work in an urban school?

UME C:

They didn't. They didn't. I mean, nothing-- matter of fact, all of the classes that we went to. All of the observations and everything was down in a rural area. So, the dynamics of the class is just very different from what I have to deal with on a daily basis here. So, there was none.

Researcher:

All right. So, does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences?

UME C:

I deal with a different-- well first of all, I deal with students of color. I deal with 100% minority students. Which was not the clientele I had when I observed.

Researcher:

Okay. All right, so how long you been teaching?

UME C:

This is year 17.

Researcher:

So, if you could begin your teaching career over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

UME C:

If I had to go back, I would not choose education at all, okay. That's number one. I would not change anything about my experience as far as where I've worked. I have no desire to work with anyone but urban students that look like me. So.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. All right so what would you say is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME C:

Trying to encourage and continue to sal your program to your supervisors and your district level personnel. To people who say that they are all on board, and supportive, but the reality is they can say that, but everything that they do as far as fiscally and providing resources and just even the amount of support with

teacher prep-- any of that stuff, we don't get any of that stuff. We're always like-- I call us the stepchildren of the department. In every building, I've been in. We're the ones they want to help people get up and sing and dance and entertain but the things we need to be able to provide that, we're not given.

Researcher:

So, recall your most rewarding teaching experience that you've had as an urban music educator.

UME C:

My first year of teaching, there was a seventh-grade student name Sade Bryant. And she and her sister were the leaders in my program. Sade is an orchestra director in Cobb County now. And when she graduated, she sent me this long letter that just talked about how inspiring it was to be in my program. That I was the first woman of color so things kind of came full circle. I wanted to be the person-- an example and I was that. I actually became that.

Researcher:

All right. That's good. All right, so as an urban teacher, what do you feel the attributes are necessary to be successful in teaching in this environment?

UME C:

Patience. Perseverance, because you're going to have lots of obstacles in your way all the time, so you have to be creative enough to work your way around the obstacles. You have to have a vision. You have to know what the foundation

is of your program and where it is you want to take it. It's just not enough for you to just have a job. You know what I'm saying? For the sake of having a job. Programs are being eliminated left and right all the time. In programs that people feel like are functioning and doing well. But because of the way that the dynamics is changing, principals are given so much more power now to where they can make the decisions of what they want in their building. So, you might have a functioning band or orchestra, choral dance program and they may decide our math scores are too low-- we need another math professional and they'll decide to get rid of that orchestra teacher and bring in a math professional. Because they feel like the students need math training more than they need orchestral training.

Researcher:

Okay. And last question. If you were maybe to speak to a new teacher or someone that's struggling, what are some of the teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable in teaching in an urban environment. What are some of those things?

UME C:

As far as orchestra, I try to help-- because I always work in an urban area, the students love a certain genre of music, so I try to incorporate that into my class. And so, I try to come to meet the students where they are. So, if it's a certain type of music, then I try to introduce that music into my program even from the beginning level, just to keep them interested. So, I try to meet them where they

are, I would definitely encourage them to not try to be the children's friend. I think that's a big problem that a lot of young teachers make. Especially when you're just coming out of college and you're teaching high school. You have to set your boundaries. And you have to let them know what the expectation is and you have to stay visually ensuring that you're continuously putting that across on a daily basis. You can't just decide, "Okay, I'm going to be strong the first week." And then go to putty from thereafter.

Researcher:

Okay. Well, I definitely appreciate you taking the time out to allow me to interview you. Is there anything you'd like to share regarding your urban experience that you haven't discussed?

UME C:

No.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. Thank you.

UME C:

You're welcome.

Urban Music Educator (UME): **D**

Male High School Band Director

Researcher:

Okay, sir, I want to thank you for allowing me to interview you as part of my urban music educator dissertation. If you can, please tell me about your present music program and the community.

UME D:

The present music program here is about 150 kids in the program. Community is very supportive. They're always involved, and they're always looking for ways for the program to grow and expand. So, it's very beneficial in the progress of the program.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME D:

I think that was-- There was no other career path for me. I'm a musician at heart. I've always been that way. I started playing piano at second grade. And it's just the most comfortable thing for me to do. It's not work for me.

Researcher:

Okay, good. All right. All right. So how did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?

UME D:

I had a lot of pedagogy classes, music theory, different education courses, which prepared me very extensively. I was also a student assistant and things like that. So, I got some on-the-job training as well, student arranger. So, I learned real early in my college career how to do what I'm doing now.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, if you can, how did your teacher education program prepare you to be working in an urban school or with disadvantaged youth?

UME D:

To be honest with you, a lot of what I learned was on the job. A lot of the courses that we took in college, in undergrad, and grad school were all just pedagogy-based. But there was never anything really tangible that would relate to an urban setting. So, I had to just kind of take and experience and learn from it, and grow, and create my own strategies around that.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. All right. So, does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences?

UME D:

Yes and no. Obviously, because some of the stuff I learned on the job. But yes, when it comes to teaching, yes. Those strategies are used daily. But when it comes, again, just dealing with the interactions of different students from different backgrounds, it's kind of trial and error, just having some experience in dealing with different types of people.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. How long have you been teaching?

UME D:

This is my-- End of my 15th year.

Researcher:

Okay. So, I guess my question to you now is, if you could begin your teaching career over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

UME D:

Absolutely. I've had several opportunities to teach in different settings. But for me, I feel like I'm making a bigger impact with students in an urban setting. I feel like students in an urban setting need to have great educators. People who are passionate about what they do and someone that they can look up to and talk to that can relate to them as well.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. All right. So, what would you say is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME D:

Sometimes when you teach students in an urban setting they don't always know the long-term benefits of being in a music program, so it's always the tug-of-war of music and athletics. A lot of times, students are always sold the dream of being an athlete, star athlete. So, we always try to persuade them to even just do both, but continue to play the instrument. Because in the long run, a lot of times a student will get hurt, or something may happen, they don't get that scholarship that they wanted, so they need to have something to fall back on, and usually that instrument will be that thing for them.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, if you can, recall your most rewarding teaching experience you've had as an urban music educator.

UME D:

I think the most rewarding thing was seeing a student go out of the city for the first time. I took a group of kids -- probably my third year of teaching -- to Orlando. And they said, "Mr. XXXXX, I've never been out of the city. This my first time ever doing it." So that was probably the most rewarding thing. Using the band is

always a great opportunity to give somebody something new, to see something, experience-- And it is a lifelong learning experience for them.

Researcher:

All right. So now if you could tell me, as an urban educator, what are some teaching attributes you feel that are really necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

UME D:

Patience. Got to have patience. You've got to understand that they're not going to always understand what you say the first time you say it. So, for me, I always try to restate what I say, or ask them do they understand, and then try to restate it in a different way. Or follow up a couple days later, because kids zone out. You've got, probably, about five minutes, really, to get the information you're trying to get to them. The rest of the time it's just reiterating what you already said. So that's one thing I've learned. I think the other thing for me is just, again, go slow. And then show them the end result. Why are we doing this? So, if I'm teaching a particular lesson on scales, what's the importance of scales? I remember one time I was teaching scales to students and they said, "Why are we doing this? It makes no sense." So, I pulled out, I had probably like \$20 in my pocket, so I pulled out a \$20 bill and I said, "Okay, play all 12 scales," and they played all 12. I gave them \$20. And I said, "Now, the relation to that is scholarship money. If you don't learn these scales, when these college band directors come in, they can't do a thing for

you. You have to meet the minimum requirements." So that was a light bulb experience for them. So, I like to do things like that, where people can actually have tangible things so they understand why they're doing it. It's almost like-- and I know I'm kind of talking a little bit. But it's almost like sitting in a room, a dark room. If you don't know where the exit is, you're kind of just running and hitting your head on the wall. So, if they know the exit is here, and we got to walk straight to that exit, it makes it more meaningful for them to get out.

Researcher:

Okay, okay. And my last question for you: if you had the opportunity to maybe speak to a novice, new, brand-new teacher coming out of college or maybe someone that's in an urban environment similar to yours, what are some of the teaching strategies that you feel are very invaluable to teaching in that environment? Maybe some of the-- What do you call-- Like, your two bell, your two hat, and your tricks of the trade? What are some things you could share with them?

UME D:

You know, I've taught a couple-- Well, I've had a couple student teachers. And I always tell them, "Don't take it personally." A student comes in the room first thing in the morning and they got a attitude. They're mad about something. Don't take it personal if they run off at you. A lot of times, they don't know how to deal with their attitude. They don't know how to deal with their emotions. So, you're going be the first one to come to them. So, the best thing for me to tell them is,

obviously, "Don't take it personal." The other thing is, never stop learning. Some of this stuff-- You're not going to know everything. And that's just the way it is. So never stop learning. Don't take it personal. That's really what I tell new teachers.

Researcher:

All right. All right, well, thank you for allowing me to interview you.

Urban Music Educator (UME): **E**

Male Middle School Band Director

Researcher:

All right. Good morning. I want to thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my urban music educator interview. If you could please tell me about your present music program and the community.

UME E:

My current music program is one that is in a Title I school, and the indicator of a Title I school is one being in which at least 98% of the school is free or reduced lunch. The student body is one of a medium to low socioeconomic background. As far as the community, the school itself, it is 97% black, 3% Hispanic. My particular music program is one that-- I guess you can say it is embedded in an urban setting. We have pretty much concert band and pep band only. No jazz band. No marching band. And yes. That's it.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. What influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME E:

When I was in 12th grade, I had the opportunity to assist a younger student that was in 9th grade in reading rhythms and reading music. And once I saw her comprehend the musical concepts that I was told to teach her, that pretty much

created a spark within me to want to educate others. Now, aside from that, I've always been a lover of music. That's always been my favorite subject all throughout school, and that's what really made me want to just go all in. Yes.

Researcher:

Okay. How did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?

UME E:

It didn't at all, honestly. The music education at my college, honestly, was a missed opportunity for me in terms of going into music education. I learned a lot in terms of music, and theory history, performing analysis counterpoint, orchestration. I learned a lot in terms of education, in terms of curriculum, educational instruction. But in terms of the joining of the two, music education, my college did not prepare me at all whatsoever. And I had to learn those missing links either through my student teaching experience, or on the job when I first got hired.

Researcher:

Okay. So how did your teaching education program prepare you for working in urban schools or with disadvantaged youth?

UME E:

It did not. It did not. Again, in my program, the general education courses were taught. But even in those general education courses, nothing specified an urban

education, a true urban educational experience. Nothing prepared us for that. It was pretty much trial and error. We had to learn as we go, and years, and years, and years, of learning as you go. There was no course. There was no session that taught us how to deal with the challenges that we face while working in the urban area. So, in short, so it did not prepare us.

Researcher:

Okay. Good. Okay. So, does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences?

UME E:

Yes. My student teaching experience, yes, it does match my current teaching experience, and that's actually why I learned the most during the short time. It was one semester. During that short time of student teaching, I spent six weeks of it at elementary schools, ironically in the system that I work in, and then I spent six more weeks at a high school. And the demographics of those elementary schools and the high schools somewhat mirrors the teaching experience that I work in now. So that would be the most beneficial benefactor of my teaching, was my student teaching experience.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So how long have you been teaching?

UME E:

I have been teaching for 11 and a quarter years. So, 11 years and 3 months.

Researcher:

Okay. So, if you could begin your teaching career all over again, would you choose to teach in an urban environment? Why or why not?

UME E:

Yes, I would, because that's where I learned how to teach, in that urban experience. One thing you learn in an urban environment is that you can't teach all the kids the same. Everybody has their different modality of learning, whether or not it's visual, whether or not it's tactile, whether or not it's digital. And although you did learn that-- and I guess there's general education courses in college, you really learn to apply it, because teaching in the urban area, you have so many other factors you have to take into consideration in terms of reaching the students better, such as behavioral issues. Factors that's outside of the core concept of music, such as, "Did the students eat last night? Did their parents come home last night? How much longer is this student's brother, or mother, or father going to be in jail?" Some of those kinds of situations that you really have to deal with, and still try to get your students to learn the instruction. So, yes. Would I teach as long as I have been teaching? Probably not. But I would definitely want to still teach in an urban area, because again, that's when you really hone in your craft of teaching.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, what would you say is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME E:

Discipline. Discipline, discipline, discipline. Either discipline or resources, but we're going to start with discipline first. And again, that's one of those things that while in college, we didn't learn. We didn't learn how to deal with disciplinary issues. And in an urban environment, that's almost 60% of the challenge. That's 60% of the class, getting that classroom managed. And unfortunately, in an urban environment, that's something we have to deal with, because if you don't have classroom management, it's almost a guarantee-- it is a certainty that instruction will not ensue if the classrooms not managed. Music cannot happen in chaos, and so once you control the chaos, once you get everybody on the single mindset of learning, then education can commence. And so yeah.

Discipline. That's a big factor. Also, resources. Being in a Title I program-- well, teaching in a title one school, the school gives what they call Title I money.

However, that money, for whatever reason, is not allocated towards the arts, and so we continuously have to do things such as fundraisers. We have to borrow instruments. We "fix" instruments to the best of our ability just so students can have something to perform on. So, we're always under-resourced, and we always kind of have to find a way or make a way. And a lot of times they can't afford their own instruments, so they are dependent upon the school

instruments, which kind of almost limits them to what they can and cannot do, depending on what's available at the school. So, discipline and resources. There you go.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, if you can, can you recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator?

UME E:

My most rewarding experience has to be when our students went to LGPE, and they did really, really well. Really well, meaning they received superiors and excellent. And it was at a time in which it was really difficult school-wise for us to do what is necessary in order for us to achieve that goal. When I think it was necessary, I was scheduling students to ensemble band A day, B day was general music every other day. Students that don't come after school were hurt. Some students won't commit. Teachers, faculty members, administration, who won't comply with what you need them to do in order to see those students grow. And so, going through all those challenges, and then still going to LGPE and doing exceedingly well, that was one of my most rewarding experiences, is getting the evaluations that we did with only 19 students. 19!!

Researcher:

Wow. Okay. Okay. Okay. So, what teacher attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

UME E:

I think understanding. It's not for the weak-hearted. What I mean by that, you can't go onto this profession in an urban environment timid. You have to go knowing you're in charge, knowing that you know what you know, and knowing what you're going to do is going to work, and going to be effective. But above all, patience and understanding, because, again, one student doesn't learn like the other student. So whereas some students, they can just look and get it, some students cannot. And you have to teach two of the students, meaning, teach two other-- their way of learning. And it takes a lot of patience, and it takes you to be calm, because if a student is really trying, and they just, for whatever reason, can't get it, and they see you getting frustrated, then they're going to get frustrated. And when they get frustrated, what are they going to do? They're going to shut down. They shut down too many times, what's going to happen? They're going to quit. They quit, they're no longer going to be in band. They're not in band, now, your numbers are dropping because students don't want to be in band anymore. Now, because your numbers are dropping, now, your job's in jeopardy because you're now producing the numbers that the administration wants. Then, the band program goes away. So, all in all, it takes patience. That's the biggest thing.

Researcher:

Okay. So, I guess, my last question to you is, if you were talking to maybe a new teacher to the profession who teaches in the urban environment, or maybe

a struggling urban music educator, what are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

UME E:

Well, one, own your classroom, the students. And when I say one your classroom, by any means necessary, in a legal way. But meaning that no student should ever come in your classroom and think they have control. And no student should ever step foot in your classroom and think that they're going to be able to do what they want to do, and it will be okay. No. Every single student needs to know that you are in control, that this is your class, that they're going to comply with what you say every day. Now, the days are going by, they're going to question that, and so I will tell the new educator, one-- again, it goes by the classroom management. Control your class. All right? And it's hard. It's really hard, and it's not easy. It's not easy, and it takes time. It takes practice. It takes help from the administration, to say the least. But if that's a battle that you have to fight every day, then you have to fight it. You have to fight it.

I've had years in which I've felt as if I was going to just, "This is going to be my last day, I can't take it anymore." You have to fight this battle every day, because there is light at the end of the tunnel, believe it or not. I know it sounds cliché, but there is. And you always have the rest of the students that's doing what you want them to do. The rest of the students that want to learn

how to learn how to play the clarinet or oboe, who have to endure that behavior of behaviorally challenged students every single day. So, first thing that we do is to tell the teacher to manage their class. The second thing I will tell them is to have a plan in mind in regard to what you want regardless of whatever the goal is. Large or small, make that goal, and then make a plan to obtain that goal by any means necessary. If the goal is to get the whole band outfitted in t-shirts. "Okay. How is that going to happen? What does that look like? What is it going to take?" Talk to people. That's number three. I would tell them to talk to other educators that have been in the game, both veteran and new, because you never know what the next person knows. I learn things every single day. So just talk. Talk to people as much as you can, and just make a running notebook of the different ideas and techniques that they use, and use and incorporate that into your system. Last thing-- not last thing. But another thing I will tell that new teacher is to be as organized as possible. And I'm still working on that myself, and I'm 11 years in. But the more you're organized, the easier it will be in terms of the fluidity in your class. And again, okay, one of the last things I will say will be to break the monotony of your instruction. I mean, kind of change it up a little bit. Do different things, different techniques. Kind of catch your kids off guard every now and then so they won't fall into the, "Oh, here we go again. Here we go again. Warm up. Breathing exercises. Music, and repeat." Just do different things to hold their attention.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, I really want to thank you for your input for my urban music education interview. At this time, the interview is done. Thank you.

UME E:

You're welcome.

Urban Music Educator (UME): **F**

Male High School Chorus Director

Researcher:

I want to thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my urban music educator interview. If you could please tell me about your present music program and the community.

UME F:

My present program is in a Title 1 school, extremely low-income area. Our music programs, band and chorus are growing. We are constantly looking to gain more community support from parents and the community in general.

Researcher:

If you could, please tell me what influenced you to become a music teacher?

UME F:

I would definitely say my influences come from my high school and college directors. They were just really instrumental in showing me the differences in regards to listening to music as just a music lover, and listening to music to teach it and/or to help other people get a better understanding of it. And so, the methods that they used to just kind of teach music to me, I really kind of fell in love with that. And they helped me to gain a good understanding of music and just develop the love for music that I have now.

Researcher:

Okay. And how did your college experiences prepare you to become a music educator?

UME F:

I would say that college really taught me the fundamentals and gave me all the rhetoric and everything that I needed to actually execute and be knowledgeable of the actual music part of it, just preparing me to be knowledgeable of just a lot of the music theory, the history, and things like that, that comes along with teaching music.

Researcher:

Okay. How did your teacher education program prepare you for working in urban schools?

UME F:

Well, I don't think that it was very instrumental in teaching me how to work in urban schools per se. Just because a lot of the textbook information doesn't focus on the understanding of the demographics that you're working within and/or how to differentiate the manner in which you're teaching the music to students or teaching music to students. A lot of that comes with trial and error. It seems like it's more just gaining your better understanding for self. And building relationships in order for you to kind of get that part across.

Researcher:

Okay. Does your teacher preparation match your current teaching experiences?

In which way does it not?

UME F:

It matches somewhat. I would definitely say it doesn't only because, like I said before, it doesn't prepare you for a lot of the different situations that come along with the urban environment per se. Because a lot of that is what's in the demographics of the school. Like a lot of urban students or just low-income neighborhoods. And just a lot of the situations that come along with those students. The program doesn't prepare you for that. It just specifically talks about the music part of it. But it doesn't talk about how to infuse the music into those students and how to just gain resources and use resources that you may not have to make that happen. So, I would definitely say I doesn't necessarily prepare you for that part.

Researcher:

Okay. And how long have you been teaching?

UME F:

I've been teaching 10 years.

Researcher:

Okay. So, if you could begin your teaching career over again, would you choose to teach in the urban environment? Why or why not?

UME F:

I would say yes, that I would because it has definitely given me tools in regards to teaching music that I don't think I would get outside of the teaching in an urban environment. And it also helped me to understand how to deal, or how to build better relationships with students because no two students are the same. And so, within the urban environment, the diversity of it just really made me a better educator. And one of the primary skills within education is differentiation. And so, that has really honed my skills on how to differentiate, not just in teaching itself or teaching music, but just in dealing with people.

Researcher:

Okay. What is the single most challenging aspect of teaching music in an urban environment?

UME F:

For me, I would definitely say resources. It's really hard to come by finances. Generally, sometimes-- Well, Title I didn't allow for music's programs to receive funding. And so, it was really hard to just have the resources. Performance groups having uniforms, actually getting music for your program, good music for your program, building the students to be in the program. Just working within the school just to make sure that you have the students in your class because they're all over the place and just getting scheduling done. So just having the

resources to build a functioning, quality program - I would say - is probably the most difficult part for me.

Researcher:

Okay. So, if you can, recall your most rewarding teaching experience as an urban music educator.

UME F:

I would say my most rewarding was my students and I just-- we really worked hard in one particular semester in which we won a national award for our performances, in which we had to submit videos of ourselves performing, actually recording an actual rehearsal, actually performing in which we received a national award from a national organization that's well-known throughout the US and abroad. And I think that was probably the most rewarding because the students bought-in to what we were trying to do. And just using a lot of unconventional ways to get the buy-in. And it just allowed for the students to feel accomplished. I definitely felt accomplished. And I think their excitement was music's going to be used to draw more students to the program.

Researcher:

Okay. Right. So, what teacher attributes do you feel are necessary to be successful in an urban environment?

UME F:

Far as attributes, I would definitely say you have to have an open mind. You'll have to be a people person. You want to be able to just kind of build

relationships. You have to know how to build relationships. And I always resort back to that because in building relationships with children and/or adults, it allows for you to know how to work with other people and how to get people to do things that they may not readily want to do. But in the sense of building collegial environment and everybody kind of doing the same thing musically in itself. You just want to be able to know how to be effective with each and every student. So, I would say just having the tact of knowing how to build a relationship will be very, very useful in teaching in an urban environment.

Researcher:

Okay. Great. All right. So, my last question is maybe if you could talk to a new teacher to the profession who'll be teaching in an urban environment. Or maybe a current struggling teacher in an urban environment. What are some teaching strategies that you feel are invaluable teaching in an urban setting?

UME F:

I would say if I-- Well, one lesson that was taught to me was understand, speak the language of the majority. And a lot of times when you're in a classroom, it's one of you and several of them. So right off the bat, they're the majority. With you being the resident expert and them being the majority, I would say that it's going to be your job to take the knowledge that you have, gain an understanding of the things that they like, what they listen to, how they react to certain songs, certain types of music, and things like that. And you have to study and analyze how to fuse them together because I can say one of

the major - I guess you could say - factors of disappointment within the urban programs is that many new teachers only go in with what they've learned from the classroom. And try to push it onto a generation that doesn't necessarily want to learn it or have an interest to learn it. So, it's just a matter of being flexible to listen to the students and get engaged and see what they like. And still feed them some of the things that you like so that you can build a quality program because just like with anyone else, once they have a taste for something, they'll want more of it. So, I would definitely tell a new teacher or struggling teacher to use your resources of the students and the earmarks you have in front of you. And take that and intertwine it with the knowledge that you have.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. So, I want to thank you for allowing me to interview you for my urban music educator research. Is there anything else you would like to share at this time?

UME F:

I think I've pretty much covered everything. No, thank you.

Researcher:

Okay. All right. Thank you.