

# A Mixed Methods Portrait of Urban Instrumental Music Teaching

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## Abstract

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to learn about the ways that instrumental music teachers in Chicago navigated the urban landscape. The design of the study most closely resembles Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) two-part Triangulation Convergence Mixed Methods Design, with the addition of an initial exploratory focus group component. Research questions focused on the contextual knowledge that the teachers held regarding their students and communities, the specialized skills they relied upon to be successful, the attitudes and beliefs they held toward teaching instrumental music in an urban school, and the challenges and rewards that they perceived from teaching in this context. The results suggest that the instrumental music teachers utilized their knowledge of the urban context to modify their general pedagogical approach, that they believed a specialized set of skills was required for success in the urban context, that they had relatively positive levels of job satisfaction and believed strongly in the development of their students' potential, and that they faced serious challenges to the success of their programs but also perceived great reward from the personal and musical improvement of their students.

## Keywords

urban, mixed methods, music education, instrumental music, teaching

Research confirms that schools located in urban areas offer opportunities and face challenges unique to their context (Gordon, 2003; Kozol, 1991; Talbert-Johnson, 2004; Voltz, 1998; Zhou, 2003). Because the majority of schools in America (57%) are in large or midsize cities or their accompanying urban fringe areas, these schools serve

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more than two thirds of all public school students (Department of Education, 2004). Urban educational issues, then, are American educational issues.

Music education programs within such contexts are not isolated from their surroundings and communities and, therefore, also have specific needs. Extant literature on the status of urban music programs demonstrates the inequities found between music programs located in urban contexts and those located within better-resourced areas (Calloway, 2009; Costa-Giomi, 2008; Costa-Giomi & Chappell, 2007; Department of Education, 2002; Iken, 2006; C. Smith, 1997). These inequities challenge the profession to consider the complex socioeconomic and cultural reasons that urban music programs might be under-researched, under-resourced, and under-served.

Research within the field of music education<sup>1</sup> that directly addresses the urban context has been severely lacking until the past decade, when a variety of researchers began examining the urban music education context specifically (Carlos, 2005; Emmanuel, 2005; Eros, 2009; Isaac-Johnson, 2007; Kinney, 2010; N. Robinson, 2004; Schmidt, 2007; Shields, 2001). This recent emphasis on research within the urban music context has been propelled by MENC's publication of two books on urban music teaching (Frierson-Campbell, 2006a, 2006b). Research regarding the specific context of urban instrumental music education provides an understanding that this particular context may be particularly affected by issues of socioeconomic status (Albert, 2006; Brandstrom & Wiklund, 1996; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991; McCarthy, 1980) and an elevated amount of teacher responsibilities (Friedrichs, 2001).

In-service teachers within urban music education settings have been found to demonstrate relatively positive attitudes toward teaching in the urban context (Ausmann, 1991). This finding is notable, as the challenges of teaching within urban schools have been well documented (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Flowers, 2003; Gardner, 2006; Mixon, 2005; J. Smith, 2006; Whitener et al., 1997), while the rewards offered by this setting have not (Bernard, 2010; Yee, 1988). The literature offers many suggestions on specific strategies that urban music teachers can use to achieve success within their programs (Albert, 2006; Allsup, 1997; Carlow, 2006; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Hinckley, 1995; Mixon, 2006; Porcino Dolamore, 2006).

Teachers working with students within urban schools should be careful to consider issues of cultural relevancy (Ensign, 2003; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Marshall, 2006; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Nieto, 2004) and should be sensitive to the needs of at-risk students (Chipman, 2004; N. Robinson, 2004; Shields, 2001; Taylor, Barry, & Walls, 1997). To best support and serve urban music teachers, issues of teacher preparation and recruitment are of the utmost importance (Bruenger, 2009; Emmanuel, 2005; Hunt, 2009; Lehmberg, 2008; Renfro, 2003), as are issues of professional development and mentoring (Conway, Hibbard, Albert, & Hourigan, 2005; Friedrichs, 2001; Hazelette, 2006; Kindall-Smith, 2004; M. Robinson, 1999), which may be especially important to the success of young teachers.

This review of the extant literature on urban music education provides a limited understanding of an extremely dynamic teaching context. The current foundation of research is inadequate to effect any significant change or progress in the quality of

urban music education, as has been noted by other researchers in the field (Ausmann, 1991; Schmidt, 2007). Little is known about the experiences of urban music teachers and the ways that they think about and connect to the urban context that surrounds them. Studies are needed that specifically examine how music teachers navigate the urban landscape, that is, how the specific demands of the urban context mesh with a teacher's knowledge of that context as demonstrated through music teaching. As Smith (2006) said, "The voices of practitioners need to be part of the ongoing conversation about music education in urban schools" (p. 73).

Every area of formal urban music education—general music, instrumental music, and choral music—is deserving of serious study. However, because the monetary investment required to purchase an instrument and other fees associated with participation in instrumental music courses may constrain the ability of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to participate (Albert, 2006), and because student socioeconomic status is associated with participation and subsequent retention in an instrumental music program (Brandstrom & Wiklund, 1996; Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Klinedinst, 1991; McCarthy, 1980), I found the specific genre of urban instrumental music teaching (the teaching of bands and orchestras and other instrumental ensembles) especially compelling to investigate.

## **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to learn about the ways that instrumental music teachers navigate the urban landscape. Because this study was designed to view one phenomenon from two different methodological perspectives, the research questions for both the quantitative and qualitative components were the same.

### *Quantitative and Qualitative Research Questions*

1. What contextual knowledge do urban instrumental music teachers hold about the students they teach and the communities in which they teach?
2. What specialized skills do instrumental music teachers rely upon to be successful within the urban setting?
3. What attitudes and beliefs do teachers hold toward teaching instrumental music in urban schools?
4. What challenges and rewards do instrumental music teachers perceive from teaching instrumental music in an urban environment?

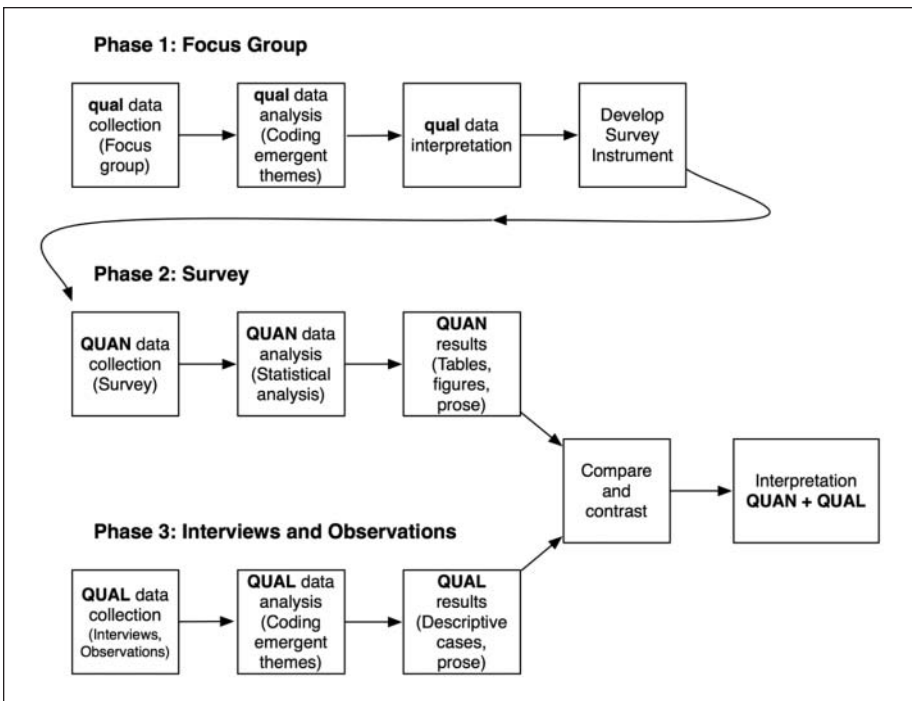
### *Mixed Methods Research Question*

5. In what ways do the survey and interview/observation data align with one another?

## Methodological Overview

Mixed methods research allows the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to emerge (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003). In combining these methodologies, the mixed methods researcher hopes to lessen the weaknesses of either approach and view the problem from several vantage points. For the purposes of this study, both the quantitative approach, which provides a broader view of the urban teaching context, and the qualitative approach, which provides an understanding of the particularities of the urban music teaching context, offered insightful perspectives on this understudied phenomenon.

A three-phase mixed methods design with both sequential and concurrent components was employed for this study. The design most closely resembles Creswell and Plano Clark’s (2007) Triangulation Convergence Mixed Methods Design, with the addition of an initial exploratory focus group component (see Figure 1). Phase 1 of the



**Figure 1.** Triangulation Convergence Mixed Methods Design with exploratory focus group component

Note: In mixed methods nomenclature, capitalization denotes the relative emphasis of the study phases. In this study, the exploratory Phase 1 is represented as *qual* while Phase 2 is represented as *QUAN* and Phase 3 as *QUAL*.

study included a focus group composed of urban instrumental music teachers ( $N = 7$ ) that informed the development of the survey questionnaire. Phase 2 of the study involved a survey of instrumental music teachers in the Chicago Public Schools ( $N = 90$ ). Phase 3 of this study was based on interviews with and observations of four selected instrumental music teachers within the Chicago Public Schools. It is important to clarify that the main emphasis of the study rests on the survey and interview/observation components, both of which were weighted equally under this design framework.

To most succinctly summarize the findings of this study and to best honor the integrity of the mixed methods framework, this article focuses on the presentation of the converged mixed methods results. Complete presentations of the separate quantitative and qualitative data analyses may be found in Fitzpatrick (2008). Summary results of the survey data and a full version of the mixed methods data matrix may be found in the appendices, available at <http://jrme.sagepub.com/supplemental>.

### **Design of Phase 1: Focus Group**

Because of the lack of data on urban music programs and a need to better understand the particularities of the district being examined, I conducted an initial exploratory focus group interview (Bloor, Franklans, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Nardi, 2003; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) in order to guide the development of the Phase 2 survey instrument. For the purposes of this study, I chose to utilize a pre-existing group of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) instrumental music teachers ( $N = 7$ ) who served as instructors of the district All-City band (demographic descriptions of participants are available in Appendix A at <http://jrm.sagepub.com/supplemental>). The focus group meeting lasted 114 minutes and was video- and audio-recorded for transcription. Following transcription of the focus group interview, I coded for themes that emerged during the discussion (focus group codes also are available in Appendix A). Following this coding, I aligned the codes with the original research questions and developed survey items that would explore these same issues with the broader survey population (Nardi, 2003).

### **Design of Phase 2: Survey**

A survey was used due to the need to gather data on a large population of urban instrumental teachers (Nardi, 2003). The survey questionnaire developed from the focus group codes was pilot tested with a group of instrumental music teachers ( $N = 23$ ) from a midsize urban school district in the Midwest as a means of ensuring both validity and reliability (Fink, 2003; Nardi, 2003; Sapsford, 1999). Following the administration of the pilot survey, the instrument was revised, taking into account the respondents' comments and suggestions according to Fink's (2003) suggested pilot questions. Following pilot testing, the revised survey was 99 questions long and took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

This survey involved a census (Sapsford, 1999) of instrumental music teachers in the Chicago Public Schools, in that all 153 instrumental music teachers within CPS

were surveyed. With the assistance of the CPS Music Curriculum Supervisor, surveys were sent and returned via the district mail system during May 2007. To facilitate an acceptable response rate, I sent a first mailing, a follow-up reminder postcard, an electronic version of the study via e-mail, and a second mailing. Finally, personal phone calls were made before the end of the school year to all participants who had not yet responded. Ninety of these surveys were returned, providing a response rate of 59%. Because this included a broad representation of age, racial identification, teaching experience, and school context attended, it was assumed that this sample was sufficiently diverse to represent the broader population of CPS instrumental music teachers. However, it is important to note that there may be inherent bias associated with the population of teachers who returned the survey, and therefore generalizations to the broader urban instrumental music teaching population are made cautiously.

To establish reliability of the survey instrument, the instrument was piloted as described above and modified accordingly. Once the final survey was developed and administered, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the three survey item clusters that were intended to represent various underlying constructs (Nardi, 2003). The overall alpha coefficient for these three sections of the survey was .85.

### **Quantitative Results Summary**

Summary results of the survey data may be found in Appendix A (see <http://jrme.sagepub.com/supplemental>). Briefly, survey results revealed that participants had a varied knowledge of the urban context in which they taught, including strong knowledge of their communities, students, and schools. Participants also indicated a belief that teaching in the urban context requires a specialized set of skills that differs from the skills necessary to succeed in non-urban contexts. An examination of participants' responses to questions concerning their attitudes and beliefs demonstrated that these teachers took jobs in urban situations for varied reasons, that they defined success in terms of student personal and musical progress rather than program or personal recognition, that they held moderately high levels of job satisfaction that correlated with several important variables, and that they held varied beliefs about their students, themselves, their programs, and their schools. Participants reported facing serious challenges to the success of their programs that resulted in their need for increased funding, repair and purchase of instruments, and administrative support. Despite these challenges, participants indicated that their greatest rewards came from student musical improvement, student personal improvement, and general student success.

### **Design of Phase 3: Interviews and Observations**

Collection of Phase 3 qualitative data occurred concurrently with the collection of Phase 2 quantitative data. Because the experiences of the four participants were used instrumentally to illustrate the issue of teaching instrumental music in the urban school, this phase of the study most resembles a collective instrumental case study (Creswell, 1998).

Because I considered it important to illustrate a variety of instrumental music teacher experiences within the urban setting, I utilized stratified purposeful sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for Phase 3 of the study. Four teachers were chosen to represent the experiences of certain important subgroups: inexperienced (5 years of teaching experience or less) and experienced (more than 5 years) teachers, and those identified by the district coordinator of music as teaching in programs that traditionally would be identified as being either struggling or thriving according to level of student participation in ensembles, attendance at festivals and contests, and prominence within the community. The combination of experienced/inexperienced and thriving/struggling produced a four-way matrix in which one teacher was identified by the district coordinator of music to represent each category.

Ms. Erika Sanders<sup>2</sup> (inexperienced teacher/thriving program) was in her 3rd year of teaching at Elmira West High School (5 years total) and directed an instrumental music program that has a storied history in the district. The school lies at the intersection of three neighborhoods of vastly differing socioeconomic status and racial makeup, and the majority of students at Elmira West were Black<sup>3</sup> (93%). Mr. Antoine Michaels (experienced teacher/thriving program) of Bellerman High School was in his 14th year of teaching. Bellerman is a performing arts magnet school with 19 student music ensembles and 12 music teachers on staff, including a full-time instrument repairman. Most of the students were Latino or Black, and most did not come from the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Rodrigo Moya (inexperienced teacher/struggling program) was a 3rd-year teacher at Gerstein High School. His students were primarily Latino and Polish, and the school is located in an area plagued by gangs and violence. Mr. Moya had been rebuilding the program after it had been dismantled for a 3-year period; student enrollment in the program was small and progress slow. Finally, Mr. Jerry Sims (experienced teacher/struggling program) at Katz High School had 24 years of teaching experience. One hundred percent of Katz students were Black, and the school occupies a beautiful new building in one of the poorest areas of the city. The Katz program was struggling as student numbers were down and the administration was unsupportive.

With each of these participants, Phase 3 included three different episodes of data collection: a pre-interview, a day of observation, and a follow-up interview. The first episode of data collection included a 1-hour-long semi-structured pre-interview. Following this pre-interview, a day of observation was scheduled at each school, in which I spent a “day in the life” of the teacher, following each through the teaching day from morning bell to after-school rehearsals. During this day, I observed all teaching episodes while collecting extensive field notes and making audio recordings of ensemble rehearsals and performances. I acted as an “observer as participant” (Glesne, 2006), serving primarily as a detached observer within each classroom but having some interaction with teachers and students at each school. Immediately following the day of observation, an unstructured follow-up interview was conducted in which I probed for better understanding of the events just observed, guided by the research questions.

Following Phase 3 data collection, I utilized the steps of Creswell’s (1998) Data Analysis Spiral to guide data analysis. Identification of codes was primarily guided by the framework of the interview and research questions, although emergent codes and

themes also were noted. Following identification of codes, within-case themes were developed, and a narrative description of each case was created from these themes that included my interpretations of the data (see Fitzpatrick, 2008). Next, I developed cross-case themes from comparison and contrast of all four cases, and I interpreted and analyzed these cross-case themes, taking into account disconfirming evidence.

To establish trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), triangulation was accomplished through the use of several forms of data, including interviews, observations, field notes, audio recordings of rehearsals, collected documents such as concert programs and calendars, and digital pictures of each school's surrounding community and classroom setup. Also, researcher bias was clarified from the outset of the study so that my own particular assumptions and experiences were explicit. Finally, I developed rich, thick descriptions of the participants, experiences, and contexts so that the reader can assess to what extent the information is transferable.

## Qualitative Results Summary

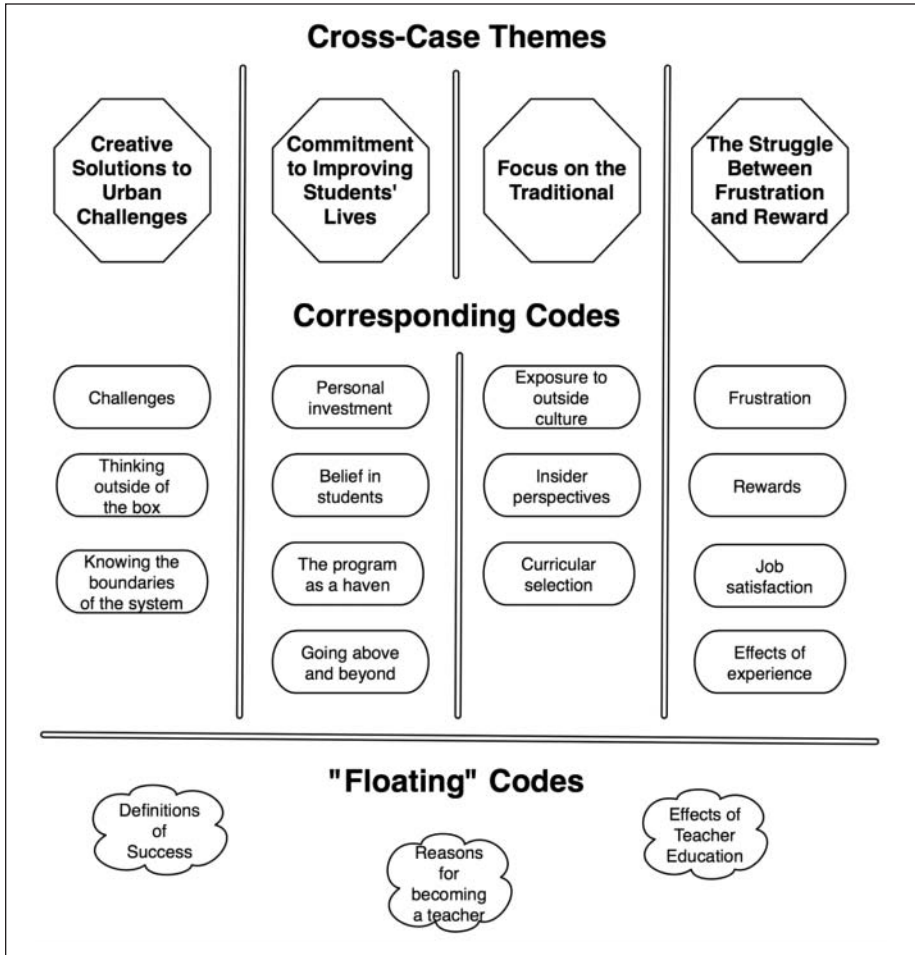
The full results of Phase 3 data collection, including the presentation of each case and subsequent presentation of the cross-case themes, may be found in Fitzpatrick (2008). To summarize, four themes emerged from this analysis: "creative solutions to urban challenges," "commitment to improving students' lives," "focus on the traditional," and "the struggle between frustration and reward." Figure 2 presents these cross-case themes and codes in graphic form.

## Mixed Methods Data Analysis

In mixed methods research, qualitative and quantitative data are first analyzed separately according to the traditions of each methodology. Subsequently, the data are analyzed to address the mixed methods research questions, as presented in this article. To facilitate comparison between the quantitative and qualitative data, I assembled a mixed methods data matrix (see Appendix B at <http://jrme.sagepub.com/supplemental> for the full matrix and Table 1 for a condensed version). The full matrix is organized according to the four quantitative and qualitative research questions and presents quantitative data plus examples from the qualitative data, while Table 1 presents only the alignment of the quantitative and qualitative data.

For those data that are topically associated, that is, that relate to the same focus group category or theme, the qualitative and quantitative data are presented next to one another for easy comparison. In order to better describe the nature of the converged results, and to more specifically address the mixing of the data, I have developed what I term *data convergence labels*. In those situations where the quantitative and qualitative data directly address the same phenomenon or topic and clearly confirm or contradict one another, the data are labeled *confirm* or *contradict*. There may be situations in which the qualitative and quantitative data regarding a phenomenon or topic may, in part, confirm one another





**Figure 2.** Cross-case coding framework

Note: Although most codes were easily collapsed into themes, three codes stood on their own as more unique categories of data that did not naturally fit with the others. These codes are described within the figure as “floating codes.”

while also, in part, contradicting one another. In these cases, the data are labeled as having *mixed* convergence. In those cases where the quantitative and qualitative data do not directly confirm or contrast but instead provide different perspectives on the same phenomenon or add a richness of understanding to the other, the data are labeled as *enhance*. Thus, there are four possible researcher-designed data convergence labels: confirm, contradict, mixed, and enhance. These labels are intended to specifically and succinctly describe the nature of the convergence of the quantitative and qualitative results.

**Table 1.** Condensed Data Convergence Matrix by Research Question

Quantitative Survey Themes	Qualitative Codes	Alignment
<i>What knowledge do urban instrumental music teachers hold about their students and communities?</i>		
Knowledge of students	Insider perspectives	Confirm
	Knowing the boundaries of the system	
English as a second language	Knowing the boundaries of the system	Confirm
Neighborhood history	Knowing the boundaries of the system	Confirm
<i>What specialized skills do these teachers rely upon to be successful within the urban setting?</i>		
Philosophy	Creative solutions to urban challenges	Confirm
Creativity and developing relationships		
Planning/preparation		
Motivational skills		
Differences: Urban and suburban contexts	Thinking outside the box	Confirm
<i>What attitudes and beliefs do teachers hold towards teaching instrumental music in urban schools?</i>		
Beliefs: About themselves	Commitment to improving student lives	Enhance
	Personal investment	
Beliefs: About students	Belief in students	Confirm
Beliefs: About programs	The program as a haven	Confirm
Beliefs: About programs	Focus on the traditional	Contradict
Beliefs: Definitions of success	Definitions of success	Mixed
Attitudes: Rationale for taking positions	Reasons for becoming a teacher	Enhance
Job satisfaction	The balance of frustration and reward	Enhance
	Job satisfaction	
<i>What challenges and rewards do urban instrumental music teachers perceive?</i>		
Challenges: Perception of support	Challenges	Enhance
Challenges: District testing	Challenges	Enhance
Challenges: Comm. social issues	Challenges	Confirm
Challenges: Funding	Challenges	Confirm
Challenges: Instruments	Challenges	Mixed
Challenges: Student musical prep.	Challenges	Enhance
Challenges: Facilities	Challenges	Mixed
Challenges: Recruiting	Challenges	Confirm
Challenges: Needs	Challenges: Scheduling	Mixed
Rewards: Personal	Rewards	Confirm
Rewards: Program		
Rewards: Professional and Student		

## Mixed Methods Results

### *What Contextual Knowledge Do Urban Instrumental Music Teachers Hold About the Students They Teach and the Communities in Which They Teach?*

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates that participants knew a great deal about their students, their schools, and their communities. Qualitative data reveal that the Phase 3 teachers were guided in large part by the knowledge of context that they gained as former students of the Chicago Public Schools themselves. For example, Mr. Moya learned how to play percussion as a high school beginner in a CPS program and said, “Overall I think it [the experience of having started playing an instrument in high school] has given me a little perspective on how hard it is for kids, as much as somebody that’s been playing since fourth grade takes this for granted, maybe” (interview, May 16, 2007). Quantitative results confirm the benefit that this personal knowledge provided for CPS graduates, as teachers who attended a rural or suburban school themselves felt that they faced a moderate level of challenge because of this difference in background ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).<sup>4</sup> Teachers who were of a different race from the majority of their students felt that this represented a lesser degree of a challenge ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ).

Quantitative data also reveal that the participants considered the skill of “showing concern and care for students’ lives outside of school” to be significantly more important for the urban than the suburban environment, with a moderate effect size of  $r = .30$ . The qualitative data confirm these findings, as the case study teachers discussed how important it was to understand the life that students live outside the classroom. Mr. Moya, for example, modified his teaching style according to his knowledge of the urban context:

They want to be respected and that’s a huge inner city thing. These kids don’t get respect at home—they don’t get respect in real life, so if you give them that respect, they appreciate it. Even if they don’t always show it, they do appreciate it. And so that is sort of the way that I’ve been approaching gaining the kids. (interview, May 15, 2007)

Mr. Sims similarly found his knowledge of context and knowledge of his students to be inseparable from his job as a band director. In this way, he found that his job responsibilities extended far beyond that of administering a music program:

You have to learn who you have in your group and you really have to deal with those issues.... So you have to really get to know who’s in your group and what you can do with that group. So you’re the doctor, the lawyer, the psychologist. (interview, May 16, 2007)

Quantitative data reveal that teachers believed that they knew a good deal about the history of the neighborhood in which they taught ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) and felt that the racial and socioeconomic levels ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ) of their schools were similar to those of the surrounding neighborhood. Qualitative data confirm the insight that participants had into their neighborhoods and communities. Ms. Sanders, for example, described a level of understanding of the diversity of her school neighborhood and Chicago neighborhoods in general, saying,

And I'm not from this neighborhood, but I can see the clear divisions. Things that are on the east side of Elmira West are a lot different from the west side. In Chicago, that happens a lot. There are so many communities that can change when you walk across the street. That's a thing that happens in Chicago. (interview, May 22, 2007)

Mr. Moya similarly demonstrated an understanding of his neighborhood and how difficult it was for his students to walk home carrying their instruments:

They've all come up with their own little ways of getting around this by taking back roads, or whatever they need to do to get home and stuff like that, but unless they're driving they're not going to take an instrument home. Probably for one, they don't want to be seen with the instrument; but for two, they could probably have the instrument stolen from them. If someone saw that they were walking with a saxophone, probably that's it; that saxophone is probably gone. (interview, May 16, 2007)

Instrumental music teachers in the CPS, then, knew a great deal about the context in which they taught and utilized this information to affect their teaching. Both qualitative and quantitative data converged to provide a more complete understanding of this contextual knowledge than either method of data analysis alone.

### *What Specialized Skills Do Instrumental Music Teachers Rely Upon To Be Successful Within the Urban Setting?*

The alignment of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that participants believed specialized skills were required to succeed in the urban environment. Here, the broader term *skills* is intended to represent a set of specialized skills, understandings, and dispositions that these teachers utilized within the classroom. Results of a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test demonstrated that participants believed that certain skills were significantly more relevant to succeeding in the urban than the suburban environment.<sup>5</sup> Those skills found to have a moderate effect size are “focusing on the basics” ( $r = .30$ ), “being creative with resources” ( $r = .37$ ), “showing concern and care for students' lives outside of school” ( $r = .30$ ), and “spending personal funds to help your students” ( $r = .43$ ). Small effect sizes were found for the following: “having a strong

philosophy for why you teach music" ( $r = .20$ ), "developing relationships with your students" ( $r = .19$ ), "demonstrating love for your students" ( $r = .23$ ), "selling' the importance of your program to students, parents, administrators, and community" ( $r = .20$ ), and "getting students to 'buy-in' to the program" ( $r = .18$ ).

These data are confirmed by the qualitative theme "creative solutions to urban challenges," which suggests that the teachers coped with the specific challenges of the urban environment in creative ways. For example, when Mr. Sims struggled to find enough students to play in his after-school jazz band, he recruited a group of students who, while not familiar with written notation, had experience playing instruments in their local church. Similarly, both Ms. Sanders and Mr. Moya coped with the tremendous loss of personnel posed to them by scheduling conflicts by inviting students who could not schedule band to rehearse on their own and continue playing with the group at concerts. These examples demonstrate the ways in which urban instrumental teachers "think outside the box" to provide the best possible musical experience for their students despite what can sometimes be a hostile system.

Survey data reveal that the participants considered their knowledge and skill base to be so broad that they could successfully teach music in a suburban school ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) while they believed the reverse was not true for suburban teachers teaching in an urban setting ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ). They also held a moderately positive belief that very few people could successfully teach music in an urban school ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ), although they believed that their definition of success was similar to a suburban director's definition of success ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ). Qualitative results confirm the finding that participants believed that music teaching skills are context-specific. Mr. Moya, for example, believed that what works with suburban students would not work with his students: "And maybe that works in the suburbs, but ... you have to sort of be on their side and be an advocate more than try to come up with this confrontational approach to straighten them out" (interview, May 15, 2007).

Both qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate that these urban instrumental music teachers utilized skills that were specific to the urban environment in order to succeed. These skills were multiple and varied and included not only specialized knowledge but also creativity in adapting this knowledge to the urban environment.

### *What Attitudes and Beliefs Do Teachers Hold Toward Teaching Instrumental Music in Urban Schools?*

With regard to beliefs about themselves, participants indicated strong agreement with the belief that teachers maintain high expectations for their students ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), moderate agreement that they had better disciplinary control over their classroom than did other teachers at their school ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ), and low agreement that they were more motivated to do their best when they started teaching than they are now ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ).

Qualitative data do not directly address the same topics as the quantitative data but rather enhance the understanding of how dedicated these teachers were to their students

and programs. For instance, Ms. Sanders described the importance of holding high expectations for her students, placing posters for All-State auditions around her classroom and saying, "I just keep my expectations high, and I don't tell them they can't do it, and they don't know any different" (interview, May 23, 2007). Mr. Sims stayed at his school most nights until 6:00 p.m., trying to get everything done and working with after-school ensembles for which he was not paid.

This dedication to programs merged with the participants' beliefs that they were responsible for improving their students' lives in personal as well as musical ways. For example, Mr. Michaels frequently discussed achieving personal success with his students:

What I try to remind the young people is that, you know, you have to play the hand you've been dealt. You know, there's just no way around that. It's not how you start, but how you finish. And you can use the skills that you're gaining through the music and life skills, life learning lessons, to take this and turn your life and guide it in the way you primarily want it to go. (interview, May 27, 2007)

With regard to participants' beliefs about students, quantitative data indicate moderate agreement that students in their programs were more academically successful than others in their school ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and moderate agreement that their students were better behaved than other students in the school ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). Qualitative data confirm this finding, as Mr. Moya revealed,

I have never once in 3 years ever filled out a discipline report on a kid. I've never had a discipline problem. Even the worst kids that come in that are like, you can tell they're the worst gang banger asshole, probably shoot you if they saw you on the street, will not give me a problem. (interview, May 15, 2007)

Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate that these teachers believed that their programs provided a haven from the rest of the school and community. This reinforces Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz's (2003) finding that band programs can serve as a "home away from home." Quantitative data revealed that the teachers had moderate agreement with the statement "My program provides a haven from the problems in the rest of the school" ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) and slightly stronger moderate agreement with the statement "My program provides a haven from the problems of the neighborhood" ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). This is confirmed by the qualitative findings that students spent a great deal of time in participants' band rooms and often, as Mr. Michaels said, stay until "we have to kick them out" (interview, May 30, 2007). Mr. Sims indicated that students' desire to remain in the band room might be attributed to their desire to avoid troubled home lives, saying, "A lot of them would rather be here than at home" (interview, May 25, 2007).

Quantitative data indicate that the teachers held a moderately positive belief in incorporating culturally relevant musics such as popular music ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ )

and the music of their students' culture ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) within their programs. This is contradicted by the qualitative theme of "focus on the traditional," representing the sole instance of mixed methods data contradiction in this study. The teachers participating in the qualitative portion of the study each strongly rejected the use of popular or culturally relevant musics in their classrooms, preferring instead to focus on the performance of traditional band repertoire and the acquisition of instrument performance skills. Ms. Sanders, an African American woman who attended CPS herself, focused on these more traditional band skills in order to expose her students to musical traditions that lay outside of students' everyday experiences:

So I really want to help urban students, to make sure that they have an appreciation for things, and that they're not ignorant of things when they set outside their community. Because, I was trying to remember my experiences, and you're not going to always work with people from your neighborhood. When you go to corporate America, they come from various backgrounds, different cultures. You got to be able to adapt and tolerate their culture. (interview, May 23, 2007)

Similarly, Mr. Moya, a former professional rock drummer, believed that the performance of traditional band repertoire is of greater educational value than popular music:

It's one of those icing on the top of the cake more than the cake, which needs to be playing some varied and challenging repertoire that's good for the kids and shows them that there's a broader universe out there, as opposed to doing something that is something that they would get anyway if they do it on their own. (interview, May 16, 2007)

Quantitative data demonstrate that participants on average held a positive self-perception of their success as an urban music teacher ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ). The mean perception of program success was slightly lower but still moderately positive ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). Participants also were asked to indicate the extent to which certain factors indicate program success for their students. Those success indicators that garnered a mean score of at least 4 were "My students learn to work together," "I cultivate a sense of pride within my students," "I cultivate a strong work ethic within my students," "My students will become productive citizens," and "My students develop leadership skills." It is important to note that these particular indicators of success are primarily focused on students' extramusical development rather than personal or program success or prestige.

For Ms. Sanders, exposing students to elements of musical culture outside their own urban experiences was a higher indicator of program success than musical achievement or notoriety: "I don't care if they ever get to Midwest or get a Grammy or something, but—if they would come back and tell me, 'Oh, I saw the symphony,' I'm like, 'yes!' That's what I like" (interview, May 23, 2007). Mr. Michaels, director of a very successful district fine arts magnet program, serves as a negative case, as he focused

much more on traditional indicators of program success such as getting good ratings at large group and solo and ensemble contests. Because Mr. Michaels' emphasis on contest ratings contrasted with the other qualitative participants' focus on student-centered measures of success, which confirms the quantitative data, the convergence of qualitative and quantitative data on indicators of success demonstrates mixed alignment.

Quantitative data reveal that participants took positions in an urban school for a broad variety of reasons, most of which can be classified primarily into the following categories: 35.29% of participants indicated that they took a job in an urban school "because I wanted to help people," 35.29% indicated "because I attended a CPS myself and wanted to give back," and 16.47% indicated "because I didn't get a job in a different setting." Qualitative data could not directly confirm or contradict this finding because all four participants were graduates of CPS and thus tended to want to give back to their district as motivation for taking an urban position. However, the qualitative data serve to enhance the understanding of why the participants felt a greater degree of comfort in the urban setting than in any other.

For Mr. Michaels, returning to become a teacher in the CPS was a way to return the mentorship that he had been provided as a student: "That desire returned, you know, to assist them as I was assisted" (interview, May 23, 2007). None of the qualitative participants indicated any desire to ever teach in another setting or any desire to leave the CPS, although several did indicate a desire to move to more "successful" programs in the city. It seems that these graduates of the CPS were much more comfortable in the urban setting than in a non-urban setting.

Quantitative data reveal a moderately positive level of participant job satisfaction ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). Job satisfaction was found to be correlated with several other variables. A large positive correlation was found between level of satisfaction teaching music in the urban context and the teacher's perception of program success ( $r = .50$ ,  $n = 83$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). Medium-size positive correlations were found between level of satisfaction teaching music in the urban context and the following variables: perception of administrative support ( $r = .48$ ,  $n = 85$ ,  $p < .0005$ ), maintaining high expectations for students ( $r = .32$ ,  $n = 84$ ,  $p = .003$ ), and perception of teaching in a clean, orderly, and safe school ( $r = .38$ ,  $n = 86$ ,  $p < .0005$ ). A small positive correlation was found with perception of colleague support ( $r = .228$ ,  $n = 85$ ,  $p < .0005$ ).

Qualitative data do not directly parallel these quantitative findings but enhance the understanding of participants' job satisfaction. The qualitative theme of "the balance between frustration and reward" augments our understanding of the complex nature of the participants' level of job satisfaction. All participants discussed extremely high levels of frustration with the continuous challenges that they faced. However, all participants also described receiving tremendous rewards from their job. Mr. Moya summed up his confusion regarding whether the rewards were able to outweigh the frustrations:

As optimistic as I am and now in my 3rd year, if 2 more years go on and we don't see a lot of improvement, you kind of also have to look at yourself and your own career and say, "Do I want to fight the rest of my life?" And even



though you're making a difference in this type of kid's life, what did you get into this for to begin with? Do you want to be the stand-by-me type of guy, or do you just—do you want to be a band director that actually has a successful band? And what ends up being with that is then you need to get to a better school if you want that. So, there's a conflicting sort of ideal of what you should be doing. And I feel personally that I'm going to stick it out for as long as I can, but if it doesn't improve within about 5, 6 years, I probably will end up looking for something else. (interview, May 16, 2007)

This constant struggle between frustration and reward identified in the qualitative findings demonstrates that the participants' job satisfaction was a more complex issue than the quantitative data are able to demonstrate.

### *What Challenges and Rewards Do Instrumental Music Teachers Perceive From Teaching Instrumental Music in an Urban Environment?*

Quantitative data reveal that teachers perceived a moderately positive degree of support from administration ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) and colleagues ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), while the perception of parental support was lower ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ). Qualitative data enhance the quantitative findings by providing insight into the significance of this support and the power structures that underlie it. For example, at Gerstein, administrative support was very high; the principal decided that she wanted to develop a fine band program and so provided tremendous financial support to Mr. Moya's program. As Mr. Moya said,

The school is just gung-ho for the band which is—I mean, that is the biggest thing. You need administration support in a school like this in an urban environment to be really successful. And until you get that support, you're not going to be good because it starts with them. They call the shots. So for her to be on my side like this is—it doesn't happen very often. (interview, May 15, 2007)

Because Mr. Moya's principal valued band, he received assistance with scheduling and funding. When administrators do not value the development of instrumental music programs, they may have a similarly negative effect. For example, Mr. Sims taught at a school where the basketball teams had won numerous championships. Because the school had received positive attention for these achievements, Mr. Sims felt that the focus of administrative support was on athletics instead of the band program.

Quantitative data suggest that the teachers perceived a strong level of pressure on their schools to raise standardized test scores ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). Despite this pressure, teachers felt that they were asked to discuss or teach these tested subjects within their music programs only to a small degree ( $M = 1.91$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ). Participants indicated losing an average of 8.38 rehearsals ( $SD = 5.81$ ) annually because of standardized testing

conflicts. Teachers involved in the qualitative phase of the study did not discuss testing extensively, but Mr. Moya's case provides an enhanced understanding of the way that district testing affected his program:

Well when they come in as freshmen, about 85% of the freshmen all come in so low-scoring in reading and math that they have to take a double period reading and math their 1st year, which immediately chops out any electives. Okay, so I can't have any freshmen.... The rest are all seniors which is destroying the program because how can I start a program with seniors when they're all going to graduate? (interview, May 15, 2007)

Quantitative participants indicated moderately positive feelings of safety in the neighborhood that surrounds their school ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ). They also believed that violence, drugs, and gangs in the neighborhood surrounding their school were concerns, with gangs ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) being rated with a slightly higher mean than violence ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) or drugs ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). Qualitative data confirm that these issues were present in the communities surrounding participants' schools. However, teachers spoke about the lack of safety primarily as a concern for their students, not for them as teachers. Ms. Sanders, for example, explained why she was very concerned about her students:

One young man, he lives on [an intersection close to the school]; he doesn't want to walk, because he's been jumped on so many times. Another young man, he got stuck up one night coming from a football game with the marching band; one of the boys was thrown in the trunk and these other guys were just joyriding around with this boy in the trunk and they let him out somewhere.... So there are those things around here that happen. (interview, May 23, 2007)

Mr. Moya agreed that these issues strongly affected his students, saying, "There are gangs in this area, actually quite a few gangs in this area.... I mean, you can't even walk down those streets without coming across them or being threatened as a kid, I suppose" (interview, May 16, 2007). Both qualitative and quantitative data indicate that problems of gangs, drugs, and violence were present in the neighborhoods surrounding participants' schools.

Quantitative data reveal a broad picture of the levels of funding that each program received. Participants indicated a mean funding level from all CPS-related sources of \$4,951.88 ( $SD = 6621.59$ ). The very wide standard deviation indicates a variety of funding levels for programs within the district, with several participants indicating that they received no funding whatsoever from CPS sources and several indicating levels of funding more than \$30,000 a year. Participants also indicated that they participated in fundraising, with a mean of \$2,195.09 ( $SD = 5304.39$ ). The large standard deviation again reveals tremendous differences between district schools. Several participants wrote in the margins of the survey that they either were not allowed to do fundraising or had made a philosophical or practical decision not to do it. Fifty-one percent of

participants charged some sort of participation fee to students (many participants specified in the margins of the survey that this fee served as an instrument rental fee), and the average amount of the participation fee charged was \$35.83 ( $SD = 20.64$ ). Overall, participants indicated a moderate level of challenge presented by lack of funding for their programs ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ).

Qualitative data confirm the quantitative finding that the amount of program funding differed widely between programs. Because of the system of local school control in Chicago, each school principal was given a great deal of freedom to administer his or her own budget. Principals could decide how much or how little of their resources to allocate to instrumental music; there was no district-level funding for these programs. This resulted in disparate levels of funding throughout the district. For example, Ms. Sanders had to purchase her own copy paper out of personal funds, whereas Mr. Sims' principal purchased a brand new state-of-the-art copier for him that folded and stapled large, sturdy paper so that his concert programs might be of higher quality.

Quantitative data reveal that the vast majority of students in the district required the use of a school-owned instrument ( $M = 90.93\%$ ,  $SD = 18.16$ ). Participants indicated that disrepair or lack of instruments presented them with a moderate level of challenge ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). For most of the qualitative participants, there was great need for school-owned instruments in the participants' programs, because no students owned their own instrument at Gerstein or Katz (although the new Katz school came with a full inventory of new school-owned instruments) and only 10% of students owned their own instrument at Elmira West. The story was different, however, at the arts-magnet Bellerman, where most students purchased their own instruments and did not need to worry about costly repairs, because Bellerman had its own full-time instrument repairman. Although the broad picture of the district's lack of instrument inventory resources is indicated by the quantitative data, the convergence of the qualitative data indicates mixed alignment.

Quantitative data reveal that a mean of 88.89% ( $SD = 17.35$ ) of incoming high school students have had no previous experience playing an instrument. This is related to a long history in Chicago in which elementary instrumental music programs have been scarce to nonexistent (Podrovsky, 1978). Qualitative data demonstrate how difficult this makes life for the high school teachers. For example, Mr. Sims and Ms. Sanders both felt that finding quality literature for high school beginners was extremely difficult. As Ms. Sanders said,

Especially with the brass players and because they're high school students, I found that even though they start as beginners, they can do more, because they learn a little bit faster, their bodies are different, and they just get bored when they're only playing five notes. (interview, May 23, 2007)

Despite participants having had few years to develop as musicians, qualitative data reveal that some impressive musical moments were being created in their' rehearsals, such as when I heard the beginners play at Elmira West and wondered, "How do they

learn to play like this in 1 year?" (field notes, May 23, 2007). In this way, the quantitative data provide an understanding of the general picture of student musical preparation while the qualitative data enhance these findings by providing insight into the challenges that the lack of elementary feeder programs provided.

In the quantitative survey, participants revealed a slightly negative impression ( $M = 2.92, SD = 0.99$ ) of the adequacy of their instrumental music facilities. Qualitative data reveal tremendous disparity between the facilities of participants and thus reveal mixed convergence of the data. Perhaps the most striking example of facility disparity is the Katz instrumental music facility, where Mr. Sims directed his program in a brand new state-of-the-art band room with every available technological capacity, such as the ability to record the group digitally and the availability of multiple sets of chairs and stands for the different school performance venues. As Mr. Sims said, "It's nice to have stuff.... I mean, it's great. I'm not going to knock it. All this is great. It's better than being in that old building" (interview, May 16, 2007). The Katz facility contrasted greatly with the Gerstein facility. Located on the fourth floor of the building, Mr. Moya's students needed to haul their tubas and drums up and down these flights of stairs for rehearsals because there was no elevator. There also was no air-conditioning in the room despite the rising heat.

In the quantitative survey, participants indicated a belief that competition with district magnet and selective enrollment schools had the most negative effect on recruiting ( $M = 2.53, SD = 1.07$ ), followed by the availability of specialized academic programs at their school ( $M = 2.83, SD = 1.06$ ), competition with private schools ( $M = 2.87, SD = 0.67$ ), parents' perceptions of the problems in the neighborhood ( $M = 2.89, SD = 0.92$ ), and the influence of school counselors ( $M = 2.96, SD = 0.96$ ).

Qualitative data reveal sharp contrasts between the recruiting issues faced at the case study schools. For example, Gerstein had no selective enrollment or magnet status and thus was designated as a neighborhood school, meaning that it must accept every student from the neighborhood who chose to go there:

So we—obviously we get the local kid, but the school situation is such that most kids don't want to go here.... Well, the thing is, when these kids are in grammar school they have all these high dreams that they're going to go to these schools, and then the reality hits when they try to get into them that they don't have the grades or such, and so they end up having to go to Gerstein. So we are their absolute last choice and so they're miserable coming in. (interview, May 15, 2007)

The situation was completely different at the fine arts magnet school Bellerman, where more than 4,000 students a year applied for a spot in the freshman class. Bellerman needed to accept only 30% of its students from the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Michaels felt that this selective enrollment status greatly helped his program. Qualitative data thus confirm the quantitative finding that district magnet/selective enrollment status affected recruiting.

An open-ended section of the survey asked participants to list the top three things they most needed for their program to be successful. Overall, the three most commonly mentioned needs were financial support/increased funding (20% of all responses), repair and purchase of instruments (15%), and administrative support (13%).

Although qualitative data did reveal the importance of these three elements, the most prominent need that emerged in the four cases was the need for better scheduling of instrumental music courses, and thus the convergence of the data is mixed. All four teachers discussed at length the tremendous difficulties involved in scheduling students on a consistent basis for instrumental music classes. This seemed to affect both low- and high-achieving students especially. At Gerstein, for example, low-scoring students must take a double period of reading and math, which left no room for electives. The higher-achieving students, such as the students involved in the International Baccalaureate program, had such a full schedule that they too had no room for electives. Mr. Moya estimated that, of his incoming freshman class, only two students would be able to schedule band for all 4 years. According to Ms. Sanders, the typical progression of an incoming freshman who took beginning band at Elmira West would be as follows:

And so, you know, so the 1st year will be their music requirement. During the 2nd year, they will just do it as an elective. And then that next year they take their art requirement, or wait until their senior year for that, and in their senior year they have more electives.... So right now, with all the students in my intermediate band, most of them now, they want to go ahead and take art so they can get that out of the way. They say, "Well I'll be back my senior year to play." (interview, May 23, 2007)

An open-ended survey question asked participants to list the top three rewards that they perceived from teaching instrumental music in an urban environment. Overall, the three most commonly mentioned rewards were student musical improvement (17% of all responses), student personal improvement (12%), and general student success/progress (7%). It is striking to note that these three rewards were focused solely on student, rather than personal, professional, or program, success.

These student-focused rewards are confirmed by qualitative data. Mr. Moya, for example, dealt with many challenges to the success of his developing but struggling program. However, he felt that it was the students who most motivated him to continue his work:

Well, I think that the only thing that keeps me doing it now is the students. And also this sort of hope that something can come, this optimism of well, we can maybe get something workable out of this, ultimately. (interview, May 16, 2007)

Mr. Sims also described that his greatest reward lay in seeing the long-term personal success of his students:

But when you have the rewards, when you have those kids that can leave here and come back and still come back, and still come back and say, “I remember when you showed me ...,” or “If it wasn’t for you telling me this or showing me that ...,” those are your rewards, that’s where your rewards are, that they actually got something out of it. (interview, May 16, 2007)

Both quantitative and qualitative data, therefore, confirm the same finding that participants received the most reward from the success of their students.

## **Discussion of Results and Implications for the Profession**

Participants in both the Phase 2 survey and the Phase 3 qualitative interviews and observations demonstrated knowledge of their students and communities. This knowledge of context (Grossman, 1990) became inseparable from their general pedagogical knowledge, a type of knowledge cited by Shulman (1987) as relating to the way teachers conceptualize and enact general principles of instruction. This combination of general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of context, or “pedagogical context knowledge” (Barnett & Hodson, 2001), merits further study within the field of urban music education.

Both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate that participants believed that teaching in the urban environment requires the use of specialized skills, understandings, and dispositions (referred to here as *skills*). There are, of course, many strategies for instrumental music instruction that have been shown to be effective across rural, suburban, and urban contexts (Lindley, 2003). However, as each individual school has its own particularities of student, school, and community culture, it may be that the ability of a music teacher to adapt his or her teaching strategies to the needs of his or her particular teaching context is especially important.

The attitudes and beliefs that urban instrumental music teachers held were broad and complex. Teachers believed that their programs served as havens from some of the problems of the urban context and allowed students to relax and enjoy making music. Although this type of “haven effect” surely exists in all types of contexts, from suburban to rural (see Adderley et al., 2003), one wonders if the welcoming environment of the instrumental music classroom might be even more attractive to those students living in urban environments that experience high levels of violence, drugs, and gang activity.

The teachers believed that their success as urban instrumental music teachers was indicated primarily by the personal improvement of their students. Both quantitative and qualitative data reveal the student-focused nature of the teachers, who listed their own personal and professional success as being unimportant when compared to the development of their students’ personal potential. This focus on student success emerged as a major finding of this study.

Although the Phase 2 quantitative survey data reveal that the teachers held a moderately positive level of job satisfaction, this indicator does not capture the extremes of daily life experienced by the teachers. Qualitative data reveal that the teachers' job satisfaction was a result of a constant attempt to balance both frustration and reward. Participants faced tremendous daily challenges and extremes of frustration because of the constant challenges that they faced. However, participants also perceived a high level of reward from working with their students. These two factors, rather than "averaging out" to produce a level of contentment with urban instrumental music teaching, were constant, daily, and polarizing presences in the lives of participants.

This study provides insight into many of the challenges and rewards that participants perceived as urban instrumental music teachers. The data suggest no quick and easy solutions to these challenges. Although quantitative participants indicated that increased funding was their top need, qualitative data demonstrate that the four teachers operated in complex environments in which funding was but one aspect of the complete picture. A more comprehensive approach to supporting urban instrumental music programs is needed. The provision of adequate resources does represent a start, however (Costa-Giomi, 2007). As for rewards gleaned from teaching in an urban setting, for these participants, professional and personal rewards were less important than the rewards gained from witnessing student success and improvement. These student-focused rewards were confirmed by the qualitative data and reinforce similar findings by Chipman (2004).

The use of mixed methods within this study provides implications for future research within the field of music education. Mixed methods research in the field of music education is still relatively new, although the number of doctoral dissertations that utilize such designs has been increasing steadily. Within this study, the depth of understanding that the convergence of methods provides suggests that mixed methods research may be especially well-suited to the multifaceted, complex, and multilayered endeavor of music teaching and learning.

The portrait of urban instrumental music teaching presented in this study is indeed complex, as it relies upon each teacher's understanding of the urban culture, utilization of specialized skills, attitudes and beliefs, and perception of the challenges and rewards that abound in the urban context. The use of mixed methods to develop this comprehensive verbal representation adds another layer of complexity and richness to the portrait. To visualize urban instrumental music teaching as a phenomenon, one must imagine an intricate, multifaceted, and multilayered composite of the teacher's knowledge and skill base with the similarly complex landscapes of the urban community context, the boundaries of a large and bureaucratic district, the restrictions of the school environment, and the ever-changing essence of student culture. Such a portrait is constantly evolving and changing.

### **Author's Note**

This article is based on the author's doctoral dissertation, "A Mixed Methods Portrait of Urban Instrumental Music Teaching," completed at Northwestern University in May 2008.

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## Notes

1. For a full review of the literature on urban music education and other related subjects that pertain to this study, please see the literature review chapter of the dissertation upon which this article is based (Fitzpatrick, 2008, pp. 34–80).
2. All names of teachers and schools are pseudonyms.
3. The terms Black, White, and Latino are utilized as descriptors because they were found to be the preferred terms of the teachers interviewed in the focus group and interview/observation components of the study.
4. The majority of the quantitative data collected involved a participant rating of the proposed question or topic on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents the most positive or strong belief and 1 indicates the most negative or weak belief.
5. Participants were not asked whether they actually had experience teaching in a suburban school; this question rather was intended to gather information about which skills participants *believed* were context-specific to urban instrumental music teaching versus the suburban foil.

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## Bio

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