BEGINNING MUSIC TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

ON TEACHING MUSIC IN URBAN SETTINGS

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A Document

Presented to the Faculty of the

Moores School of Music

Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education

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By

Kiana Day Williams

July 2018

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Abstract

In an effort to gain insight on the lived experiences of novice urban music educators, the purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine beginning music teachers' perspectives of cultural relevance in relation to music instruction in urban school settings within in a large Southwestern city. Research questions focused on the perspectives that beginning music teachers have about their preparation to teach music in urban settings, the role of student culture in beginning music teachers' instruction, and the meanings that beginning music teachers place on their experiences of teaching music in urban settings.

Data were collected based on Seidman's (2013) three interview series, consisting of audio recordings from two semi-structured individual interviews for each participant, a 15-20-minute video recording from each participant teaching in their classroom, and an audio recording of one focus group interview. Participants included three beginning music teachers currently employed in urban schools in a major metropolitan city in the Southern United States. In this study, a teacher was considered a beginning teacher if they had zero to three years of experience teaching music in urban school settings. Regarding the participants' perspectives to teach music in urban settings, four broad themes were revealed consisting of a lack of preservice curricular content related to teaching in urban schools, outside resources as support, individual professional development, and providing hope through music education. Concerning the role that student culture plays in beginning music teachers' instruction, the results revealed three broad themes related to connectivity & relatability, concerts, and differentiated

instruction. The broad themes that were revealed in relation to the meanings that beginning music teachers place on their experiences of teaching music in urban settings were familial roles, respect (giving and receiving), cultural sensitivity, peer support (camaraderie), and lack of internal support. Implications for current music educators as well as music teacher educators and higher education are included in this study. Future research should consider examining teaching music in urban school settings longitudinally, as well as the effect of culturally relevant pedagogy on student retention in urban school music programs.

Acknowledgements

The journey to attain this doctorate degree has been one filled with unforeseen challenges and setbacks, yet also with radical faith and renewed determination, and the latter have truly been gifted to me through nothing short of the grace of mercy of God who has placed "angels" in my life to be majorly instrumental in helping me to achieve this dream that at many times along the journey seemed next to impossible. I want to take this opportunity to thank the individuals who supported, assisted, and cheered me on throughout this degree process—to each of you, I give never-ending thanks. I must first give all glory to God, for there is nothing and no one who deserves praise above Him for the blessing of accomplishing this monumental task!

I wish to sincerely thank my committee chair, Dr. Julie Derges Kastner, who has not only aided in leading me along this scary journey by providing endless support in writing, critical thinking and organization, but she has also served as a shining example of the type of academic professional that I aspire to become. I would also like to thank Dr. Erin Hansen, Dr. Aaminah Durrani, and Dr. Charles Hausmann for their participation and support as members of my committee and as encouraging former professors throughout my graduate matriculation.

I am sincerely appreciative of the three participants in my study for availing themselves to share their thoughts in such a candid and straightforward manner. I truly hope that their perspectives that are included in this document will further conversations on and advancements in the area of music education in urban schools.

I could not have prayed for more supportive parents. I am eternally grateful to my father and mother, Rev. Calvin and Mary Day, for their prayers, encouragement, and support for my entire life—they have been and continue to be the wind beneath my wings. My sister Kedrienne and my brother Kevin moved to the same city as I did and have given me the continual assurance that I never have to travel far to feel their love and support. My son Arian and soon-to-be born daughter Ariah have been my continual motivation to push through the challenge of completing this degree in order to be a personal example for them in the future that if Mommy could achieve it, they can achieve even more. My husband Calvin was right there to hold me when I initially thought that pursuing this degree was too much to manage while dealing with my health challenges, he was there a year later to encourage me when I was in fear but in faith decided to try again, and he has continued to silently cheer me on to the finish line, and I am forever grateful for all of the selfless sacrifices that he has made to help make this goal achievable for me.

Lastly, my small circle of sister friends, fellow church members, colleagues, and former music teachers believed in me even in many instances when I didn't believe in myself. The encouraging words, periodic mental check-ins, and prayers of each of them have been held close to my heart.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of the late Willenham Cortez Castilla, my beloved former choral director at Jackson State University. May this completed work continue to make you proud of me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning music teachers graduate from their institutions of higher learning with a foundational knowledge of pedagogical methods and proficient musicianship in their specific discipline to help them provide valuable music instruction to their students. However, as preservice music teachers, most take coursework that prepares them for their different areas (i.e., band, choir, elementary, or orchestra), but not for the different types of school settings (urban, suburban, or rural) where they might end up teaching. Music teachers often receive little or no training to teach in urban classrooms, particularly those where the student population includes high percentages of students of color and students from low socioeconomic households (Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Abrahams and Schmidt, 2006; Abril, 2009; Doyle, 2012). Most often, music teacher preparation programs have a curriculum that is heavily focused on music from and inspired by Western classical traditions, with little to no incorporation of culturally and socially relevant music or pedagogical practices (Legette, 2003; Abrahams & Schmidt, 2006; Abril, 2009; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, and Mills, 2011), especially that which would relate to the majority of urban student populations, that typically feature high percentages of students of color and low socioeconomic status.

The challenges that beginning urban music teachers might face include developing student musicianship among students who may have limited formal musical training (Frierson-Campbell, 2006), low academic achievement (Alonso, Anderson, Su & Theohasis, 2009; Boggs and Dunbar, 2015), disciplinary issues (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Brian & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Kokka, 2016),

and/or lack of parental involvement (Bradley & Whiteside-Mansell, 1997; Baker & Soden, 1998; Bradley et al., 2001). While beginning music teachers in urban schools might experience challenges that are specific to that environment, they also might experience many positives from teaching music in these settings. It is important to better understand the experiences of beginning urban music teachers in order to learn how music teacher preparation programs and teacher educators can better prepare future music educators for teaching in urban schools. This study seeks to explore and examine the perspectives of beginning music educators as they teach in urban school settings.

Defining Urban Education

The definition of urban education has changed over time and there remains a lack in a shared definition for this term (Alonso, Anderson, Su & Theohasis, 2009; Chapman, 2010; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Frierson-Campbell, 2006; Milner, 2012). However, Milner, Laughter, & Childs (2015) have stated that an urban school can be identified by the following criteria:

1. the size of the city in which schools are located: dense, large metropolitan areas;

2. the students in the schools: a wide range of student diversity, including racial, ethnic, language, and socioeconomic demographics; and

3. the resources: the amount and number of resources available in a school, such as technology and financial structures through federal programs as well as property taxes (pp. 85-90).

In recent years, urban education has additionally come to include "self-governing charter and private schools" (p. 283) and magnet schools, although they do not typically carry the large size of public school districts (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Milner & Lomatry, 2014).

Unfortunately, urban education tends to have a bad reputation. Some individuals "seem to classify schools as simply urban because of the perceived shortcomings of students and the parents in the school" (Milner, 2012, p. 558). This common misconception often discourages new educators from thinking about teaching in urban school environments when considering job opportunities in various schools and districts. This mindset could also affect the way that teachers who do decide to take teaching positions in urban schools interact with their students and approach their pedagogy.

However, the term "urban" in education is not one-size-fits-all. Milner (2012) created a conceptual framework for defining urban education that categorizes urban schools into three different contexts: Urban Intensive, Urban Emergent, and Urban Characteristic. Below are the definitions for these terms:

- Urban Intensive: school contexts that are concentrated in large, metropolitan cities across the United States…[These are] considered intensive because of the sheer number of people in the city and consequently the schools. In these cities, the infrastructure and large numbers of people in the city can make it difficult to provide necessary and adequate resources to the large numbers of people who need them...Urban intensive environments would be those with 1 million people or more in the city

- Urban Emergent: schools which [*sic*] are typically located in large cities but not as large as the major cities identified in the urban intensive category...typically have fewer than one million people in them but are relatively large spaces nonetheless...encounter some of the same scarcity of resource problems [as urban intensive]

- Urban Characteristic: schools that are not located in big or mid-sized cities but may be starting to experience some of the challenges that are sometimes associated with urban school contexts...in the urban intensive and the urban emergent categories. An example of challenges that schools in the urban characteristic category [experience] is an increase of English language learners to a community. These schools might be located in rural or even suburban districts. (Milner, 2012, p. 559)

Milner's framework serves as a reference for researchers, policy makers, and educational administrators in defining urban educational climates. Urban schools involve more than their geography and size; rather, there are distinguishable characteristics regarding the resources and student demographics of each of these settings. However, it is important to note that not all of these characteristics are negative. Milner notes that there "is a rich array of excellence, intellect, and talent among the people in urban environments" (2012, p. 558), but it is important for the decision makers within each community to identify these powerful assets within their educational environments.

Culture, Ethnicity, and Race in Urban Education. Some of the positive aspects of teaching in urban school settings can often be traced to the rich pride in cultural and

ethnic traditions that are found in many urban schools. It is important to define culture, ethnicity, and race in order to provide context into how they will be discussed throughout this study. Culture is "a body of learned beliefs, traditions, and guides for behaviors that are shared among members of a particular group" (Orozco, 2012). Race and ethnicity are terms often mistaken for one another due to the shared ideology of common ancestry between the two, but are different (Bayor, 2003; Kukathas, 2008). For the duration of this study, race will be conceptualized as being "distinguished by perceived common physical characteristics, which are thought to be fixed," but ethnicity will be referred to as "perceived common ancestry, history, and cultural practices, which are seen as more fluid and self-asserted rather than assigned by others" (Clair and Denis, 2015, p. 857). Historically, urban school districts tend to be in communities that include a high majority of Black students, followed by smaller numbers of Hispanic, White families, and Asian students (Burgess, Wilson, & Lupton, 2005). However, in more recent years, Hispanic student populations have "substantially increased" within urban schools, while White student populations have "drastically declined" and Black student populations have "remained virtually static" (Lomotey, 2015, p. xiii).

English Language Learners. Urban areas tend to attract individuals from a variety of cultures, and not all of these individuals speak English. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 made it a requirement for English language learners in public schools to receive educational assistance and to have the opportunity to "participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). As a result, urban schools

often devote additional resources to developing English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to support students who are English language learners. ESL programs are for any student whose primary language is one other than English that needs assistance in cultivating the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in the English language (Texas Education Agency, 2012). Additionally, some schools offer dual language programs, in which curricula are developed to accommodate the linguistic needs of students (Wood, 2008). The dual language program allows students to spend a portion of the day learning and communicating in English and the other portion in their native language, like Spanish or Mandarin. This curriculum is one that is becoming increasingly beneficial to schools. Lomotey (2015) purported that "from 2000 to 2010, the percentage of English as a second language (ESL) learners increased by nearly 54% and is considerably higher in urban schools than it is in rural or suburban schools" (p. xiii). Providing these resources for urban school students can be challenging for administrative and faculty personnel, as it is often pursued with very limited funding and additional support staff. Weiner (2000) concluded that "the most salient aspect of urban teaching then is that urban teachers must be able to accommodate the greatest diversity of student needs under conditions that continually subvert their efforts to personalize and individualize education" (p. 371).

Socioeconomic Status. Milner, Laughter, & Childs (2015) attribute socioeconomic status to be one of the defining characteristics of urban schools. In an effort to provide clear understanding of its relationship with urban education, it is important to provide a detailed definition of the term. Socioeconomic status (SES)

describes a combination of factors that characterize the total measure of an individual or family's economic and social position in relation to others. Determining factors include "income, educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class" (American Psychological Association, 2018b). SES is often used as a resource to "reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control" American Psychological Association, 2018a). SES is also often used in assessing educational projections of school and student progress, as common attributes associated with students from low-SES communities are "poor cognitive development, language, memory, socioemotional processing, and consequently poor income...in adulthood" (American Psychological Association, 2018b).

Characteristics of Urban Education

The following discussion will include a brief description of the characteristics of urban education, not for the purpose of exhausting all aspects of this topic, but to "highlight major turning points" (Boggs & Dunbar, 2015, p. 43). Topics discussed in this section will include historical perspectives and problems in urban education.

The educational system in the U.S. during the start of the twentieth century became focused on creating a trained working class who would be able to "meet the demands of the burgeoning industrialization complex" (May & Sanders, 2015, p. 4). While these purposes were promising for some members of society, many people were not afforded the same access to education, especially people of Color. Populations of Color have specifically struggled with this, and according to Alonso, Anderson, Su &

Theohasis (2009), continues to be disproportionately disenfranchised in the American

educational system as it relates to human and material resources.

Historical Perspectives of Urban Educational Environments. There were

several significant events in U.S. history that have had lasting effects on urban education.

Plessy v. Ferguson was a landmark case in which, on May 18, 1856, the United States

Supreme Court ruled in favor of a separate but equal society, making racial segregation

constitutionally legal for well over the next fifty years. This justified segregation on

public transportation, as well as in public places such as schools. While schools remained

separate under this law, they certainly were not equal, as schools that educated non-White

students were provided fewer and outdated resources, unlike what was provided in White

schools (Beittel, 1951). The Supreme Court later overruled the Plessy decision in the

Brown v. the Board of Education case on May 17, 1954 (Supreme Court of the United

States, 1856; Boggs & Dunbar, 2015).

The Post-World War II era posed new challenges that extended beyond race. As

soldiers were returning home and industry was booming–thus creating higher income–

those who could afford to move relocated into the newly developed homes and

communities that were being built in the suburbs, where there was "less racial and ethnic

diversity, and lower population density" (Rury & Saatcioglu, 2011, p. 38). "White flight,"

or the move of more affluent whites from urban to suburban communities, led to

"economic, political, and educational deterioration in the inner city (May & Sanders,

2015, p. 5). As citizens who could afford homes in the outer suburbs of the city migrated

away from city centers, there was an additional need to build schools in these new

communities and to have talented educators on hand to teach the children within the neighborhoods. While this created great promise for the inhabitants of the suburbs, inner-city urban communities suffered greatly as services and leadership within the environments in which they lived became even more limited than before, creating "layers of challenges" for urban schools and its constituents that continue to be pervasive issues affecting these areas of high need and social stress (May & Sanders, 2015, p. 5).

Although the suburbs continue to be a highly sought-after destination for young families looking to settle, another trend has currently been on the rise in many metropolitan localities. As some families have desired to eliminate long work commutes to and from the suburbs, as well as to avoid the high property taxes, more affluent suburbanites have begun moving back into urban pockets of cities. In particular, these families are moving into city neighborhoods where investors have taken advantage of the recessed real estate market in these areas and built new, single-family and high-rise living spaces with exorbitant price tags (Keels, Burdick-Will, & Keene, (2013). What has come about, as a result of these new communities, is not a new integrated society, but what can be considered "checkerboard patterns within urban neighborhoods and centers," where verbiage is created to draw a clear boundary between "'good blocks' and 'bad blocks', 'good neighborhoods' and 'bad neighborhoods' [*sic*], coding both class- and race-based stereotypes in these seemingly innocuous classifications" (Gould & Todduni, 2007, p. 169). According to Keels, Burdick-Will, & Keene (2013), the trend of young families moving into urban areas has had no positive impact on the public schools within these neighborhoods, as children of the new residents are not traditionally attending public schools within their communities. Rather, they often choose to send their children to

private schools, and neighborhood public schools often suffer from a lack of support and positive growth (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Reardon & Bischoff, 2011; Siwatu, 2011).

Problems in Urban Education. While most schools experience challenges and problems, schools in urban settings are especially prone to encountering major obstacles that impede their ability to reach peak levels of success. This section will be devoted to discussing some of the issues faced in many urban school environments. Though not an exhaustive list, the problems included in this section have been highlighted in a vast majority of empirical studies (Alonso, Anderson, Su & Theohasis, 2009; Baker & Soden, 1998; Barth, 2003; Bradley et al., 2001; Bradley & Whiteside-Mansell, 1997; Biddle, 2001; Boggs and Dunbar, 2015; Burgess, et. al, 2005; Coffey & Farinde-Wu, 2016; Dee, 2004; Doyle, 2012; Eason et al., Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; 2010; Haskins & Sawhill, 2003; Kinney, 2010; Miller & Davis, 1997; Peske & Haycock, 2006). Alonso, Anderson, Su & Theohasis (2009) list the struggles as the following:

Crowded and physically decaying facilities; fewer qualified teachers; greater turnover in teaching staff; larger class sizes; more limited curricula; less challenging classes; lower quality and quantity of instructional materials, equipment, and books; fewer extracurricular activities; and perhaps not surprisingly, lower achievement scores on standardized exams. (p. 3)

Poverty. In addition to the issues faced within the four walls of the school, one-fifth of all school-age children are likely to experience such poverty-based issues as substandard housing, limited and/or unhealthy food supply, unkempt clothing, lack of

health insurance, chronic health issues, and little to no funds dedicated to school supplies (Biddle, 2001). However, it is important to note that just because a school is labeled as urban does not mean that all of its student population are impoverished. Nevertheless, poverty is a pervasive challenge that is faced by many students in urban climates, along with high rates of crime and other outside issues that can affect the educational successes of the children of these communities (Boggs and Dunbar, 2015).

Academic Underachievement. Scholars purport that academic underachievement in urban schools is due in part to basic and minimal instruction presented to the students, while students in suburban and private schools are trained to think more critically (Boggs and Dunbar, 2015, p. 43-57). Academic underachievement is an unfortunate occurrence in many, but not all, urban schools. While many typically use the test scores to determine of student success, it is important to recognize that when urban schools produce lower scores, it does not reveal that something is "wrong" with urban school students. Rather, it may instead indicate that the opportunities and resources that would create the most likely avenues to success for these students are either limited or not available at all (Barth, 2003; Eason et al., Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; 2010; Kinney, 2010; Peske & Haycock, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Race and Culture. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of this lack of academic success among urban students is that the "structural, societal and social inequalities" that are pervasive in urban communities are often encountered to some degree before children in these communities even enter school for the first time, creating a "sizeable

'opportunity gap'" (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015, p. 4). Opportunity gap is a term that "refers to the ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students" (Great Schools Partnerships, 2013). Lee & Burkham (2002) concluded that "lower SES children begin school at kindergarten in substantially lower-quality elementary schools than their better-resourced counterparts...This reinforces specific inequalities that develop even before children reach school age" (p. 2). Another possible reason this cycle of underachievement is often found in urban school settings is due to resistance from its student population, who may feel that the teaching of a curriculum that is void of cultural reflections that are most irrelevant to their own experience (Onore, 2010).

In an effort to maximize student achievement in urban educational settings, some schools have implemented a strategy known as *racial pairing*, where students are placed in classes with teachers of their same race (Dee, 2004). This strategy is based upon empirical findings that support the idea that "minority students are more likely to excel educationally when matched with teachers who share their race or ethnicity" (Dee, 2004, p. 195). Although research suggests that racial pairing has positive effects on academic outcomes for students (Dee, 2004; Evans, 1992; Pitts, 2007), this does not imply that only teachers of the same racial background of their students can achieve academic successes. When teachers, regardless of their race or ethnicity, develop the essential knowledge and understanding of the cultural nuances of their students, they put themselves in the best position to create academic successes in their classroom. In essence, it is their level of

cultural competency that can make an important impact on guiding urban students toward

academic success (Coffey & Farinde-Wu, 2016).

Institutionalized White Racism. Many scholars have stated that institutionalized

White racism is a major problem in urban education. For example, Boggs and Dunbar

(2015) explained that prejudices against historically marginalized races and cultures are

often driven by powerful people who view racial minorities in urban communities as

deficient, and some may even profit from the "informal alliances that keep certain people

in certain places" (p. 54). However, this idea of racial bias does not lie solely on the

shoulders of those who knowingly play an active role in preventing success in urban

education, but also on those who, regardless of race, turn a blind eye towards the

educational plight of urban schools (Frierson-Campbell, 2006, p. xii).

Educational Segregation. Educational segregation has contemporarily been

measured by observing whether or not students from diverse ethnic backgrounds are

evenly distributed across schools and neighborhoods (Burgess, et. al, 2005). Although the

landmark Brown v. Board of Education case of 1954 made separate educational systems

for Blacks and Whites illegal, urban communities continue to have high concentrations of

racially segregated neighborhoods which creates de jure—or legal—segregation in many

of the public schools within its borders (Doyle, 2012). Unfortunately, many students

never get the opportunity to interact with peers of varying ethnicities in a school setting,

and therefore miss out on the opportunity to learn about different cultures firsthand from

their peers. Urban schools, regardless of type (i.e. traditional schools, charter schools,

magnet programs) tend to lag in receipt of resources in comparison to their suburban

counterparts. Additionally, although some do not see this de jure segregation as a

problematic issue, the challenge lies mainly in the "inequity [of] human and material

resources that lead to disparate educational outcomes" (Alonso, Anderson, Su &

Theohasis, 2009, p. 2). Specifically, one of the "inequities of human resources" referred

to in this situation is a lack of certified teachers who teach in urban schools. This ties into

the reality that schools are not only sometimes segregated by race, but also add to the

potential for academic underachievement (Boggs and Dunbar, 2015).

Lack of Parental Involvement. Another issue affecting student and teacher

success in urban educational settings is a lack of parental involvement (Baker & Soden,

1998; Bradley et al., 2001; Bradley & Whiteside-Mansell, 1997). Parents can play a great

role in their child's academic success by helping with homework, maintaining a genuine

interest in their child's education by remaining up-to-date on their child's academic and

disciplinary progress, staying in constant communication with their child/children's

teacher(s), and being an active participant in the school's Parent Teacher Association

(PTA). However, some issues that prevent parents in urban school settings from playing

as active a role as is beneficial to their child's academic success is beyond their control

(Bradley et al., 2001; Bradley & Whiteside-Mansell, 1997; Haskins & Sawhill, 2003;

Miller & Davis, 1997). Many students in urban schools come from low-income homes,

where the parents often work more hours, have multiple low-wage jobs, have limited or

no paid leave, and/or struggle to find sufficient transportation and childcare for younger

children (Gorski, 2008). These life challenges can prevent parents of students in urban

schools from attending school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back to school nights, and school performances or sports events that feature their child (Onore, 2010).

When students are not well-equipped to be as successful as they individually could be, the blame is most typically placed on the family of the child, due in part to the perception that parents fail to prepare their children for school. This perception can lead to a lack of ability, character or motivation in the child (Cuban, 1989; O'Connor and Fernandez, 2006). While parental involvement can play an important role in student achievement, the school can also have a significant impact, because if students come from home settings where support is not present, the school should at least provide the academic foundation for student success. As May and Sanders (2015) state, even students raised in impoverished and challenging circumstances should be able to find refuge in the opportunity to change their situation through a quality public school.

Teacher Quality and Retention. As pre-service educators prepare to transition from teacher education programs, most who have the best qualifications pursue teacher vacancies in school districts or individual schools with the greatest reputations for student success and/or are in what would be considered "good" neighborhoods (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Alonso, Anderson, Su, & Theohasis, 2009). As a result, in order to fill teacher vacancies, administrators are forced to hire individuals who either may or may not be certified to teach, or are certified but not as effective (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Dugyala, 2018; Robinson, 2008). Many teachers only stay in an urban teaching assignment until they are able to obtain a position in a school with a low-poverty/low-minority status (Guin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll-Smith, 2003; Ladson-Billings,

1994; Peske & Haycock, 2006). It is important to note that teachers do not choose to change schools due to the race or SES of the student population, but rather because of issues with the school, like behavioral problems, school safety, and the overall school climate (Horng, 2009). This unfortunate pattern has created high teacher turnover in urban schools and has become a "$7 million-dollar problem that plays a significant role in low student achievement" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. xv).

Disciplinary Issues. A stereotypical challenge in urban schools is poor student behavior. This is not to say that students in non-urban schools do not display behavioral issues, but the prevalent nature of misbehavior in urban schools is a common concern. Along with this, many teachers in urban schools feel that they do not receive the necessary administrative support in handling disciplinary and classroom management issues (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Brian & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Kokka, 2016). However, there are many urban schools that have discovered solutions to the issue of unruly student behavior by getting to the core of what is most effective in rerouting misconduct by "developing trusting relations with students" (Weiner, 2003, p. 308) as well as understanding and accepting respectable cultural norms within the school (Brantlinger, 2003; Weiner, 2003). Students unique to these settings will most often be accepting of the rules that they are governed by when they feel that they are generally cared for and that they are all treated fairly (Cummins, 1986; Plank, McDill, McPartland, & Jordan, 2001).

Summary of Problems. It is important for all students, regardless of where they go to school, to be afforded a quality education. It is through the resources provided by schools that students are given the foundational tools that help them to be most competitive in an ever-changing and versatile workforce (Lytle, 1992). However, many urban schools experience issues of poverty, academic underachievement, institutionalized White racism, educational segregation, lack of parental involvement, teacher quality and retention, and disciplinary issues that impede their capability to provide students with the most ideal educational experience. What urban schools truly need to combat all of these challenges is administrative leadership that not only has a genuine heart for their students, but also understands the cultural and social variables impacting the environment (Becker & Luther, 2002). When administrators accept the reality that the challenges that urban school students face do indeed have an impact on their academic success, relevant and effective solutions can be formed and implemented with the ultimate goal of obliterating the problems and making major differences in the academic trajectory of the students who rely upon them for scholarly development and ultimately, limitless professional possibilities (Lomotey, 2015; May & Sanders, 2015).

The State of Urban Music Education

When the descriptor "urban" is used in the term urban music education, it is not used to describe a type of music that is shared, accepted, and/or performed in urban school settings. The term is mainly utilized to "form community" (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015, p. 211) with other music teachers in urban schools by sharing resources and identifying those who educate students and learn the cultural contexts of students of

similar demographics. Beyond this, Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) argues that there is no other purpose for labeling any portion of music education "urban." One of the matters that often binds urban music teachers is the fight for music classes to continue to be a part of the school curriculum, as well as receive financial and emotional support from administrators to be most successful. Successful urban music educators find creative ways to turn their students' musical inexperience into great opportunities to introduce the concept of music making to their students by utilizing culturally relevant music in their classrooms (Frierson-Campbell, 2006).

As aforementioned, a challenge in urban school settings is low academic achievement. Many times, when students' scores on standardized tests decline or remain in a depressed state, the knee-jerk reaction of many school leaders is to either pull academically low-performing students out of music classes and place them in extra test-prep courses, or eliminate music classes altogether (Flagg, 2006). This terrible inconvenience of students being pulled from their music classes often removes them from one of the very experiences that can provide them with senses of achievement and acceptance. For urban music educators, this means that they may have to deal with constantly changing student rosters and frequent changes in student schedules (Doyle, 2012).

Urban music educators are also challenged by a lack of resources, and this lack often comes from both the school and the means of individual students. Many families of students in urban school settings may not be financially capable of taking on the expenses typically associated with students in music performance programs, such as buying or leasing instruments and taking care of repairs, purchasing ensemble uniforms, paying for

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private lessons, or transporting students to performances (Alpert, 2006; Bates, 2012; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) stated that, what often ends up happening in these instances is that the music teacher takes on many of the expenses of their students by using their personal funds to purchase resources or providing transportation for students who otherwise would not be able to participate in music events (2015). Additionally, many of these students who would like to participate in school music ensembles cannot because they obligated to work after school for the purpose of assisting in the family expenses or are responsible for watching younger siblings while the parents work (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). To combat the issue of student expenses in music program participation, Goldberg (2006) suggested that urban schools should consider creative efforts to raise money for music in the schools such as "partnering with arts institutions, writing for grants, or independently raising funds for projects" (p. 538).

The field of education continues to consist of teachers who are mainly White, middle-class, and female. However, the specific demographic of certified music educators is largely comprised of White males (Elpus, 2015, Gardner, 2010; Kelly, 2003; Pembrook & Craig, 2002). In contrast, there are many music teachers in urban schools who strive daily to connect with a large population of students who are "non-White, poor, and may come from homes where English is not spoken" (Onore, 2010). With this data in consideration, the presumption can be made that many urban school music teachers are met with the challenge of identifying the best ways to connect with students with whom they have little in common, all while meeting the diverse needs of each student.

Nevertheless, all is not "doom and gloom" for music educators in urban settings, as there are positive aspects of urban music education. Despite the challenges, many

educators find teaching music in urban settings to be personally and professionally

rewarding (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Kokka, 2016), as they often enjoy being "able to

bring music to children who had not always been exposed to classical music or whose

parents could not necessarily afford to provide a safe and happy place for children who

are exposed to poverty, family discord, and violence on a daily basis" (Doyle, 2012).

Also, urban music teachers are afforded the opportunity to be positive role models to

students who may not be exposed to many constructive examples besides those that they

may encounter within the walls of their schools.

Students in urban schools who participate in school music ensembles tend to feel

more connected to the school and gain a sense of pride toward the effort of achieving

excellence within their ensemble (Abril, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Shields, 2001; Shuler,

1991). Many successful teachers in urban schools place great emphasis on creating and

sustaining ensembles that focus greatly on music of the cultures of their students to aid in

creating this sense of pride. This desire for achievement can often reach beyond the

music classroom, as many music students in urban schools experience higher academic

achievement than students who do not participate in arts-based instruction (Catterall et

al., 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Kinney, 2008).

Culturally Relevant Music Teaching

Effectiveness in urban music education is most often the outcome of

implementing what is referred to as one of the following terms: *contextually specific*

music teaching, *culturally responsive teaching*, or *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Abril,

2009; Coffey & Farinde-Wu, 2016; Doyle, 2014; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Ladson-

Billings, 1994, Shaw, 2015).

Culturally responsive teaching is a concept that has brought awareness of the need for teachers to be sensitive and responsive to the cultures of their students. Its main purpose is to get teachers to connect with students' cultures, and to help students connect with their cultural and social identities in ways that learning in any subject is made more effective and relevant (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001). Such teaching requires that students be viewed as members of extended cultural circles that exist beyond the classroom" (Abril, 2009, p. 79).

Regarding culturally relevant teaching, Ladson-Billings (1994) defines it as teaching that "embraces the establishment of natural ties between in-school work and out of school experiences as a means of decreasing the disconnect that many students feel between these two worlds" (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015, p. 43). Although the terms contextually specific music teaching, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally relevant pedagogy have been found to be used interchangeably in reference to the same concept, culturally relevant teaching will be the term used for the duration of this study, in an effort to establish clarity and maintain consistency.

Shaw (2015) suggested that students are frequently presented material based on scenarios that look and feel nothing like their own life experiences, deterring them from embracing the material that they are required to learn. Regardless of the culture of the school, Shaw felt that all music educators should establish culturally relevant methods of music teaching, and urban school settings are no exception. From selecting repertoire and programming concerts to audience engagement during performances and recruitment/retention efforts, knowledge of the specific learners and the community in which they live is critical to the successful execution of these tasks (Shaw, 2015).

Music teachers in urban schools experience certain phenomena that is unique to the environments in which they teach. There is value in providing research on urban music education programs in relation to the experiences of new teacher experiences. Currently, there is a limited yet growing number of empirical studies that cover the phenomenon of music teacher experiences in urban educational environments (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Shields, 2001; Emmanuel, 2002; Frierson-Campbell, 2006; Lehmberg, 2008; Kinney, 2010; Doyle, 2012; Doyle, 2014a; Doyle, 2014b; Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Shaw, 2015).

Although there are a few studies on culturally relevant teaching in music instruction within urban school settings (Abril, 2009; Doyle, 2014), there were no studies at the time of this research that explored beginning music teachers' perspectives of cultural relevance in urban school settings. Studies of this nature would offer insight into this unique setting that would be a beneficial resource in helping music teacher educators to better prepare preservice music educators for the possibility of teaching in urban schools and also provide insights for ways that the field of music education could provide support and professional development for practicing urban music educators.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine beginning music teachers' perspectives of cultural relevance in relation to music instruction in urban school settings within in a large Southwestern city. This study investigated the research topic by asking the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives that beginning music teachers have about their preparation to teach music in urban settings?

2. What role does student culture play in beginning urban music teachers' instruction?

3. What meanings do beginning music teachers place on their experience of teaching music in urban settings?

Theoretical Framework

This study was framed within the theory of culturally relevant teaching. Ladson-Billings (2009) provided the following description of culturally relevant teaching:

Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. (p. 20)

Doyle (2014) described culturally relevant teacher beliefs as "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" (p. 45).

The inclusion of popular music deemed acceptable for school could also be utilized as culturally relevant pedagogy in the music curriculum. This allows teachers an opportunity to create dialogue with students about music and culture, as well as its effect on the lives of students (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015). Also, music programs in urban schools could also include "academic" music classes like theory, composition, and/or sight-singing in an effort to create a variety of opportunities to keep students involved in

cultivating their musical skills and abilities (Hinckley, 1995). In essence, success in urban music education is a combination of "relevance, high expectation, and variety," where students feel a valuable connection to what is being presented and how it is being presented by educators who believe that their students can achieve success in music learning (Hinckley, 1995, p. 33)

Significance of the Study

A number of previous studies have provided insight into culturally relevant teaching within urban school settings (Brown, 2003; Coffey & Farinde-Wu, 2016; Lambeth & Smith, 2016; Milner, 2016) with even fewer concerning culturally relevant music teaching in urban schools (Abril, 2009; Doyle, 2014). This study differs from previous studies in two important ways. First, this study focused on beginning music teachers who teach in urban settings in an Urban Intensive city (Milner, 2012) in a Southwestern U.S. city. Second, while other studies in music education have placed a major focus on music teacher experiences in public urban schools, this study explored and examined beginning music teachers' perspectives on cultural relevance in public as well as charter schools in urban settings.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The objective of this study was to examine beginning music teachers'

perspectives of cultural relevance in relation to music instruction in urban school settings.

This chapter will include a review of literature focusing on studies that relate to urban

school teaching as it relates to preservice, experienced, and beginning music teachers.

Additionally, this chapter will review studies related to culturally relevant teaching within

urban education.

Teaching in Urban Settings

Effective teaching in urban schools calls for the acquisition of a unique skill set

consisting of flexibility, cultural knowledge and skills, caring and responsive attitude,

content knowledge and pedagogical proficiency (Lehmburg, 2008). However, there are

additional attributes that aid in productive urban teaching experiences. Stanford (2001)

examined the perspectives of ten urban elementary school teachers in the Washington,

D.C. area who had both high morale and ten or more years of teaching experience. Nine

of the ten participants taught in the same school, with five of them having taught there for

30-33 years, a sixth teacher had taught there for 28 years, and the remaining four teachers

had 10-21 years of teaching experience. Additionally, all of the participants were "well

educated" Black females (Stanford, 2001, p. 77) ranging in age from 37 to 55. High

morale was described to be a teacher who met the following criteria:

(1) Positive in attitude and in treatment of others; (2) Enthusiastic about teaching, their students, school, and the field; (3) Involved in their work, and; (4) are themselves. (p. 77)

Data were collected from semi-structured interviews, personal field notes, and a focus group discussion (Stanford, 2001). Findings from the study revealed five emergent patterns among the participants concerning their longevity in urban education: their love of and commitment to the children in their urban school of employment; their sources of satisfaction as a teacher (i.e. making a difference in the lives of their students, seeing their students' academic progress, feelings of achievement in reaching and affecting students); optimism for the future of their teaching lives, their sources of support (i.e. colleagues, church community, personal spiritual lives, family and friends); and a positive outlook of their teaching experiences. The meaning that the participants placed on their urban teaching experiences was an important factor in their decision to continue teaching in urban schools for such extended periods of time. Although Stanford's study revealed the perspectives of highly experienced teachers, more research is needed to address the meaning that beginning teachers place on urban education. A study of this nature would provide additional insight into the various stages of personal development and self-reflection for beginning teachers in urban schools.

Similarly, a Kokka study (2016) explored the rationale behind urban teacher longevity and job satisfaction. Data were collected through in-depth interviews among 16 of 20 STEM teachers who had taught more than five years at one urban high school, with their years of teaching in the school ranging from seven to twenty-four years. The participants discussed enjoyable aspects of their urban school teaching assignment which

included instructional autonomy, connectedness to their students, aiding in student understanding of the subject matter, the opportunity to learn from the students that they teach, the motivation of experiencing student thank-yous, and feeling of being more useful and needed in teaching in an urban school. Kokka also discussed challenges that these urban teachers faced in their teaching experience, including a lack of administrative support in the areas of classroom management and assistance with school safety. Although the study purported to investigate why teachers of Color continue teaching in under-resourced urban schools, it is important to note that White teachers were also included in the participants. Since Kokka's stated purpose was to explore the perspectives of teachers of Color, the inclusion of White participants calls into question the trustworthiness of the findings.

Teacher perspectives of urban education are likely to have developed within the preservice teaching experience, if not before. Some preservice teacher education programs prepare students for the possibility of urban school employment by offering or requiring courses that focus on the urban school experience. A study conducted by Mawhinney, Mulero, and Perez (2012) sought out to investigate the perspectives of 37 Black preservice music teachers on urban education before and after completing participation in an urban education immersion course while attending a Historically Black university (HBCU) in Pennsylvania. Data included pre- and post-experience surveys of students who were enrolled in either Foundations of Urban Education or Urban Seminar courses over a two-year (four semester) period. Findings indicated that the participants' perceptions of urban teachers, urban administrators, and a career in urban education were more positive upon completing the immersion course, yet their

views of urban parents were more negative. Unfortunately, findings in the study do not reveal what influenced the negative view of urban parents among the participants, as all of the data is quantitative with no free response questions on the survey regarding participants' perspectives of urban parents. More research is needed to explore the perspectives of Black preservice teachers on urban parents upon completing an urban education immersion course and more insights into why they might hold positive or negative views of parents.

Coffey and Farinde-Wu (2016) conducted one of the only studies to examine the unique experience of a beginning teacher in an urban setting. This exploratory case study took place over the course of one academic school year by observing a Black female English language arts teacher and her all-Black student population of Advanced Placement Language and Composition students during her first year of teaching at an urban high school. Data were comprised of classroom observation notes, lesson plans, emails between the first author and the participant, and interview transcripts that were collected over the course of nine months. Data revealed that although the teacher was of the same race as her students, she did not have the same shared experiences as her students, and this initially presented academically cultural challenges within the teacher-student dynamic (Coffey-Farinde-Wu, 2016). The teacher then shifted her classroom teaching and classroom management strategies to include culturally relevant techniques, like selecting literary works for study that were more relevant to the students' lived experiences and allowing the students to present the knowledge that they obtained from the study of these literary works through one of the following: a choice of short plays, interviews in the style of modern talk shows, or monologues that were performed for

students and parents. Coffey and Farinde-Wu found that these culturally relevant student projects resulted in greater student receptiveness and connectivity to the instructional content. The results suggest that although beginning urban teachers may experience student resistance to the initially implemented classroom teaching strategies that they have learned from their preservice teaching experiences, it is very possible to cultivate a teaching and lesson-planning style that will cultivate more productive outcomes of student connectedness to the instructional material. The results of this study also suggest that regardless of whether a teacher in an urban school is of the same race as their students, the implementation of culturally relevant teaching practices can be beneficial to the productivity of students from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Preservice Music Teachers in Urban Settings. Music teachers' decisions to accept a job placement is likely based, at least in part, upon experiences in their preservice teaching. Bruenger (2010) examined the reasons why or why not eleven vocal music education students chose to apply to teach in urban school districts after participating in cultural diversity training. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire and open-ended interviews. Three of the eleven participants applied to teach music in urban school districts, with only one accepting a position in an urban district. Bruenger (2010) found that the participants who chose to apply to teach in an urban district had a desire to make a difference in the lives of young people who might have scarce opportunities and an interest in working close to home. However, the only participant who accepted a job to teach in an urban district stated an interest in making an impact on students' lives, despite a lack of preference of the location of the school. Of the

participants who did not choose to apply to teach in urban districts, Bruenger found that

the reasons given for their decision were comprised of three themes: no teacher vacancies

in urban districts at the time of their mid-year graduation, a desire to teach in their home

district along with a fear of preconceived notions about urban schools, and a desire to not

teach in a district that is perceived to lack in value and support of arts-based education.

When asked about what incentives might make them consider teaching music in urban

districts, four participants said a promise of administrative support, two cited attractive

financial incentives, and three said that no incentives could persuade them to consider

teaching in an urban district.

Experienced Music Teachers in Urban Settings. Teaching in urban schools

provides unique rewards and challenges, and the experiences of urban music teachers are

no different. The following section will review different types of studies related to urban

music teachers who are past the preservice and beginning phases of their urban school

teaching experiences. The review will include studies examining urban music teachers in

a cross section of classrooms and studies exploring them in specific types of music

classes (e.g., choir, band, etc.).

Music Teachers in all Types of Classes. Urban music teachers can be inspired to

teach in an urban setting for a number of different reasons. Eros (2018) conducted a

qualitative case study that investigated the specific life experiences that had direct

influence on one music teacher's choice to teach music in an urban school. The data for

this study included an email survey, an email journal, and three semi-structured

interviews conducted during the participant's preservice teaching practica, This data had been collected as a part of a previous study, and the raw data were used to answer new research questions that were specific to the current study. The participant was a White female that had taught elementary general music and choir for seven years in a large city in the Midwestern United States. The participant had also emigrated from Canada while in middle school and grew up in a U.S. city just across the United States-Canada border. Results revealed that the participant's career choice was influenced beyond a desire to be an urban music teacher. Additionally, the participant desired to serve others, wanted to live in a specific city, and wanted to become a part of that specific city by being a change agent through the service of teaching music in an urban setting. Further research would be advantageous in exploring the influences considered by beginning music teachers when choosing to teach music in an urban school.

Fiese and DeCarbo (1995) asked twenty successful urban music educators from across the United States to complete a questionnaire "designed to collect background information on their teaching experiences and four open-ended questions regarding different aspects of music teaching in urban settings" (p. 27). Participants included ten males and ten females who taught various types of K-12 music classes in urban school settings in California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Fiese and DeCarbo (1995) found that, while all respondents felt musically prepared, the majority of respondents felt greatly untrained to teach in an urban setting, because they felt that their academic courses prepared them to teach the "ideal" student, an ideal to which most students in urban school settings do not conform. Several

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respondents felt that the professors who taught their teacher preparation courses had little to no experience teaching in urban schools.

Regarding specific strategies or approaches that participants have found to be effective for teaching music in urban settings, Fiese and DeCarbo (1995) found that most participants suggested two main approaches: gaining the respect of students and experimenting to find what techniques work best for them in their individual setting. Participants also felt that student input in class instruction, small group activities and cooperative learning were effective strategies for teaching in the urban music classroom. Further, Fiese and DeCarbo suggested the following as contributing factors for personal success: maintaining a support network of fellow teachers and mentors; consistent participation in professional conferences and clinics; establishing and maintaining positive rapport with students and parents, and active involvement in the community around the school. Lastly, the participants suggested that music education in urban schools could be improved by including better preparation in undergraduate coursework on the topics of teaching diverse cultures of students and gaining knowledge of the psychology of urban school students.

Specific Areas of Urban Music Teaching. This section will focus on teaching in specific types of urban music classes, particularly in comparison to the studies in the previous section. Doyle (2012) examined the perceptions of urban elementary music teachers focusing on the issues and problems in urban schools they faced by surveying seventy-one music teachers were selected from 221 Title I public elementary schools in two counties in the Southeastern United States. Results regarding preparation revealed

that 39% of the participants did not take courses related specifically to teaching in urban settings during their undergraduate matriculation, yet 12.5% of the participants shared that they took part in an internship within an urban setting as part of their undergraduate degree program. Over half of the participants (58.9%) revealed that they felt unprepared by their urban-related undergraduate coursework to teach in urban schools.

Regarding the rewards of teaching elementary music in urban schools, emergent themes among 35 participants consisted of "empowering students to achieve, perform, succeed, and find the joys of musical styles that they might not experience in their daily lives" (Doyle, 2012, p. 42). Additional positive experiences for the teachers in the study included: positive receptiveness to diversity of culture, race, and language (22.5%); and the ability to provide a safe and happy environment for students who might be exposed to poverty and violence on a regular basis (21.1.%). The obstacles that these teachers reported experiencing were common to urban school teaching across academic subjects, such as lack of parental involvement (43.7%); classroom management and student discipline (33.8%); unwilling or unable administration or parents to provide consistency with student discipline (22.5%); inadequate materials or classroom space (56.3%); and difficulties communicating with ESOL students or working with special learners in the whole-classroom context (11.3%). Lastly, the teachers expressed specific things that they wished that they had been taught in college, such as tools for managing the unique challenges teachers face when working with urban children (45.1%); more realistic classroom management techniques (38%); college courses that taught about different cultures and the issues faced in different communities (14.1%); opportunities to observe, volunteer, or intern in urban schools(12.7%); course material on how to best teach

students with no background in classical music (12.7%); and better preparation on how to deal with parental conflicts among those with difficult life situations (9.9%).

Fitzpatrick (2008) focused on gathering an understanding of how Chicago-area instrumental music teachers in urban schools navigated the urban landscape in which they taught. A mixed-methods approach was employed, which included a focus group consisting of seven instrumental music teachers employed in urban schools that guided the direction of the survey questionnaire, a survey of 90 instrumental music teachers in Chicago Public Schools, and then interviews with and observations of four instrumental music teachers in Chicago Public Schools. The results of Fitzpatrick's (2008) study revealed that the teachers utilized the general knowledge of teaching that they had gained from their university teaching preparation by fusing it with the knowledge that they acquired first-hand regarding urban contexts. Much like the participants in Fiese and DeCarbo's study (1995), those in the Fitzpatrick study (2008) believed that a specific set of relational and pedagogical skills must be attained in order to effectively teach music in urban school settings, and although they faced many challenges, they also found positive rewards in the personal and musical growth of the students.

Some urban music education programs explore music classes outside of the traditional band, choir, and orchestra classes. Weiss, Abeles, and Powell (2017) conducted a study where they investigated the effect of a music education initiative called Amp Up New York City (Amp Up NYC) on the progress of students' musical, social, emotional, and academic skills while participating in a Modern Band program. The students ranged in grade from kindergarten through twelfth grade and the study took place over the course of one full school year. Teachers, principals, and parents of the

students also took part in an online survey. Amp Up NYC was created in an effort to "bridge the gap between traditional school music and relevant, student-centered music education practices while closing the musical opportunity gap by supplying schools with popular music instruments, resources, and professional development for every certified, full-time music teacher in the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE)" (p. 334). NYCDOE is the nation's largest public school district and is located in an urban metropolitan area. Data was collected from monthly observations of rehearsals and performances at each of the five focus group schools, student focus groups conducted at each of the five selected schools, field notes from teacher workshops, as well as informal interviews with and online surveys collected from teachers, students, parents, and principals. Although the study did not specify the original instrumental specialty area of each of the teachers who participated in this study (i.e. band, choir, orchestra, etc.), it was reported that there was representation from elementary, middle, and high schools within the school district. Weiss, Abeles, and Powell (2017) found that 63% of the students felt that participation in the program elevated their ability to express themselves through music, and 60% of the students felt that the program made them an overall better musician. The parents, teachers, and administrators also felt that the students' technical and expressive musical skills improved by the end of the school year, and the parents also reported that their children practiced their instruments at home. During the focus group discussions, the students expressed that participating in the Modern Band program had a positive effect on their musical, social, emotional and academic skill development. As it related to the students' academic skill development, results of the study revealed that improvement was shown from the beginning to the end of the data collection period.

Although the Weiss, Abeles, and Powell (2017) study took place in a school district located in an urban metropolitan area, the study did not focus on any aspects that were unique to urban schools. There were no implications discussed relating the results of the study to urban schools. More research would be needed to draw a closer connection to the benefits of the implementation of a music education initiative and the unique needs of urban schools.

As aforementioned in Chapter 1, high teacher turnover is an unfortunate commonality in urban schools, and schools that experience this plight often encounter severe organizational challenges (Guin, 2004). However, unlike the previous studies in this section that examined the experiences of urban music teachers while they were in the classroom, Robinson (2018) sought to explore reasons why many choose to leave. Robinson (2018) conducted a study that investigated teacher turnover among secondary choral and secondary band programs within a large urban school district in the United States over the course of a ten-year period. The study also examined correlations between teacher turnover and particular non-pecuniary school characteristics, such as total school enrollment, total number of minority students enrolled in the school, total number of students classified as low-poverty, total number of suspensions, and total number of expulsions. Robinson (2018) found that 86% of the secondary school music programs experienced turnover while only 13.7% did not. Robinson classified the levels of teacher turnover, and the number varied among the schools: 29.8% had low teacher turnover (two to three teachers), 34.6% had moderate teacher turnover (four to five teachers), 9.7% had high teacher turnover (six to seven teachers), 12.1% had chronic teacher turnover (eight or more teachers), and one school experienced 100% teacher turnover over the course of

the ten-year period, meaning that there was a new music teacher in the specific position every school year for ten years. The secondary choral programs experienced more teacher turnover (17.7%) than the secondary band programs (1%), and the choral programs experienced more high and chronic teacher turnover than the band programs. The high teacher turnover rate among choral programs was perhaps due in part to the report that the school district "employed a substantial number of non-certified choral teachers, which created a more transient culture among choral teachers who persistently had to navigate certification requirements, coursework, time constraints, deadlines, etc. in addition to managing new teaching responsibilities" (2018, p. 277).

Further, Robinson found that secondary music teacher turnover was negatively correlated with total school enrollment, minority student enrollment, and suspensions. Additionally, there were no significant correlations between teacher turnover and the total number of poverty students and expulsions. The findings of this study further support the results of a Horng study (2009), which found that the transition of teacher turnover in urban schools most often occurs not due to the race or SES of the student population, but because of issues with the school, like behavioral problems, school safety, and the overall school climate. The results of Robinson's study (2018) suggest a need to further investigate the perspectives of beginning music teacher in urban schools, as this may reveal some context into the aspects of teaching in these unique settings that either drive or deter music teachers to continue teaching in urban schools.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Some studies previously reviewed in this chapter discussed the use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Coffey and Farinde-Wu, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2008). However, there are other studies that have looked specifically at the use of this approach. These studies will be reviewed in this section. One way that the perspective of music education is changing is the recognition of the idea that Western classical music "may not be the most culturally relevant vehicle to incite musical interest and participation for all populations" (Doyle, 2014a, p, 48). Previous studies have concluded this idea through investigations concerning student music participation in urban schools, implying that the incorporation of musical styles from diverse cultures and the teaching of courses that are more reflective of student' musical interests provide greater opportunities for musical achievement in urban school settings (Abril, 2009; Albert, 2006; Bosacki et. al, 2006, Bradley, 2007, Campbell, Connell, & Beagle, 2007; Miralis, 2006). However, few studies have examined the perspectives of music teachers in their use of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Doyle (2014b) conducted a study that investigated the effects of teacher/student differences, teacher quality indicators (TQIs), teacher preparation, and school support on music teacher attitudes towards and expectations of their students. TQIs are "combined measures of a teacher's years of experience, levels of education, undergraduate major, and teaching assignment in the area of expertise" (Doyle, 2014b, p. 439). A culturally relevant teacher questionnaire was given to 584 kindergarten through twelfth grade music teachers from 20 large, urban cities across the United States. The participants were mainly White (73.6%) females (56.3%) from suburban or rural communities (69.3%)

with middle class or higher socioeconomic backgrounds (74.6%). Findings of the study suggested that when music teachers matched demographically with their students, their perspectives about their students were more positive and they had high expectations of their students (Doyle, 2014b). Additionally, music teachers who felt more prepared to teach in urban schools had lower levels of implicitly prejudiced attitudes, more positive attitudes toward culturally relevant teaching music, and expectations of their teaching and of student learning outcomes. Additional research is needed on teacher perspectives related to culturally relevant teaching in urban schools that allowed for open-ended responses, as these might offer insights into the nuances of the participants' responses.

Albert (2006b) examined the recruitment strategies used by three Midwestern middle school band directors of successful band programs in low-socioeconomic schools. While the author of the study did not list the schools at which the teacher participants taught as urban, the issue of low-socioeconomic status (SES) associated with the schools in the study are in alignment with the challenge of low SES that is pervasive in many schools categorized as urban (Boggs and Dunbar, 2015). Data was collected via interview questions and field notes taken from researcher observation of the music programs. The participants reported employing such recruitment strategies as frequent exposure of the band program to the local elementary students and the opportunity for students to participate in culturally relevant ensembles based on student interests, such as marching bands that perform in the style of Black southern college bands. These nontraditional ensembles were reported to contribute to student pride in their schools and in the culture to which they felt most connected.

Not every teacher feels as comfortable as the band directors in the aforementioned study (Albert, 2006b) in their capability to teach non-traditional music or ensembles that fall outside of Western art music (Abril, 2009; Albert, 2006b; Legette, 2003). Also, teachers might not be confident about their ability to teach multicultural styles if they are not apart of the culture linked to the music (Abril, 2009; Legette, 2003). A case study by Abril (2009) examined how an instrumental music teacher responded to culture through the curriculum. The participant in this study was a White female band director at a suburban middle school who decided to create a Mariachi ensemble. The reason that the teacher decided to start this ensemble was due in part to a rapidly increasing number of Hispanic students in the school, but low numbers of Hispanic students in the band program. The teacher was not knowledgeable about Mariachi music nor other styles of traditional Mexican music, but was determined to create a culturally relevant curriculum that would peak the musical interests of the Hispanic students within the school. Abril found that, although tensions arose between teacher and students due to the teacher's limited contextual knowledge of the culture surrounding Mariachi music, the teacher persevered in actualizing the curriculum and denoted the experience as beneficial and appreciated. While this study did not take place in an urban school, the implications of creating culturally relevant curriculum in school music programs remains relevant. More research is needed to explore culturally responsive pedagogy specifically in urban environments and with beginning music teachers.

Shaw (2015) conducted a collective case study that sought out to examine successful urban choral directors' use of contextual knowledge in their teaching methods. The participants were four full-time choral directors who taught in the after-school

program within an urban "multiracial, multicultural choral education organization" (Shaw, 2015, p. 203). The participants had ethnically diverse backgrounds, including Korean-American, Black, White, and Jewish. The after-school choral program rehearsed in nine residential neighborhoods throughout an urban city in the Midwestern United States. Data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, ethnographic field notes, autobiographical notes, and collection of material culture.

Shaw found that the participants heavily relied upon their knowledge of the students in the areas of demographics, individual personalities, preferred learning styles, and preferred communication styles. The demographics that the participants had knowledge of consisted of an "awareness of students' racial and ethnic identities, socioeconomic status, immigrant status, family situation, housing, parents' orientation toward education" as well as knowledge of the "local economy, employment, housing, population stability or transience, crime, social services, and community organizations" where they taught (Shaw, 2015, p. 207). The participants displayed an understanding of the "active, participatory communication style" (p. 214) that was favored within the communities of their choir students by abandoning the standard tradition of classroom decorum where students are "expected to listen quietly and speak only when given permission by the teacher" (p. 213) and asking questions of the students while teaching Western classical repertoire. Shaw described how the use of this culturally relevant communication style gave students the opportunity to engage in dialogue that made the repertoire relatable because they could begin drawing comparisons in the choral music to matters to which they could culturally relate. Furthermore, the participants relied upon

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their knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy by making connections between the musical repertoire and iconic representation that was culturally relatable to the students in an effort to aid in student absorption of and represent for the educational material. The utilization of their knowledge of these important aspects aided in the participants' success as urban choral music educators, and could serve as a model for urban educators across multiple disciplines.

As mentioned earlier, many, if not most, teacher education programs do not incorporate culturally relevant teaching strategies within the curriculum (Coffey & Farinde-Wu, 2016). It is possible that a curricular focus on cultural relevance is even less common in undergraduate music education programs. However, some teacher education programs do incorporate community-based and cross-cultural immersion programs where "teacher education students actually live in communities that are culturally different from their own while they are learning to teach" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 96). Emmanuel (2002) examined pre-service music educators' beliefs related to teaching music in culturally diverse settings as they participated in a community-based and cross-cultural immersion teaching internship of teaching in an urban educational setting. This teacher education program placed pre-service teachers in a culturally diverse, urban elementary school as a part of the music education degree program. In the study, Emmanuel focused on the way that the pre-service music teacher participants spoke about "learning to teach music in the context of cultural diversity, and to probe the relationships among these conceptualizations prior to, during, and after a short-term immersion internship experience in a culturally diverse setting" (p. 15). The participants were five female music education majors with strong faith-based backgrounds, and all were non-Black and

non-Hispanic. Each of them participated in a course that included a week-long orientation and a two-week immersion experience in an urban community, along with group and individual interviews, and observations.

Emmanuel (2002) found that the participants felt that they "came to new awarenesses about themselves and about people typically viewed as 'other', they made shifts in their views of teaching and learning, and they developed new views concerning diversity" (p. 271). They were also able to acknowledge and challenge their privileges as members of the "White dominant culture" (p. 285). Further, three of the participants showed a "significant sign of a changing worldview," is to feel a which could be seen as a "call to social action, social justice, [and] looking critically at how our schools privilege some and disadvantage others" (p. 270). Collectively, the participants felt that they "came to new awarenesses about themselves and about people typically viewed as 'other', they made shifts in their views of teaching and learning, and they developed new views concerning diversity" (p. 271). They were also able to acknowledge and challenge their privileges as members of the "White dominant culture" (p. 285). Emmanuel concluded that music teachers might be more able to effectively teach for acceptance of cultural diversity than classroom teachers, because "the environment is more conducive for the inclusion of cultural content" than the academic classroom (p. 283). Therefore, Emmanuel argued that music education programs should better prepare future music teachers for the incorporation of cultural relevance within their pedagogical strategies. Additionally, Emmanuel stated that it would be beneficial to future music educators to be taught and trained by college music education professors who "not only have the

experience, but also the desire to help better prepare our future music educators for our

changing society" (p. 283).

Summary of Chapter

      The studies in this literature review have identified the rewards and challenges of

teaching in urban schools (Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008;

Kokka, 2016; Stanford, 2001) as well as the skills and personal attitudes necessary to be

effective in urban school teaching (Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick,

2008; Kokka, 2016; Shaw, 2015; Stanford, 2001). Several studies looked specifically at

the perspectives of experienced music teachers (Abril, 2009; Eros, 2018; Doyle, 2012;

Doyle, 2014b; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008; Robinson, 2018; Shaw,

2015). The experienced urban teachers that participated in these studies expressed

enjoyment in being able to make a difference in the lives of their students (Doyle, 2012;

Eros, 2018; Stanford, 2001), who in turn, taught the teachers about themselves and their

respective cultures (Abril, 2009; Albert, 2006b; Coffey and Farinde-Wu, 2016; Doyle,

2014b; Emmanuel, 2002; Kokka, 2016; Shaw, 2015). Many studies also found that the

teachers also recognized a need to be flexible in their teaching methods, with an

overarching necessity to incorporate culturally relevant teaching strategies in their

pedagogical practices in order to be most effective in reaching and teaching their students

(Abril, 2009; Coffey and Farinde-Wu, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2008). Although the rewards

seemed to outweigh the challenges, the common obstacles that teachers experienced were

a lack of administrative support, lack of parental involvement, classroom management

and discipline, and inadequate classroom space and resources (Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008; Kokka, 2016; Robinson, 2018).

This chapter not only surveyed previous studies on experienced urban teachers and music teachers, but also surveyed previous studies on preservice urban music teachers. Although a number of the experienced teachers said that they did not receive any preparation prior to beginning teaching (Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008), cultural immersion internships were found to be a useful experience to help prepare preservice teachers to teach in urban settings (Bruenger, 2010; Emmanuel, 2002; Mawhinney, Mulero, and Perez, 2012), but more emphasis on this topic is needed in undergraduate coursework. It is interesting to note that the teachers that participated in the studies reviewed in this chapter, who were not offered courses on urban education during their undergraduate degrees, expressed a need for change in undergraduate curricula so that preservice teachers could receive the necessary foundational knowledge, materials, and resources to be effective in teaching in this unique educational setting (Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008). A case study of beginning urban music teachers' views on culturally relevant teaching is necessary to begin bridging the gap between what we know about preservice music teachers' perspectives on teaching in urban schools and what we have learned from veteran urban music teachers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) was to examine beginning music teachers' perspectives of cultural relevance in relation to music instruction in urban school settings. The study examined the lived experiences of music educators with zero to three years of teaching experience in Urban Intensive schools (Milner, 2012) and both the positive and negative aspects of teaching music in these settings. This chapter will discuss the design, participation selection, informed consent, data collection & procedures, and data analysis of the study.

Design

This study utilized an instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995). The function of this design type is to provide insight into a central issue, which in this study is the perspectives of beginning music teachers on teaching in urban settings. An instrumental case study is "the study of a case (e.g., person, specific group, occupation, department, organization) to provide insight into a particular issue, redraw generalizations, or build theory" (Grandy, 2010, p 473). The case in the current study is beginning urban music teachers. Case study methodology has been used in previous empirical studies to examine teacher/student relationships, teacher perceptions, and the role of the teacher in the classroom (Dixon, 1994; Edgar, 2015; McNulty & Roseboro, 2009; Richards, 2006). Because of my personal experience as a music educator in urban schools, it is important for me to affirm that I set aside any personal experiences related to the phenomenon and focused only on the thoughts and experiences of the study participants.

Participant Selection

Participants were three beginning music teachers currently employed in urban schools in a major metropolitan city in the Southwestern United States. In this study, a teacher was considered to be a beginning teacher if they had zero to three years of experience teaching music in urban school settings. This amount of experience was considered beginner based upon The Life Cycle of the Career Teacher Model (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, and Enz, 2000; Steffy and Wolfe, 1997). According to this model, teachers are considered to be beginners when they first "receive responsibility for planning and delivering instruction to students on their own" and continues "into the second or third year of teaching" (Steffy and Wolfe, 2001, p. 16).

A purposeful sampling strategy (Palinkas et al., 2015) was utilized in this study. In order to recruit participants, I solicited recommendations from three local music education professors of music educators who were currently teaching in a school in an Urban Intensive city (Milner, 2012) and had zero to three years of experience teaching. Potential participants were contacted via email regarding their interest in participating in the study. Included in the email of initial contact was an introductory letter, explaining the purpose of the study along with the specifics of participation. Each subject was asked to respond to the initial introductory letter regarding interest/non-interest in the study by emailing the principal investigator within ten days of receipt of the introductory letter. A maximum period of four weeks was dedicated to gathering study participants.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants after gaining approval from the University of Houston's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Consent forms were emailed to each individual participant upon their written or verbal confirmation of interest following their receipt of the introductory letter which was sent via email. I received the signed consent forms personally, either from each participant's school of employment or via email. To thank them for their participation, each participant was provided a $20 Amazon gift card upon completion of the data collection procedures.

Data Collection Procedures

In this study, I drew upon multiple sources of data, consisting of the following from each participant: audio recordings from two semi-structured individual interviews, a 15-20-minute video recording of teaching in their classroom, and an audio recording of one focus group interview.

Data collection was based on Seidman's (2013) three interview series. This phenomenological approach to interviewing concentrates respectively on "the life history of the participant, the detailed experience(s) of interest, and reflections of the meaning of experience(s)" (Anderson and Holloway-Libell, 2014, p. 428). The following format was employed for the three interview series: two semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group interview. Upon IRB approval, I began contacting potential participants. After selecting participants, gaining their consent, and receiving their completed background questionnaire, I began the initial face-to-face interview process with each participant. The interviews took place at the school of employment for each participant,

during a time period selected by each participant during or after their school day. Each initial semi-structured interview was approximately 60 minutes in duration. The questions in the first interview were focused on such topics as their life experiences, the teacher education program in which they participated, and the steps that they took themselves to prepare for teaching music in an urban school (see Appendix A). This information was collected in an effort to "put the participant's experience in context" (Seidman, 1991, p. 17) by inquiring about their life in relation to the topic up to the present time. Within two weeks following the initial face-to-face interviews, a second 60-minute face-to-face interview was conducted with each individual participant at their school of employment, during a time period selected by each participant during or after their school day for the purpose of not intruding upon their time allotted for teaching and planning. The questions in the second interview were centered on gathering concrete details of each participant's present experience by exploring what (if any) role student culture plays in the instruction used by each participant (see Appendix B). It was in the second interview that each participant was asked to bring a 15-20-minute video of their classroom instruction. The participant and I watched the video during a portion of the interview, and then I asked the participant questions regarding the video.

Within two weeks of the initial interview of each participant, but before the second individual interview, participants took part in a 90-minute focus group that was held online via GoToMeeting.com and was audio-recorded. In the focus interview, questions were asked in order for each participant to reflect on meaning they ascribed to their experience of teaching music in urban settings. Specifically, this was done by exploring the challenges and rewards that beginning music teachers may experience

when teaching music in urban settings (see Appendix C). The purpose of the focus group was to create an interactive setting where participants were able to express their thoughts and opinions freely with other participants. The reasoning behind completing the focus group online was to eliminate the travel time that would have been needed to drive across a huge city with limited public transportation.

Data Analysis

Analysis took place during and after the data collection period. After transcribing the interview recordings, data were coded by hand and analyzed in order to examine connections between participants' experiences and to come away with strategies for teaching among urban populations. The codes were then analyzed to look for patterns in the codes in an effort to discover emerging themes. While my direct interpretation by myself was considered (Stake, 1995), the main instrument for data analysis was content analysis through the creation of data grouping through broad categories, the identification of emerging themes, and code development for the themes. (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In order to ensure trustworthiness, I used data triangulation and an expert review of the research and interview questions (Patton, 2002).

Chapter 4: Participant Background

This chapter will provide a synopsis of the participants in the study. At the time of data collection, all three participants had been teaching for two-and-a-half years, which means that they can be classified as beginning teachers (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, and Enz 2000; Steffy and Wolfe, 1997). Additionally, all participants taught in urban districts in a large Southern city in the United States. In order to protect the identities of the participants, all names of individuals and schools will be referred to with pseudonyms.

Liz

Liz was a 24-four-year old White female music teacher who taught general music and band at a public elementary school. Her schedule consisted of teaching general music to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade students, band to second, third, and fourth grade students, and Orff to fifth grade students. She described teaching elementary band as her "dream job" (interview, February 5, 2018) because of her passion for teaching elementary students, love of band, and preference to avoid dealing with the hormonal challenges that she perceived as often being present in middle and high school students.

The school where Liz taught is comprised of a majority of Black and Latino students, and it also served as a music magnet school within one of the largest public school districts in the country. The school sat near a major airport, in an area that would be considered low-income and was described by Liz as "not the safest area" (interview, February 26, 2018). Because of its magnet status, some students were bused to the school

from all over this large, metropolitan city, which created a mix of students from a range of socioeconomic statuses.

A part of Liz's understanding of and relatability to her students came from her own childhood experience, as she spent a portion of her childhood living in a neighborhood near the school where she taught at the time of the study. She described her experience in the first house where she lived in the following words:

> It was a little rough growing up. I remember having to leave my original house because we had gun holes in the fridge. Bullet holes. So my parents decided that was the last straw. So they moved...And even there, I had friends who got executed like on their front doorstep. So I mean, I kind of understand where some of these kids are coming from because I have been through that kind of stuff. Losing a friend. Seeing a friend get shot. Things like that. (Liz, interview, February 5, 2018)

Liz's parents divorced when she was she was five, and she spent much of her childhood going back and forth between their homes. She described her mother as a teacher as well as her main caretaker who struggled most of her life after having Liz by striving to provide for them both on a teacher's salary. However, Liz was able to attend a small, private elementary school where she recalled the teachers and the curriculum as being very effective. It was at this elementary school that she began to learn how to play the flute, but with an unconventional start:

> My PE [physical education] teacher, I mentioned to her that I wanted to play flute. So my PE teacher started a band because I asked her to teach me how to play the flute. So she got me a book. She actually rented me my

first flute...because my mom couldn't afford it at the time. So she got me a

flute, the book, and she said "Here, teach yourself. If you teach yourself, I

will build a band around you." So I went ahead and we started it and it

was...it was a mess at first. But it was a lot of fun. (Liz, interview,

February 5, 2018)

Her middle and high school years further fueled her love for band and

strengthened her abilities as a musician. During these years, she said that "band was my

life, basically. I mean, I would eat, sleep, and breathe band, and if I wasn't at home, I was

at band. Like, that was it. There was no in between" (interview, February 5, 2018).

Liz received a bachelor's degree from a large local state university, majoring in

music education and music performance in flute. Liz expressed that, overall, she was well

prepared by the teacher educators in the school of music where she attended, as they

brought a wealth of experience and perspectives on effectiveness in music education, and

this had provided her with a very strong foundation of knowledge in her career field. She

expressed that the instruction provided by her college music professors aided in her level

of preparation for entering the career field of music education. She humbly expressed her

confidence in teaching at her school of employment in the following words: "I just felt

overly prepared...even some people who work here feel like they're less prepared than I

am. And I was like, 'Well, that was because of my education,' and I really do appreciate

that" (interview, February 5, 2018).

Jonathan

Jonathan was a 30-year-old Black male band director at a public charter middle school. He was from a small city in a state located in central southern United States and was raised in a two-parent family of educators, and his sister also became a teacher. He grew up in a tight-knit community of middle class Blacks who heavily embraced a strong musical culture within the elementary, middle, and high school music programs. Although Jonathan was completing his third year of teaching at the time of this study, it was his second year of teaching at his current school of employment. However, Jonathan's work experience did not begin in the field of education. Upon graduating with a bachelor's degree in music technology from a mid-size university in his home state, Jonathan began a career as a traveling audio engineer for a private production company. When asked at what point he decided to transition from audio engineer to music teacher, he answered in the following manner:

> Well, I got tired of traveling (laughs). Audio engineers [are] always on the road doing stuff. So after I left audio engineering...well, I never left it, I just stopped traveling...I wanted to just settle down and just be rooted, so I started working as an audio tech at [a large oil and gas company], and then it got to a time where everybody was getting laid off in oil and gas. So my girlfriend at the time was like, "Hey, you need to just go get your teacher's license." She just kept saying it. I was finally like, "I'm not gonna be no teacher. I don't wanna teach." So I finally did it, and then before I even finished all my courses, I got three interviews. They were saying I was highly qualified because of all of my college requirements I already had

and my experience. And I got hired (Jonathan, interview, February 6, 2018).

Jonathan had completed a teacher education program through a private agency that granted him an alternative teacher certification but had not yet passed the state teacher certification exam. However, in his undergraduate curriculum, he completed courses in music education as well as the required music theory and music history courses that laid a foundation for the knowledge base he relied upon as a music teacher. For example, Johnathan's professors provided him with culturally relevant anecdotes that aided in the comprehension of certain concepts. He explained this method of teaching by describing an interaction with a music theory professor:

> They taught straight out of the book. 'This is how it's supposed to be'—cookie cutter. But then when you kinda get that intimate one-on-one session with them, the urban side comes out and you can understand them more. Because I didn't understand music theory at all because he went straight from the book. But then when he finally broke it down and made it, like, real-life situations…he helped me understand it (Jonathan, interview, February 6, 2018)

At the time of data collection, Jonathan was teaching at an all-boys middle school academy in which a majority of students are Latino and the remaining students are Black. He shared in his interviews that the students come from low-income homes and a large percentage of them have 504 plans, referring to individualized education plans that entitles students identified as having certain disabilities to receive special services (Spiel, Evans, & Langberg, 2014). Due to these circumstances, Jonathan felt that the students

were not always held to appropriate standards of discipline and provided limited

consequences for poor behavior; they were, in his words, "babied." He stated that:

> I think we kinda hinder them a little bit because...they see us for over
>
> eight hours a day, so when they leave, that's all they have in their mind, is
>
> that fairytale world, so if they go out in the real world and try to get away
>
> with things that they can get away with at school...life might give you
>
> consequences (interview, February 24, 2018).

Sarah

Sarah was a 24-year-old White female choir director at a middle school located on

the north side of the city. She not only was a native of this city, but also grew up in the

neighborhood in which she taught at the time of the study. Although she did not attend

the middle school where she was employed, the school did feed into the high school that

she had attended. Sarah grew up in a two-parent home where singing in church and heavy

participation in Boy Scouts had been and continued to be a family affair.

Throughout Sarah's experience as a student, she was always one of very few

White students in each school that she attended, with Latino and Black students being the

overwhelming racial majorities. She described her elementary school experience as being

one that shaped who she has inevitably become:

> There were not many White people in my school. I could probably count
>
> on my hands how many there were. It definitely changed who I am
>
> compared to who I could have been, because I learned a lot of Spanish…
>
> and that's definitely helped me as a teacher too. Because most of my
>
> students are Hispanic. So I'm able to communicate with them in a

different way. And I understand their needs and their wants a little easier

than other teachers, because I grew up in the same neighborhood as them.

(Sarah, interview, February 26, 2018)

Sarah's original goal upon graduating from high school was to become an opera

singer, but through the encouragement of her high school choir teacher, she began to

recognize and embrace her gift of teaching music. She explained the shift in her

perspective on her career choice in the following words:

I realized I was really good at teaching my class, and I actually would do

my work in other classes and then go back to the choir room and help [the

choir director] even more. And so I realized like, "I'm really good at this.

I'm really organized, I understand what is expected in the music, and I'm

a good sight reader". And so that kind of like, changed my perspective

about what I wanted to do. I was like "Well, if I do music education, I

could still perform." (Sarah, interview, February 26, 2018)

Sarah attended an out-of-state university during her freshman year of college, but

decided to transfer to an in-state university to complete her Bachelor of Science degree in

music with a choral emphasis and earned her teaching license during that time.

Unfortunately, she described the teacher education program in which she participated as a

"horrible" experience:

During my choral methods and during my student teaching, [those] were

really the only times that I actually learned anything...I was sitting in

teacher classes and, they taught me things that I never used ever. (Laughs).

They talked about these lesson formats that don't apply to choir...I mean,

I've talked to other choir teachers that are like, "Yeah, I just learned it myself." I feel like it didn't really prepare me as a choir teacher for what I have to do. (Sarah, interview, February 26, 2018)

Thankfully, her negative teacher education program experience did not dissuade her from pursuing her goal of becoming a choir teacher. Her efforts to achieve this dream reached beyond just being a career aspiration; Sarah's intention all along was to take her education and talents back to the school district in which she attended. She made deliberate steps to prepare herself to be ready to teach music in her home school district by volunteering at her former high school during winter and summer breaks while she was in college:

I knew that I was gonna come back to this school district. Every winter and most of the summers, whenever I would get out of school early before the high school actually got out, I would go and work with them for their Christmas Concert, and work with them for their Pop Show at the end of the school year...I would choreograph almost the whole thing for them. And anytime that I could volunteer with any of the schools in [the school district], I did because I knew that this area is what needed me most (Sarah, interview, February 26, 2018)

Summary

The three participants in this study all taught in differing school districts within the same city, and shared similarities as well as differences in their background and current experiences teaching music in urban schools. Two of the participants identified as

White females, while one identified as a Black male. Additionally, two of the participants were currently teaching in the city in which they grew up while one participant grew up in a completely different state from the one where he currently taught. One of the participants taught music at the elementary level while two of the participants taught music at the middle school level. In relation to content area, one participant taught choir and two participants taught band, with one of the band teachers also teaching general music classes as well. Although each participant earned their bachelor's degree from different universities, each of them shared that they did not have any classes in their undergraduate curriculum that focused specifically on teaching in urban settings. Also, even though they did not receive formal training to prepare them for urban teaching, each participant expressed an understanding of what they felt was necessary for their students to be successful within their music classrooms.

Chapter 5: Results

During the data collection period, the participants in this study shared their thoughts on their experiences teaching music in urban school settings. They also shared their thoughts on the incorporation of cultural relevance within their classroom instruction and the meaning that they place on teaching music in urban schools. In the next section, themes that emerged from the data will be presented according to each research question.

Research Question 1: What are the Perspectives that Beginning Music Teachers Have about Their Preparation to Teach Music in Urban Settings?

The participants expressed that they did not have any classes in their undergraduate curriculum that focused specifically on teaching in urban settings, they took the personal initiative to learn what was needed in order to be most effective in inspiring and teaching their students. Coding of the data revealed several broad themes which relate to Research Question 1. These themes included the following: (a) a lack of curricular content related to teaching in urban schools, (b) individual professional development, and (c) providing hope through music education.

Lack of Curricular Content Related to Teaching in Urban Schools. The participants felt that, in their undergraduate teacher preparation courses, they experienced lack of a curricular content focusing on the unique aspects of teaching in urban schools. All three of the participants shared that their teacher education programs were based

solely on "perfect world scenarios" (Liz, interview, March 3, 2018), which in essence, is

a term the participants used to describe an idealized classroom setting where teachers are

supplied with all of the needed resources, receive support from their administrators, and

have students who all learn in the same style and create few disciplinary distractions,

Similarly, Jonathan stated "I didn't have a 'How to Teach in Urban Schools' class. In

college, they taught the perfect world" (interview, February 6, 2018). As Liz explained:

> I was prepared for a perfect world situation...where you would come into a
>
> situation where all of the music instruments were there, all the furniture
>
> you needed was there, all the curriculum was there, and that was
>
> something that did not happen [when I started]. (Liz, interview, March 3,
>
> 2018)

Instead, Liz felt as though she "had the tools to kind of figure out how [she]

wanted to teach," rather than specific strategies for obtaining resources, like instruments,

furniture, or even a music curriculum, in an urban school where those resources were not

immediately available. Further, Liz seemed to feel that only learning about how to teach

music in an ideal setting was a limitation of her undergraduate music education courses

and that more information should be provided for other types of situations:

> ...I would say that [a] perfect world situation is not fathomable in the
>
> urban setting because of all the restrictions that we have. I think there
>
> should kind of be some kind of, I guess, sidetrack to saying "...This perfect
>
> world would be great, but this is also a reality that you might come into"
>
> (Liz, interview, March 3, 2018)

Liz suggested that, instead of focusing on ideal classroom environments, music teacher education programs should invite music teachers currently teaching in urban schools to come and speak with undergraduates in an effort to provide relevant, first-hand knowledge on what it is like to teach in those settings.

> It would be valid [to bring in urban music teachers] because, I mean, the teacher is coming straight from the school. So you know, you don't hear the hearsay, [like], "Oh well, I've heard that in urban schools they do this, and they have these kinds of struggles." It's actually an urban school teacher coming in and saying, "These are the struggles I deal with; this is how I fix them. Take whatever you need and use it yourself." (interview, March 3, 2018)

Sarah felt similarly to Liz, and she further suggested that, in addition to inviting in urban music teachers to speak, music teacher education programs should allow opportunities for preservice music teachers to go out into the schools to observe music teachers and have teaching experiences. She stated:

> You need to see a teacher who has experience—or even not really a lot of experience—go through the struggles of teaching at an urban school, and really have a conversation with them about what their challenges are, and what rewards they get out of it. Because a lot of people that I even graduated with, most of them teach in affluent areas, and so, you know, it makes me feel a little bad sometimes because I see their postings on Facebook, and you know, they're all like doing really well...and I'm like "Yeah, but you don't have to deal with everything that I have to deal

with." So, I mean just having the [preservice music teachers] actually go observe, I think would be a really huge benefit." (Sarah, interview, March 3, 2018)

Sarah seemed to insinuate that by allowing preservice music teachers the opportunity to observe urban music teachers in action, preservice teachers would be more prepared to handle the challenges that may present themselves in teaching in urban schools. Additionally, the comparison that Sarah made of her urban music teaching experience to those shared by her former classmates via social media postings revealed an acknowledgement of unique challenges that she felt she faced in urban music teaching.

Individual Professional Development. The participants each shared specific things that they recognized as essential for them to be more successful in their urban music teaching. Although their school districts probably provided professional development, they took on unique and personal efforts to grow in their teaching to better meet the needs of their students. The participants comments revealed that they each pursued this professional development informally, outside of any formal training, which was coded as a theme of individual professional development. In relation to the theme, Sarah ventured to learn how to communicate in Spanish; Liz took on the challenge of responding to students' maturity concerning certain subjects; and Jonathan sought out to gain essential knowledge on his students' culture.

Sarah's experience growing up in the school district where she currently taught allowed her the opportunity to pick up a modest amount of Spanish from her classmates, as she attended elementary, middle and high schools that were comprised of a majority of

Spanish-speaking students of Hispanic heritage. However, she did not feel the need to become conversationally fluent in Spanish until she became a teacher in the district. Her language acquisition in Spanish came as a result of intentionally participating in casual conversations with her students and other people around her community who spoke the language. "I have my kids teach me Spanish words every once in a while or I'll practice on my own" (interview, March 3, 2018). Perhaps surprisingly, Sarah did not share during the data collection period that her desire to learn Spanish was due in any part to a need to communicate with her students, but rather, because it helped her to better communicate with her students' parents, many of whom only spoke Spanish. Sarah reflected on her desire to learn Spanish for the purpose of communicating with parents in the following words:

> I already knew quite a bit of Spanish, but for me, my school is primarily Hispanic, and I've had to learn so much just to communicate with the parents...and I have to go through and actually figure out the sentence structure and make sure that it sounds okay. That's been one of the things that I didn't know...because you know, I want to be communicative with the parents. (interview, March 1, 2018)

While Sarah sought to learn Spanish as way to further develop herself professionally, Liz challenged herself to learn the best methods of how to navigate her elementary students' advanced understanding of mature life topics. "Kids in what we're calling an urban setting, they're far more mature than other [non-urban] students" (interview, February 26, 2018). In an effort to channel the students' energies into more

positive mature topics, Liz ventured to test their ability to comprehend more mature

musical skills, such as composition and jazz appreciation:

> We have 5th graders talking about sex, and I'm like "You're in the 5th
> grade. You should be talking about cartoons." But what that tells me is
> that we can do more mature things in music. So now we're composing;
> we're actually doing jazz...Since they're more mature emotionally—not
> physically but emotionally—then that means that we can do mentally
> more mature things. And I think that's kind of cool in a way because
> they're not shut off from the world. Like they understand what's going on.
> They understand innuendos in cartoons and movies now, which is
> frightening, but it's also a little bit eye opening because then you can push
> them even further." (interview, February 26, 2018)

Although an understanding in topics like sex does not necessarily correspond with

an understanding of more complex music genres like jazz, Liz gave this as an example to

show her students' knowledge of the larger world outside of school. As a result, she

believed that her students were ready for lessons in school that were on more complex

musical topics and interests, in the hope that these would further engage and challenge

them.

Jonathan also worked toward advancing himself through individual professional

development as he tackled the task of trying to understand the culture of his students. At

the time of this study, he taught a population of middle school boys of whom a majority

were of Mexican heritage. During each of his interviews, he shared instances in which he

had strived to find ways to best connect with his students. One specific instance was

while preparing music to be performed in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at his school. Jonathan shared that he did not have any knowledge of culturally relevant repertoire for this particular concert, and so he initially turned to YouTube for ideas of popular Hispanic music. However, when that was unsuccessful, he eventually turned to his students to ask them to tell him about songs from their culture:

> I had to teach them something, so I asked them "Okay, what songs do y'all listen to? Or what songs represent your culture?" And they started telling me all of these songs. I'm like "Okay, let me see. How can I teach them that?" And they gave me songs that I didn't even think about—they gave me the "Macarena" and they gave me "Maria, Maria," [which were] songs that I already knew. So I was like "Okay, I can definitely teach that." That was one of the situations where I didn't know what to teach them, but they taught me, "Hey, we listen to stuff that you listen to, too." (Jonathan, interview, February 6, 2018)

The participants in this study engaged in this professional development because they each recognized upon entering their classrooms that there was more for them to learn regarding how to be more successful at teaching classroom music than what they had presented within their teacher education courses. They took the personal initiative to improve upon themselves professionally without being prompted by anyone around them and received this professional development from themselves through use of the human and material resources around them. Each of the participants discussed a matter that related to better understanding the cultural climate in which they taught. Although this individual professional development took place after they had already begun their

professional teaching careers, the participants identified elements of their personal knowledge related to the cultural climate among their students and initiated a fresh stage of preparation aimed at being most effective in teaching their students. While they were in the process of teaching, the participants had the opportunity to learn things from their students that have given them more confidence in their ability to teach within the urban school setting.

Providing Hope Through Music Education. In preparing to teach music in an urban school setting—an environment that is often not favorably looked upon by future preservice teachers—the three participants in this study took into consideration the possible positive outcomes that could come as a result of making this choice. Each of the participants expressed that one of the aspects of teaching music in an urban school setting that they most looked forward to was making a difference in the lives of their students. During the focus group discussion, the participants were asked the question, "Was there anything that you looked forward to regarding teaching music in an urban school prior to beginning your music teaching career?" and they each spoke along the theme of providing hope through music for their students.

In response to this question, Liz instantly answered that her motivation was to "be able to change lives" (interview, March 3, 2018). She felt that through teaching, she would be able to make a difference in the lives of her students "by teaching them that there's this whole other world of music, and you can escape into the music, and you can even better your life with music by going to college" (interview, March 3, 2018). Sarah agreed with Liz and added that she mentally prepared to provide an outlet for her students

to escape the rough realities that many of them faced in their home lives. She wanted to inspire them to believe that "you can push yourself to be better than how you're living now through music" (interview, March 3, 2018).

While Liz and Sarah's comments toward providing hope for their students was a bit more generic, Jonathan's thoughts related to the theme were more specific. In preparing to teach band in an urban school, Jonathan made the decision to introduce his students to band culture in the style characteristic of southern Black colleges—like the one that he attended—in an effort to inspire his students to consider participating in band while attending a historically Black college or university as he had done. Jonathan incorporated this musical style in his curriculum, and at the time of data collection, he reflected upon the impact that this decision had on the culture of his classroom:

> It feels good to see students in my room, when they're supposed to be outside playing football or basketball. They're in my room looking at my old college days, trying to learn what we did, and it's Black and Hispanic [students] who don't have any rhythm, just in there trying to learn something...they're trying to figure out, okay, "if Mr. [Jonathan] can do it and Mr. [Jonathan] is good, let me see what he used to do," and it makes them better musically too, because they're learning different things without me having to always teach it to them. They're exploring on their own." (Jonathan, interview, February 24, 2018)

The pride that Jonathan felt in seeing his students take interest in the musical style that had played a major role in his own musical development went beyond sharing a

common musical enthusiasm. Jonathan recognized that his students saw his musical experiences as inspiration in their own development of musical skill and appreciation.

The three participants seemed to promote music as a form of escapism for the students from the hardships that many of them face within their everyday lives in their homes and communities. Additionally, they used the education of music as a means of advocacy for their students to graduate from high school, make music in college, and even to possibly consider careers in music. The inclusion of this perspective in their preparation to teach music in urban schools has served as daily motivation for each of the participants as they have strived to make a difference in the lives of their students.

Research Question 2: What Role Does Student Culture Play in Beginning Urban Music Teachers' Instruction?

Student culture is an unavoidable aspect of classroom teaching, as it often plays an important role for how students define their identities as well as relate to matters and aspects of the world. It is important to add that, as defined in this study, culture is not limited to student race or ethnic identity, but also includes the attitudes, behaviors, language, customs, and beliefs held by groups of people in comparison to other groups (Matsumoto, 2001; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Coding of participant responses in response to Research Question 2 revealed an overarching theme of connectivity and relatability with two sub-themes: (a) connecting through popular music and music from students' cultural heritage, and (b) connecting through concerts featuring multicultural music. Although the theme that emerged regarding the role of student culture in participants' instructional

practices is not an issue exclusive to urban schools, it does reveal how each participant demonstrated a sensitivity to student culture.

Connectivity & Relatability. It is of great importance that teachers develop pedagogical strategies that promote a positive connection between the material being presented and the student in order to aid in absorption of the educational information. This connectivity can be found through teachers developing creative ways to relate presented materials to aspects of students' lived experiences. The participants in this study all mentioned their efforts to connect with their students as a critical method of capturing students' interests. Liz discussed what happens when she does not present relatable examples in her classroom instruction:

> If I [sing] 'Itsy Bitsy Spider' for first grade, they're just gonna look at me like I'm crazy, 'cause that's a baby song to them, 'cause they're singing Cardi B and Migos all day long. (Laughs). So yes, it definitely makes a difference. (interview, March 1, 2018)

Similarly, Jonathan spoke about making content relatable to his students by having what he referred to as a "hook."

> You have to be able to catch them, 'cause if you're just going with the same old textbook way [of teaching] in an urban school, that's not going to work. You'll lose your crowd. You're not gonna get anything accomplished. You'll be fighting harder, harder than them, to get it, and I think that [during] my first year of teaching, that was my problem. I didn't hook them first, I was just trying to go 'textbook', how they taught me to

teach, and it was a struggle for that first year. (interview, February 24, 2018)

Jonathan recognized that the traditional way that he was taught to teach in his teacher preparation courses did not work in connecting with his urban school students when trying to make the instructional material relatable to them. Instead, he abandoned this traditional method and adopted a culturally relevant pedagogical method of drawing the students in with introductory material that the students found relatable.

Unlike Jonathan and Liz, Sarah expressed that, although there was "definitely a benefit" to consideration of student culture in her urban music teaching, she believed that there were limitations to doing so (interview, March 3, 2018). She believed that it was important for teachers to "understand the culture of the students that you teach" (interview, March 1, 2018) and to sometimes relate lyrical or topical themes found in the music that the students learn by "making movie references for them" (interview, March 1, 2018). However, she did not "necessarily teach to their culture" (interview, March 1, 2018). Instead, Sarah expressed the sentiment that too much consideration of student culture in teaching music in urban schools would limit the students' ability to assimilate into subcultures outside of their own at beneficial moments:

> If you just teach the way that they know, if they ever go anywhere else besides here, then they may not understand how to do it a different way...If they ever decide to go to a college or university somewhere else that is primarily a different culture, they're gonna get a culture shock. (interview, March 1, 2018)

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Although Sarah did not delve into any details of why students receiving culturally relevant instruction would receive a "culture shock" in a different setting, it is my interpretation that Sarah's educational goal was to ensure that her students leave her classroom well equipped to absorb information in a variety of educational methods, not limiting their way of learning to methods that are unique to their current cultural climate. However, in making this decision to limit how much she would teach to the students' culture, Sarah likely missed out on opportunities to use culturally responsive teaching to connect with students' interests or recognize her students' unique ways of understanding choir.

Connecting Through Popular Music and Music from Students' Cultural Heritages. Each teacher expressed that some of the ways that they incorporated student culture in the instructional practices within their classrooms was by incorporating popular music and music from their students' cultural heritages in parts of their curriculum throughout the school year. Liz said:

> I do "Figure it Out Fridays," and I play the clean versions of popular songs, and they have to tell me the name and the artist. They really enjoy that, and it kind of brings their everyday life into music. (interview, March 1, 2018)

Jonathan shared that he began the school year by teaching marching band styles where the students learn "pop and rap songs" (February 24, 2018).

> I like to introduce that because it's the hook to catch the students, to get their attention, because I know me, growing up, if they would have

introduced classical [music] to me first, I wouldn't have liked music class,

but by catching me with what I like, with the rap, then I started

appreciating the classical style, because now I know that I can read and

play that now, and because I'm hooked to all of the music now. (February

24, 2018)

Jonathan went on to add that during the spring semester, the students were working on rap songs chosen by the students to play during a Black History Month celebration at their school. Sarah incorporated popular music for the purpose of including it in their choir concerts at the end of each semester and in preparation for a pop competition that her students participated in annually. This incorporation of popular music in her curriculum required after-school rehearsals because in the school, Sarah's choir classes were separated by gender but the songs that she selected were for mixed voices. "Whenever we do pop music, I have my varsity girls and my varsity boys combine and that requires extra rehearsals because their classes are not mixed" (March 1, 2018).

In addition to incorporating popular music into their curriculums, the participants also used music from the cultural heritages of their students. Liz made an effort to introduce music in a different language each month. "Every month, we have a different language that we sing. So this month is Zulu. Super exciting because I don't speak Zulu. [Laughs]. So just trying to sing in Zulu is exciting in itself" (interview, February 5, 2018). Sarah incorporated music in Spanish in her classroom, which allowed for a vast majority of her student population to sing in their primary language. During the data

collection period, Sarah's students were preparing a Spanish language song that they had learned earlier in the year for a state-based choral competition:

> This is one of our Spanish songs, and we did this in our fall concert. Then we brought it back for [state choir competition] because it was so successful in the fall concert, and it made teaching it a lot easier because they already knew the language. There were a couple of students in the class that don't speak Spanish, and so they had to learn [the words within the music], but a lot of it they already knew. And it has this Latin flair with it that they all really enjoy, so that helped put the tag on the song as well. (Sarah, interview, March 1, 2018)

The participants each individually observed the relevance of establishing a connection with their students through the use of popular music and the incorporation of music from various cultural heritages. They also made a conscious decision to make the information presented within their classroom instruction relatable to their students for the purpose of helping students to correlate new material with their own identifiable lived experiences. As each of the participants continue to guide their students toward connecting and relating to the music presented in their classrooms, it is possible that the students will, in turn, develop ways to connect and relate to music that they are exposed to outside of the school music experience and cultivate a personal appreciation for many different styles and genres of music.

Connecting Through Concerts Featuring Multicultural Music. Additionally, the participants highlighted how students' cultures were celebrated with extra emphasis

during designated months throughout the year. With the overwhelming majority of the participants' student populations being Black and/or Hispanic, these cultural commemorations occurred according to nationally celebrated holidays, such as Black History Month during the month of February, Cinco de Mayo on May 5th, and Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th through October 15th. During the time that the first interviews of each participant was being conducted, all of them were either preparing for or had recently completed concerts centered around Black History Month and were beginning to prepare for musical performances for around Cinco de Mayo celebrations at each of their schools.

Jonathan taught African and Latin music to his students in observance of cultural celebrations within the school year. "We have an African piece that we're doing for our Black History Month program on Tuesday. We've done a Latin piece for Hispanic Heritage Month, and we are also doing another Latin piece for Cinco de Mayo" (interview, February 24, 2018). Similarly, Sarah's students had previously performed songs representative of different cultures from around the world during their fall concert, so she decided to have them perform the songs from African cultures during the school's Black History Month program. "We did a lot of African cultures because that's what my kids [the students within the school] like to see because it's all really upbeat, so we performed them in our Black History program. And now we're getting ready for our Cinco de Mayo program and they really enjoy performing for those and learning about different cultures" (interview, March 1, 2018).

Liz shared that her students were preparing for the school's Black History Month program, and that the students would be playing West African drum music. The students

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had not only learned the music, but Liz had also provided the students with an opportunity to first learn about West African culture in preparation for learning the music:

> We're doing a Black History Month program this Wednesday, so I decided that we're gonna do some West African Drumming things. The students really enjoy it. We got to watch a video where a couple of missionaries went to West Africa, so they [the students] know how they live. They saw all kinds of different drums being played. They heard different rhythms on the different kinds of drums. And that was exciting for them, because it's different, and they had so many questions, and I was super excited because I love when my kids have questions. That means they're interested, it means they're excited, and it means they're actually learning. (Liz, interview, March 3, 2018)

In addition to selecting African music for Black History month, Liz pedagogically strived to connect with her students by first showing them a video of real-life experiences within West African culture and then introducing them to the music of the culture. Watching the video not only sparked the interest of the students to gain a deeper understanding of the culture, but it also aided in creating an enjoyable experience for them when they had the opportunity to begin playing the music of the culture. This provided the students with a point of cultural reference with the music.

None of the teachers mentioned (nor were asked) whether or not it was their ideas to perform these concerts. They also did not share whether or not they required or asked to perform for these school events. However, each participant mentioned that their

students greatly enjoy learning about other cultures as well as learning more about their own through music.

Research Question 3: What Meanings do Beginning Music Teachers Place on Their Experience of Teaching Music in Urban Settings?

The meaning that teachers place on their experience of teaching music in urban settings can have a direct influence on how they complete the activity of a particular experience. The participants in this study were asked specific questions for the purpose of encouraging them each to reflect on meaning about teaching music in urban settings by exploring the challenges and rewards that beginning music teachers may experience when teaching music in urban settings. Coding of participant responses revealed several broad themes that relate to Research Question 3. These themes included: (a) familial roles, (b) rapport, (c) need for support from administrators and parents, and (d) peer support. Additionally, two participants expressed noteworthy sentiments on the meaning that they place on providing a sense of safety and security for their students.

Familial Roles. Participants in this study took on a familial role in their daily interactions with their students. Throughout the data collection process, each participant unsolicitedly either defined a portion of their role as teacher to their students as that of a mother or brother or likened their classrooms to a home-like environment. When asked what type of classroom environment he tried to establish with his students, Jonathan spoke of his students seeing him "like a big brother" (interview, February 24, 2018). Taking on this big brother role seemed to imply that Jonathan had strived to maintain a

certain level of approachability and relatability among his students that was more

comparable to that of a sibling rather than a parent:

> They don't see me as a parent because I'm not trying to be their parent,
> but they see me as a big brother guiding them the way they need to go, and
> you get better results that way, if they know they can trust you and have
> fun with you, they invest more into what you're saying instead of
> somebody just being a disciplinarian, always down their throat (interview,
> February 24, 2018).

Sarah pointed out that her caring nature aided in creating a familial relationship

between herself and her students:

> I'm a very nurturing person. I'm not a mom; I don't have kids, but half the
> children call me mom, and it's kind of weird because I'm only 24. But,
> you know, that's just how I am and I want what's best for my kids
> (interview, March 3, 2018)

Sarah did not seem to have sought out to be a mother figure to her students, but

her students seemed to have recognized aspects of her character that they attributed to

that of a positive, maternal figure.

Similarly, Liz stated that she tried to create a family environment for the purpose

of filling the void of what she perceived to be an absence of parental and familial

involvement in the lives of their students:

> We're family, because I know a lot of my kids don't have that. And you
> kinda have to establish this rapport, because when something's wrong, and

they don't want to talk to you because they don't know you, then they ruin

the entire lesson. (interview, March 3, 2018)

Jonathan and Sarah both discussed the familial role that their students perceived them to be fulfilling. Both of them seemed to embrace that particular role, as it gave meaning to their teaching experience within their classrooms. Liz spoke more toward an intentionality on her part to create a familial setting for her students that was beneficial in two ways: providing students with the support for their overall wellbeing that was missing in some of their lives and serving as a method of classroom management.

Rapport. The participants also found meaning through establishing and maintaining rapport or an understanding between themselves and their students. When asked about how she would describe the culture of her classroom, Liz discussed her method for building rapport, which seemed to be based on her teaching philosophy that centered around respect:

I base my entire teaching, and I guess culture, on respect. Respect

cultivating learning…Wanting them to learn, 'cause I know a lot of kids

don't even wanna be at school...so, I guess my [classroom] culture would

be more of just being respectful and trying to figure out people, dealing

with people. (Liz, interview, March 3, 2018)

Jonathan built rapport with his students by maintaining a balance of joviality and firmness in their interactions. "I like to keep it light," he explained. "I like to keep it entertaining, but also firm. They also know they can't get away with a lot of things with me, but they know that Mr. [Jonathan] has my back" (interview, February 24, 2018). For

the purpose of providing context, Jonathan used the phrase "has my back" as a colloquialism to infer that he was actively prepared to provide support and guidance to his students whenever a need would arise.

The meaning that Jonathan placed on rapport extended beyond the relationship that he strived to establish and maintain with his students. Jonathan also placed meaning in maintaining consistent communication with the parents of his students, and he enjoyed hearing from the parents about how their child's participation in the school band has shifted the culture within their homes. "A lot of parents email me every day, just thanking me," he explained. He went on describing this with some sarcasm at first:

> Well, some of them are mad at me because they [their students] [are] beating all around the house or playing their instrument around the house, but then they thank me, like, "Okay, they could be doing something worse, but all they're doing is on YouTube looking at Jackson State [University band], playing this, playing that." So I definitely stay in touch with them. They come up to the school and talk to me a lot, all of the time. (interview, February 24, 2018)

Jonathan seemed to have taken pride in playing a role in shifting the culture of his students' homes to be one that embraced a love of marching band music, similar to that of his own lived experience.

Sarah placed great meaning on cultivating rapport from the standpoint of showing her students a great level of care. She also set a standard of encouraging the students to strive to perform at their best in every aspect of life, and that sense of care was in turn

reciprocated by the students by aiming to work hard through their participation in the choir. Sarah shared the following thoughts on the matter:

> I push them to be better, but I push them in a way that they want to be better by themselves. You know, [I might say to them that] "If you're not doing your own work, I can't do anything for you. You don't participate, you're not gonna get 100 every day. If you don't work hard, you're not gonna come home with that trophy at the competition." ...And that's just how I am, and I want what's best for my kids. (Sarah, interview, March 1, 2018)

Need for Support from Administrators and Parents. The participants not only placed meaning on the need for respect to be shown and received between teacher and student, they also discussed the lack of support from the administrators and/or parents for various entities of their music programs, which revealed the meaning that they placed on receiving support and encouragement from these two groups. Jonathan was very vocal about this issue. He said, "A lot of times they [administrators] want you to do things, but when you need resources, they can't find the resources for it. But they want you to pull things out your hat, and just make you work" (interview, March 3, 2018). Liz added to this conversation by stating that the administrators at her school were "supportive in theory" (interview, March 3, 2018), which based upon the words that followed, implied that while the administrators were proud of the work done by the music department within the school, they did not play an active role in physically showing support during student performances:

They love our music magnet program, and they're like "Yay, go music."

And then whenever we have concerts, there's no administration, nobody

there. So they'll post things on social media that other people took pictures

of, like the band directors or the piano directors, and then they won't show

up...and you would think that we would have more support since we are a

music magnet school, but not really. But our magnet coordinator is

probably the most supportive that we have, which is nice because he's

directly over us. (interview, March 3, 2018)

Because Liz's school was a designated music magnet academy within the school

district, a music magnet coordinator was assigned to serve in an administrative support

role by fulfilling such duties as liaison between the principals and music teachers,

providing support for the music teachers, and developing goals and objectives to promote

a quality music magnet program. Although the magnet coordinator would be considered

an administrative role, the administrators that Liz referred to as lacking in their support of

the school music programs were the building-level principals.

Administrators are not the only people that urban music teachers look to for

support of their music programs, but they also place meaning on the support of the

parents of the students that they teach. When parents of students are actively involved in

their children's educational endeavors, it serves not only as a major foundation in

building student success, but also as reinforcement for the efforts of the classroom

teacher, which can boost teacher morale as they work to provide the best educational

experience possible to each student. Both Sarah and Liz expressed issues with a lack of

parental involvement. Sarah discussed lack of parental support as being the biggest

challenge that she faced while teaching music in an urban school, as just getting parents to attend student performances was a difficult task. Sarah shared, "That's really important because for these kids, they want their parents to be proud of them, and if the parents are not going to come to see them perform, they're just like, 'What's the point?'" (interview, March 1, 2018).

When asked about building or maintaining relationships with parents, Liz shared that while some parents played an active role in their child's educational journey, others were unavailable in moments of need concerning their students, and so Liz strived to connect with extended family when necessary:

> Some [parents] are very supportive, if I can get ahold of them. I've gotten ahold of auntie, grandma, grandpa. Sometimes daddy's not there, so mom will give me dad's number to tell him what I told her. I don't call, because they will not answer the phone calls. So, I text...it's easier. You don't get the whole phone call, "Oh, well I'm working right now, so I can't talk." You don't get the, "Oh, I didn't get your message," 'cause you can see that it's sent. [Laughs.]. (Liz, interview, March 3, 2018)

It is interesting to observe that Liz made an effort to get in contact with people other than the parents of her students when she was not able to reach the parents directly. This speaks to the meaning that Liz placed on connecting with someone in the lives of the students for the purpose of meeting students' needs. Additionally, Liz decided to communicate with students' family members via text in order to most reliably ensure that the information shared would be received by someone serving in a supportive role in the child's personal life.

The participants' perceptions of a lack of support from school administrators revealed that meaning was placed on receiving backing, assistance, and advocacy from school leaders when teaching music in urban schools. Jonathan's requests for resources from his administrators were not met favorably, while Liz expressed disappointment in her administrators lack of presence at school music performances. Meaning was also placed on receiving support from students' parents, as Liz and Sarah mentioned a lack of support from parents. Liz avoided communicating with parents via phone call, but chose text messaging as the most effective method of contact for the purpose of ensuring that the necessary student information was received. Additionally, she reached out extended family members when she was unable to get in contact with students' parents, implying that meaning was not only placed on her own support from parents, but also on her students having a support system that was knowledgeable of pertinent student information. Similarly, Sarah placed meaning on parent support for the purpose keeping the students motivated to continue participating in their choral ensemble. She expressed that a void in parental presence at student performances could cause many of the students to begin to question their involvement in singing.

Peer Support. The participants in this study highly valued the relationships they established with their school colleagues, particularly those who taught other ancillary subjects, like physical education, art, and other specialized music classes. Often, teachers within a single school are grouped into "teams" with other teachers who teach the same main subject area, while teachers of what are referred to as ancillary subjects like music, physical education, and art are typically grouped into a single team. The participants in

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this study explained that the bonds that they shared with their colleagues were developed in school through personal conversations and lunch gatherings, and outside of the school at social functions. Liz taught at a music magnet elementary school where there were six music teachers, and they had established a network of support among one another. This network included four veteran music teachers who each had over 25 years of teaching experience. When speaking of the information that she and her fellow younger colleagues gleaned from the more seasoned teachers, Liz made the following statement:

> We get information on how things work, we also bounce ideas off of
> them, because they're learning stuff...So we just kinda talk to each other.
> And it's really good, because we always get along. (interview, March 1,
> 2018)

Jonathan also discussed the great value that he placed on maintaining relationships with his colleagues. He shared it to be necessary in preserving personal motivation to continue doing the work of a teacher. "If you don't like who you work with, you're gonna have a rough time at work," he explained (interview, February 24, 2018). Jonathan also described how the bond he shared with his colleagues was based on assisting one another and establishing personal connections:

> The fine arts department, we're very close. We're just always
> collaborating with each other, like, [thinking] "What can we do to help
> each other's classes out?" We always go to lunch all the time together. Me
> and the P.E. coach, we go to the gym every lunch break, so, it's a real
> quick family. The art teacher lives probably less than 10 minutes away

from my house, so we're like real close now. (interview, February 24, 2018)

Sarah's thoughts on building and maintaining relationships with colleagues aligned with those of Liz and Jonathan, in that she saw value in establishing healthy relationships with some of the other teachers in her school of employment. She even shared that one of her colleagues is her best friend. "My best friend, she was just texting me a minute ago. She was like, 'Are you coming to lunch?' She's a science teacher here and we met here at school" (interview, March 3, 2018). However, unlike the other participants, Sarah made it very clear that for her, it was important to establish boundaries with some colleagues so as to not create any conflicts of interest that would negatively affect the working environment. She shared her thoughts in the following words:

> There are some people that don't know how to keep the professional separated from the unprofessional. And so, there are certain people that...we're friends here at school, but that's it and there's no outside communication...but I think, to an extent, it is important to have relationships with your colleagues because you never know what will happen. You never know who you need a reference from or who you need to cover your classes last-minute, things like that. (Sarah, interview, March 3, 2018)

Sarah's caution in setting and observing boundaries with her colleagues seemed to come as a result of her desire to maintain a level of professionalism and respect within her school. By establishing a reputation of professionalism and respect among her

colleagues, Sarah believed that this image would put her in a better position to receive assistance when or if ever needed from her peers.

Safety and Security. Although there was not enough information to consider it a theme, it was important to share the great meaning that Liz and Sarah placed on intentionally providing a sense of safety and security for their students. They expressed this provision of safety and security through their awareness of the challenges that some students face outside of the music classroom and/or by building and maintaining relationships with others who were a part of their students' cultures, namely, the parents of the students. Liz placed great value on helping her students to find refuge from whatever life circumstances that they may individually face by creating a safe space for her students when they come into her music class:

> At the beginning of the year, I tell my kids, "This is music class. Whatever happens outside of music class, leave it out there, because we're here to have fun. We're here to learn about music, and this is a safe zone." I understand that some of my students have some life difficulties, and I take notice and I adjust. But I don't make it a point to single them out, or baby that person. I just try to make this a safe space and make sure that they know that "When you're in music class, when you're with me, you're gonna be safe." (interview, March 1, 2018)

Part of Sarah's value in being culturally sensitive to her students came through her desire to create a sense of stability for her students that she felt to be missing from their personal lives. She shared the following statement:

I think part of what I am [for students] too is a stable place, a stable person

for them. A lot of these families come from Mexico with nothing and they

work to build up what they can, but that doesn't always mean that that's

what's gonna stick...so, they know that I'm here. And even kids that I had

in the past...they'll still message me, like "Hey, how you doing?" And

they talk to me about their situations. (Sarah, interview, March 1, 2018).

For the purpose of better understanding the participants' approaches toward safety

and security while teaching music in an urban setting, it is important to share that Liz and

Sarah did not match the ethnic and racial backgrounds of the majority of the students that

they taught. Liz, a White female, taught a majority of Black and Hispanic students. Sarah,

a White female, taught students who were primarily Hispanic. It was interesting to note

that, although Liz did not match her students racially or ethnically, her response related to

safety and security spoke to her own lived experiences with growing up in environments

where she felt unsafe, and this was the cultural aspect that seemed to match between

participant and student population. Sarah seemed to place meaning on providing stability

for her students, which was something that she perceived to not be afforded to them by

their parents, with a qualifying reason being ethnic in nature. While Sarah's expressed

care and concern were assumed to be deeply genuine, it is important for teachers—

especially those who belong to racial groups outside of their students—to strive toward

embracing a more nuanced perspective of their students by avoiding and/or eradicating

personal judgements or stereotypes that could potentially be perceived as problematic.

Summary

Several themes emerged that related directly to the participants' thoughts on preparations necessary and the preparation that they each personally underwent to teach music in urban school settings, to include a lack of curricular content related to teaching in urban schools, individual professional development, and providing hope through music education. The participants made recommendations that, beyond in-class discussions, preservice music teachers need hands-on experiences observing and teaching. Within their brief time teaching, they had discovered along the way skills and cultural understandings that would aid in them being more successful within their urban classrooms, such as learning Spanish in an effort to communicate with parents who do not speak English, learning how to navigate students' advanced understanding of mature life topics by testing their ability to comprehend more mature musical skills, and collaborating with students in order to learn more about music that is relevant to the culture of the students.

A single theme of connectivity & relatability emerged related to the participants' thoughts on the incorporation of cultural relevance within their classroom instruction, with two sub-themes of connecting through popular music and music from students' cultural heritage and connecting through concerts featuring multicultural music. The participants recognized an importance in connecting to their students by finding ways to make the instructional content relatable by considering aspects of the students' various cultures when teaching music. Additionally, the participants' responses revealed that their awareness of culture stretched beyond race or ethnicity but included recognition and understanding of music and film that were popular within their students' social spheres.

Lastly, several themes emerged related to the meaning that the participants' placed on teaching music in urban schools, which included familial roles, rapport, cultural sensitivity, and peer support. For the participants, being an urban music teacher meant establishing a bond with their students that was akin to that of an ideal family unit– one built on care, concern, and trust. They also placed meaning on establishing and maintaining a general understanding of respect and classroom expectations between teacher and students, respect for the various cultures of their students and parents, as well as forming healthy and supportive relationships with school colleagues for the purpose of providing and receiving assistance from one another.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The purpose of this instrumental case study was to examine beginning music teachers' perspectives of cultural relevance in their music instruction in urban school settings within in a large Southwestern city. Specifically, this study sought to explore the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives that beginning music teachers have about their preparation to teach music in urban settings?

2. What role does student culture play in beginning music teachers' instruction?

3. What meanings do beginning music teachers place on their experience of teaching music in urban settings?

Few studies exist providing information on culturally relevant music teaching within urban school settings (Abril, 2009; Doyle, 2014; Emmanuel, 2002; Shaw, 2015), and at the time of this writing, there were no other studies that explored this topic with beginning music teachers. This research study was designed to address the gap in the literature with the intention of offering insights to help music teacher educators to better prepare preservice music educators for culturally responsive teaching in urban schools and also to propose for providing support and professional development for beginning urban music educators.

Methods

This instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) examined the lived experiences of three music educators with zero to three years of teaching experience in Urban Intensive schools (Milner, 2012). The study also discussed both the positive and negative aspects

of teaching music in these settings. Data collection was based on Seidman's (2013) three interview series, with multiple sources of data, consisting of the following from each participant: audio recordings from two semi-structured individual interviews, a 15-20-minute video recording from each participant teaching in their classroom, and an audio recording of one focus group interview. Analysis took place during and after the data collection period. The main instrument for data analysis was content analysis through the creation of data grouping through broad categories, the identification of emerging themes, and code development for the themes. (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation and an expert review of the research and interview questions were employed (Patton, 2002).

Summary of Findings

The themes that emerged in this study in relation to Question 1 revealed the following themes: (a) a lack of curricular content related to teaching in urban schools, (b) individual professional development, and (c) providing hope through music education. First, although the participants gained a great wealth of knowledge from their undergraduate educational experiences in developing their musical and pedagogical skills, this information did not inform them on the methods that they needed to be successful teaching music in urban school settings, and the participants referred to this concept as teaching the "ideal student," corroborating findings by Fiese and DeCarbo (1995). It is not abnormal that the participants in this study indicated that they were not exposed to curricular content related to teaching in urban schools in their teacher training programs, as prior studies have revealed the same results (Darling-Hammond, 2010;

Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Additionally, there did not seem to be any differences according to their teaching areas (i.e. choir, band, general, etc.) in regard to their preparation for urban teaching.

Although there are a few music teacher education programs that promote culturally relevant teaching through curricular content and urban immersion programs (Bruenger, 2010; Emmanuel, 2002; Jones and Eyrich, 2006; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Mawhinney, Mulero, and Perez, 2012), this is not a standard practice, and most programs do not incorporate content and strategies related to teaching in urban school settings (Abrahams and Schmidt, 2006; Abril, 2009; Doyle, 2012; Fiese and DeCarbo, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2008). For this reason, it is not surprising that many graduating music education majors are turned off from considering employment as teachers in urban schools (Bruenger, 2010), as preconceived misinterpretations about urban schools due to a lack of education on these educational environments may govern their placement considerations (Gardner, 2010; Peske and Haycock, 2006), and affect whether or not they remain teaching in urban schools long-term (Robinson, 2018). This is in alignment with the findings of previous studies that have also revealed that pre-service teachers who begin teaching have minimal knowledge about diverse cultures (Coffey and Farinde-Wu, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2000), specifically cultures outside of their own or outside of the Western-European music culture that they become steeped in as developing musicians (Abril, 2009; Davis, 2008; Doyle, 2012; Doyle, 2014b, Fiese and DeCarbo). However, the participants in the current study also wanted to give their students a positive experience, similar to findings in other studies (Abril, 2009; Alpert, 2006b; Bruenger, 2010; Doyle, 2012; Doyle, 2014b; Emmanuel, 2012; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Frierson-

Campbell, 1996; Hinckley, 1995; Kelly, 2003; Legette, 2003; Lehmberg, 2008; Shields, 2001).

The themes that emerged in this study that related to Question 2 revealed an overarching theme of connectivity and relatability with two sub-themes: connecting through popular music and music from students' cultural heritage as well as connecting through concerts featuring multicultural music. The participants stated that an acknowledgement and incorporation of student culture in music instruction and performance by incorporating culturally relevant repertoire into the course curriculum played a great role in forging a connection between themselves and their students, and it also served as a powerful tool in making the presented content relatable to the students. Two of the participants, Jonathan and Liz, embraced this more fully, but Sarah felt as though she should connect to students' cultures to a smaller extent so that she could still focus on traditional instruction. Prior research has shown that teachers who recognize and incorporate culturally relevant methods of instruction are more successful in teaching in urban school classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2007; Love & Kruger, 2005) and create more meaningful learning experiences for their students (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Love & Kruger, 2005; Siwatu, 2011). Just as the teachers in the present study strived to incorporate music outside of the Western music canon such as music of diverse cultures and popular music into their curricular content, Albert (2004b), Bosacki et. al. (2006), Legette (2003), and Miralis (2006) concluded that introducing and teaching music of these styles create purposeful experiences for students of diverse cultures.

The themes that emerged in relation to Question 3 revealed the following themes: (a) familial roles, (b) rapport, (c) need for support from administrators and parents, (d)

peer support, and (e) safety and security. The participants placed great meaning on establishing and maintaining a spirit of rapport within the teacher-student dyad. This rapport came as a result of creating a healthy, familial environment within their classrooms that generated a culture of respect for one another, to include a healthy respect for self by setting and implementing firm expectations and standards for classroom decorum. For example, Jonathan likened his relationship with his students to that of a big brother with his siblings, where there was a sense of respect expected and shown for authority all while remaining approachable and congenial. Similarly, Sarah embraced the maternal character that her students recognized in her, as she expressed a desire to see her students succeed while maintaining a nurturing demeanor. The results of prior research studies have revealed that teachers who set rules and high expectations of their students in turn establish secure environments where all students feel like valuable contributors to the unique fabric of the classroom landscape (Coffey and Farinde-Wu, 2016; Doyle, 2012; Ladson-Billing, 2006; Shaw, 2015; van den Bergh et al., 2010). This culture of respect for teachers and students when consistently instituted has been found to be exceptional in promoting high student achievement within urban schools (Cross, 2008; Hinnant, Landsman & Lewis, 2006).

Additionally, the theme of lack of support from administrators and parents of students was revealed in the study in relation to Question 3. The participants placed meaning on advocacy for their music programs from their principals and parental support for the students, yet they did not feel that these needs were met. A sense of support from school administrators has been found to promote success within school music programs and among student academic achievement, bolster positive teacher attitudes, and to

further encourage support from parents and community members, especially within urban school populations (Bruenger, 2010; Doyle, 2013; Bergee, Eason, & Johnson, 2010; Gardner, 2010; Miksza, 2013).

It is important to note that, although race did not emerge as a specific theme, it seemed to influence some of the participants' views and actions as teachers, as both Jonathan and Sarah acknowledged that the race of their students influenced their pedagogical approach. For example, Sarah also acknowledged race within the meaning that she placed on the familial role that she embraced among her students. While culturally relevant teaching was an intentional aspect of this study and race can play a role in defining the culture of urban school teacher/student dynamics (Dee, 2004; Evans, 1992; Pitts, 2007), the goal of this study was to look at culture and culturally relevant teaching in a broader sense. The findings of this study indicated that race might have played a larger role in the participants' understanding of culture; however, looking specifically at race was beyond the scope of this study. Future research might want to further explore the intersection between culture, race, and urban music education.

Implications for Music Education

Although the results of this study are not expected to be generalizable to all beginning urban music teachers, it is possible that the shared experiences of the participants closely mirror those of others in similar situations through "logical situational generalizability" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 7). A number of implications of this study are meaningful to the field of music education. The following section will include

implications for current urban music educators, music teacher educators, and higher education. Lastly, suggestions will be made for future research.

Current Urban Music Teachers. Teaching music is a labor of love. It is an act that consists of sharing artistic knowledge with future generations in the hope that the information will be as personally transformative for the student as it has been for the teacher. Music educators use this art form to not only teach skill and subject knowledge, but also either consciously or subconsciously instill discipline, aid in helping students show improvement in related academic subjects, such as English and Math (Črnčec, Wilson, & Prior, 2006), and instill a sense of pride in achieving excellence within the participating students (Abril, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Shields, 2001; Shuler, 1991). Furthermore, the incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy in urban classrooms can be helpful in arming students with the knowledge to become critical consumers of culture (Coffey and Farinde-Wu; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Gay, 2010; Shaw, 2015; Weiss, Abeles, and Powell, 2017). While these skills are beneficial for all children to attain, they are highly valuable for students in urban schools, as they often provide this student population who are more likely to experience low academic achievement with an arsenal of invaluable resources that play a great role in academic and personal success (Catterall et al., 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Kinney, 2008).

It is my hope that the findings of the current research study will allow beginning music educators to identify common challenges and rewards found in their initial years of teaching within urban settings as well as to provide additional insight into the tools that have been used by practicing music educators in navigating the landscape of teaching

students in urban schools and providing culturally relevant teaching. Additionally, just as the participants in the current study placed meaning on providing a sense of safety and security to their students, it is important for music educators teaching in urban schools to identify the meaning that they place on their teaching. As beginning music teachers traverse the terrain of teaching in urban schools, it is vital to the success of this occupational role to find and cultivate positive support systems among fellow colleagues, administrators, and parents of students whenever possible, just as the participants in this study strived to do by providing and receiving peer support.

Music Teacher Educators and Higher Education. College and university music teacher educators most often place most (if not all) of the curricular focus on preparing future music educators to teach music of the Western classical tradition (Legette, 2003; Abrahams & Schmidt, 2006; Abril, 2009; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, and Mills, 2011). While there is nothing wrong with utilizing music of the Western classical canon to train students in musical knowledge and skill, it is unfortunate that preservice teachers most often have limited experience in learning about or teaching musical genres that fall outside of this classification, as spotlighting one genre while ostracizing other musical traditions has the possibility of unintentionally sending a message of value for one over the other for students (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Graham 2009; Johnson, 2004; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, & Mills, 2011). Furthermore, preservice music teachers are not provided enough opportunities in multicultural music within their undergraduate courses and ensembles to find enough value in its incorporation within their future classrooms (Abril, 2009), which inevitably can lead to school music classrooms where students miss out on

the experience of exposure to music of diverse cultures. In relation to urban schools, this could potentially mean that students do not get the opportunity to play and/or sing music to which they culturally relate while participating in school music ensembles. While some music teacher education programs place emphasis on educating future music teachers in a variety of musical genres (Emmanuel, 2006; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Jones & Eyrich, 2006), it would be most beneficial for all future music teachers to develop pedagogical methods for teaching in multiple genres of music in an effort to provide culturally relevant content to their students by bridging the gap between the world that they currently know and the rest of the world that awaits them (Abril 2009; Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007; Jones & Eyrich, 2006; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, & Mills, 2011). Collegiate music teacher education programs and officials of higher administration can begin by recognizing the educational benefit of implementing musical styles and performance traditions outside of Western classical music into the curricular structure of classroom music study. Future teachers who are prepared to teach music in varying styles which include those that are culturally relevant to students in urban school settings may find added confidence in teaching in urban school settings. Additionally, just as mentioned by the participants in the current study, music teacher education programs should provide preservice music teachers with observation and teaching opportunities in a variety of school placements, including urban schools. Due to lack of exposure and preconceived thoughts, preservice teachers may shy away from considering teaching positions in urban schools (Abril 2009; Butler, Lind, and McKoy 2007; Kindall-Smith, McCoy, and Mills, 2011). However, if they are afforded the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in these settings, it may eradicate previously believed myths and

encourage more of the best and brightest talents in music education to see the intrinsic and extrinsic values in educating students in urban school settings and consider future employment within these academic institutions that would greatly benefit from their educational gifts. Furthermore, it is perhaps through these efforts that more students in urban school settings will find increased value in participation in school music ensembles and the educators who teach them will find greater confidence in providing culturally relevant instruction to a future generation of music makers.

Suggestions for Future Research. The current study collected data from face-to-face interviews and a focus group discussion. However, future studies could include other data sources, such as field notes from classroom observations or analysis of video recordings, in an effort to compare and contrast participant perspectives on teaching music in urban school settings and the perception found through the lens of the researcher. Additionally, a longitudinal study examining the first five years of teaching music in urban school settings would provide a more in-depth look into the varying perspectives of the participants as they further develop the pedagogical methods that they find to be most successful in their classroom teaching.

Cultural relevance was an essential component in the current study. With this in mind, another avenue of future research that could be explored would be the effect of culturally relevant pedagogy on student retention in urban school music programs. It is a possibility that the results from a study of this nature would provide further advocacy for the incorporation of varying genres of music in music teacher education programs.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW ONE

The information obtained in this interview is being requested for the sole purpose of the successful completion of this research study. Your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your birth date? (age is not asked, but calculated from these)

2. How would you identify your gender?

3. What is your racial or ethnic identification?

4. Where were you born? (city/region, country)

5. Are you a native English speaker?

6. *(If participant answers "No" for Question 6)* What is your native language?

7. *If participant answers "No" for Question 6)* How long have you been speaking English?

HOME EXPERIENCE (CHILDHOOD) (Bosak, 2017; Brotherton, 2014)

8. Tell me about where you grew up.

    a. Did you move there, or were you born there?

    b. What did you do for fun? (e.g. hobbies, interests, family activities)?

9. What is your earliest memory of making and/or experiencing music?

10. Talk about your musical life outside of school while growing up.

GRADE SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

11. Tell me about the elementary school that you attended? How would you describe it?

    a. Did your elementary school have music classes?

    b. If so, what was your experience with music in your elementary school?

12. Tell me about the middle school that you attended? How would you describe it?

    a. Did your middle school have music classes?

    b. If so, what was your experience with music in your middle school?

13. Tell me about the high school that you attended? How would you describe it?

    a. Did your high school have music classes?

    b. If so, what was your experience with music in your high school?

14. Did any of the schools in which you attended resemble the school in which you currently teach?

15. What dreams and goals did you have for your life when you graduated from high school?

COLLEGE EDUCATION

16. Have you obtained an undergraduate degree?

    a. Are you currently pursuing an undergraduate degree?

    b. If so, what is your undergraduate major?

17. What was your undergraduate major?

    a. If you had an undergraduate minor, what was it?

18. Have you obtained a graduate degree?

    a. What was your major in graduate school?

    b. If you had a graduate minor, what was it?

19. Are you currently pursuing a graduate degree?

    a. If so, what is your graduate major?

20. How would you describe the college/university in which you attended?

21. Describe your musical experiences while in college.

CURRENT MUSIC EXPERIENCES

22. Describe your musical life today.

   a. Do you make/experience music outside of your teaching job?

   b. .If so, tell me about this experience.

TEACHING CERTIFICATION & PREPARATION

22. Do you have a current teaching license?

   a. If yes, in what area(s)?

   b. If no, have you ever obtained a certified teaching license?

23. Did you go through a teacher education program?

   a. *(if the participant answers "No")* Were there any requirements to attain the your current teaching position?

   b. *(if the participant answers "Yes")* Tell me about your experience in the teacher education program.

24. Were any portions of your collegiate/teacher education program experience focused on teaching in an urban school?

   a. *(if the participant answers "Yes")* Tell me what you remember from this portion of your experience.

   b. *(if the participant answers "No")* How do you feel about there not being any focus on teaching in urban school in your collegiate/teacher education program experience?

25. Do you feel that your formal education prepared you for situations involving cultural diversity or cultural relevance?

26. Did you take any steps on your own to prepare for teaching music in an urban school setting?

    a. Why or why not?

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW TWO

The information obtained in this interview is being requested for the sole purpose of the successful completion of this research study. Your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential.

BACKGROUND & URBAN SCHOOL TEACHING EXPERIENCE (Lehmberg, 2008)

1. What is your job title, school district?

2. Do you have any special certifications, such as National Board Certification or Orff certification?

3. How many years of experience do you have teaching music in an urban school setting (in total)?

4. Is this your first music teaching assignment in an urban school setting?

   a. If no, how many other urban school settings have you been assigned to teach?

CLASSROOM CULTURE

5. Tell me a little about your school?

   a. How would you describe your students?

   b. How would you describe the culture of your classroom?

   c. To what ethnic and cultural heritage do the majority of your of your students belong, or is there a ethnic/cultural majority?

   d. What other ethnic and cultural heritages are present in the population of students you teach?

   e. Please tell me a little about the urban area in which your school is situated.

6. What type of classroom climate do you try to establish with your students?

7. Describe the type(s)/style(s) of music that you introduce in your classroom.

8. How do you manage student behavior in your classroom?

9. What is the most difficult thing about classroom management in an urban school?

CULTURAL RELEVANCE & INSTRUCTION

10. What are your thoughts on culturally relevant teaching when teaching music in an urban school?

11. Do you think that it is matters to consider student culture(s) in order to be effective as a music teacher in an urban school?

    a. Why or why not?

12. Do you consider student culture when planning instruction?

    a. Why or why not?

13. (If the participant answers "Yes" to Question 8) What is the context of the use of this material in your instruction?

    a. As in teaching a concept?

    b. As in a cultural celebration or performing this material on a concert?

    c. On a daily basis throughout your teaching?

14. Do you make an effort to learn about your students' cultures?

    a. Why or why not?

15. How does your own culture affect how you work with your students?

16. Do you find any value in building/maintaining relationships with others of your students' cultures?

    a. Why or why not?

17. What effect do your students' life experiences have on the instruction you design for them?

18. Have you ever felt a need to control for cultural bias in textbooks, media, and other material you use in the classroom? If so, how do you accomplish that?

19. How do you design instruction so that your students are successful within their own learning and communication styles?

VIDEO

The following questions will precede the viewing of the 15-20 minute video of the participant's classroom instruction.

20. Tell me about what we are about watch; set the scene.

The participant and I will watch the 15-20 minute video of their classroom instruction. The following questions will proceed after the viewing.

21. Tell me what was your intended goal for your students in this lesson?

22. Do you feel that the students progressed toward that goal?

23. Do you feel that you experienced any challenges in during this lesson?

    a. *(If participant answers "Yes")* Tell me about the challenges.

    b. To what do you attribute these challenges?

24. What do you feel went well with this particular lesson?

25. Did you consider your students' culture(s) in presenting this particular lesson?

    a. Why or why not?

    b. *(If participant answers "Yes")* In what way?

COMMUNITY

26. Do you build/maintain relationships with parents?

a. Why or why not?

b. *(If participant answers "Yes")* What methods do you use to build these

relationships?

27. Do you build/maintain relationships with community members?

a. Why or why not?

b. *(If participant answers "Yes")* What methods do you use to build these

relationships?

28. Do you build/maintain relationships with colleagues?

a. Why or why not?

b. *(If participant answers "Yes")* What methods do you use to build these

relationships?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are you teaching in an urban school? (Wade, 1991)

2. Did you have any concerns specific to teaching music in an urban school prior to beginning your music teaching career?

3. Was there anything that you looked forward to regarding teaching music in an urban school prior to beginning your music teaching career?

4. What have you found to be some of the challenges of teaching music in an urban school?

5. What have you found to be some of the rewards of teaching music in an urban school?

6. In general, how supportive is your school of your program?

7. How supportive are the parents of your students regarding your school music program?

a. How could they be more supportive?

8. Thinking about the music methods courses in your degree program(s), how do you feel about your preparation for becoming a music teacher in an urban school?

9. What was helpful about your preparation?

10. What could have been better?

11. What was lacking?

12. What suggestions would you make regarding the preparation of future music educators who may decide to teach in an urban school? (Wade, 1991)

13. Thinking about yourself as a prospective teacher, and thinking about yourself now as an effective urban teacher, what did you have to learn on your own to become the teacher you are today?

14. What is something that you have learned about teaching music in an urban school that you didn't know prior to beginning your music teaching career?

15. How much, if any, time do you spend outside the classroom helping or interacting with your students?

16. In general, what is the most rewarding thing about delivering music instruction in an urban school?

17. In general, what is the most difficult thing about delivering music instruction in an urban school?

18. Is there anything else you would like to say about effective teaching or effective teaching in urban schools?

19. Is there anything else you would like to say about pre-service teacher preparation for urban schools?

20. Is there anything I should have asked about effective, music teaching in urban schools, but didn't?

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