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The Hometown Band Director: An Autoethnographic Study on the Needs of Rural High School Instrumental Music Educators

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THE HOMETOWN BAND DIRECTOR:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE NEEDS OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATORS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Mary Pappert School of Music

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Music

By

Jonathan G. Schaller

August 2016

THE HOMETOWN BAND DIRECTOR:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE NEEDS OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Jonathan G. Schaller

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ABSTRACT

THE HOMETOWN BAND DIRECTOR:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE NEEDS OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATORS

By

Jonathan G. Schaller

August 2016

Thesis supervised by Dr. Stephen Benham

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. Three research questions guided the inquiry: 1) How do the needs of practicing rural high school instrumental music teachers compare to the unique needs of rural music educators identified by other researchers in previous studies? 2) Why are the needs of a rural high school instrumental music educator unique? 3) How are the needs of a rural instrumental music educator distinctive? Autoethnography was the primary research methodology utilized with additional participant interviews to enrich the data. Four themes emerged from the coding of data: 1) Need of balance, 2) Need of support, 4) Need of identity, and 4) Need of understanding. Based on its findings, this study recommends the creation of mental health support, rural music education support networks, unique program culture, and advocacy of rural instrumental music programs.

DEDICATION

To my colleagues who teach high school band and orchestra in rural schools who have been so committed to their students that they have remained silent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Chris Ann Lessly and Mr. Carl Defilippi, my undergraduate advisor and my high school English teacher, I extend a special moment of recognition. These two people pushed my writing to the next level, so that I would be better prepared for what was to come.

I am flattered by the offers of my colleagues and friends who offered to proofread and read the rough draft of this study. Thank you to Mrs. Rebecca Bouch, Mrs. Christina Cohlhepp, Mr. Cory Leydic, and Dr. Timothy Stevenson. Their simple words had immeasurable implications.

To my close friends and colleagues who heard me repeatedly discuss my need to write and finish, specifically Joan Wilden, Alyson Berezansky, Chellise Stolarz, and David Hutchison, I offer an apology. Your patient ear as I drew out this process and made you listen to me bemoan my own life in dramatic fashion did not go unnoticed. I noticed and am grateful.

I shake my head in disbelief at my parents, Thomas and Sandra Schaller and my sister Kristin Schaller Marino. Not once did they ever say one negative thing about this process, but instead offered only optimism and encouragement. "I just have to do this, this, and this. Then it's done!" "Alright!" was our conversation ad nauseam.

Finally, I ask my partner and biggest critic, Matthew Metzger, "Are you ready for me to do this all over again?" Here we go to Illinois!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My story

"Get out of here." These words echo as the simple statement that my senior high school English teacher said to me when we had an outside of class discussion about my future. She saw my future as one that would be better off away from my small town school and community. My high school chorus teacher echoed that sentiment by stating, "There's nothing for you here." Yet here I am, a high school music teacher teaching in rural western Pennsylvania in a school and community very similar to my hometown. I tried my best to take their advice and "get out," but in the end there was "*something"* here.

My personal journey as a rural music educator begins at my birth, because my birthplace is a rural community in northwestern Pennsylvania. My mother was a second grade teacher at the community elementary school and my father was the band director at the local high school. The property of the school was adjacent to our own backyard, and as a result the life of the school was a strong part of our daily lives even after school hours.

I grew up attending band rehearsals, and high school band members served as my babysitters—I was a part of the band before I learned how to play an instrument. I learned to identify instruments by their proper names and could quickly recite the entire woodwind and brass families, as well as accurately draw pictures of their shapes by early elementary school. I took advantage of the opportunity to open up cases in the instrument storage room and touch the instruments. If my dad was willing, I was even able to hold them with his supervision. I remember several instances where drums, French horns, trumpets, and once an "E-flat contra alto clarinet," as I so proudly and precisely called it, were at our house for one reason or another.

These school-owned instruments—as well as my personal inventory of toy instruments—were the source of hours of dedicated band practice or as it was termed in the neighborhood, "playing band." My parades are catalogued in photographs and home video. I had my own personal library of old marching band drill charts, various pieces of marching band music "borrowed" from the music library, lyres, and even my own broken down clarinet that was only good for parts.

The day that my dad let me take home the beat-up, junkyard clarinet, he must have been feeling either generous or ambitious because he also let me take home a working E-flat soprano clarinet—complete with reeds and a copy of *Belwin Beginning Band Method* for clarinet. I was in second grade at the time, and I had never taken any music lessons, not even piano. School band lessons were still two years away. As you can imagine, my mind was spinning with excitement. My dad showed me how to properly put the instrument together, wet the reed, and hold the instrument. He also showed me how to read the fingering chart in the book. At this time, I had a basic knowledge of rhythm and notes since I also had been working with spare music theory workbooks my dad had at home. Within a few short days, I could play the majority of the book mostly without my dad's help. My beginning clarinet experience was culminated with show and tell at school where I played "Merrily We Roll Along" for everyone and showing my classmates and teacher all the notes I could trill really fast. Eventually my interest waned as I was unable to play the higher register, and my dad seemed hesitant to give me any real formal training.

In fourth grade, I quickly signed up for our school chorus and also began instrumental lessons. Instead of the clarinet, I chose to take lessons on the saxophone. My three years of elementary band and chorus consisted of solos, small group ensembles, and a flurry of lesson

books. I had a good collection of Disney songs, show tunes, and pop songs to play in addition to my lesson materials. Also during this time, I was clocking in dozens of hours a week on the computer transcribing music and scores into my father's music notating software that was loaded on the home computer, the most ambitious of which was the John Williams' marching band show that the high school band was performing. By the end of my elementary lessons, I was in my fourth lesson book and more than ready for marching band and concert band in the high school.

My eager entrance into the high school marching band and concert band in seventh grade started off as a great experience but was occasionally marred by my own developing teen angst and perfectionist attitudes. While, I was physically and musically able to play and perform, I had difficulty maneuvering the complex world of the high school social dynamics and the seemingly meager musical goals of my classmates. My mind could not handle the fact that my classmates had not been practicing marching band drill since the age of five, nor did they have a desire to be a world class drum corps.

My junior high years in band consisted of similar experiences from my elementary years. I continued to play a lot of music on my own and experiment with music electronically on the computer. Unfortunately, my dad's schedule did not allow for him to give lessons to students— except during study halls—and even then it was very inconsistent. I received a few lessons during this time, but only when I made a sincere effort to seek them out.

My senior high years were highlighted by my experiences at band and chorus honors festivals. I attempted to go to every festival I could and in almost any way I could. If for a reason I could not participate in a festival on saxophone, I would play instead on the bass clarinet. (Those self-taught clarinet lessons in the second grade finally were put to use!) In the world of

band and choir, the music that was rehearsed and performed in these ensembles combined with

the work ethic that was demanded of its participants, gave me musical encounters that challenged

my musicianship and allowed me to continue a musically rich experience in high school.

I was a member of the marching band, concert band, stage band, concert choir, and show

choir. I took voice as an elective and also opted to do the work of a music theory course that I

was not enrolled in but was in the band room for anyway. I was the first male drum major of the

marching band my eleventh and twelfth grade years. I even learned how to play tuba so I could

participate in our school's brass choir that performed at Christmas time. None of these

experiences seemed to be enough. I distinctly remember researching on the National Association

for Music Education's website on how to start a Tri-M Music Honor Society Chapter at my

school.

While it seemed obvious to my teachers and friends, that a career in music education was

in my future, to my parents and me it was decided that I should pursue anything else. While I did

consider music as a future and visited colleges, the decision was met by resistance and apathy

from my parents. In the early 2000s, my parents were nearing retirement and had grown weary

by the world of education. They saw a future of misery and endless obstacles if I pursued a

career in teaching, especially music. I also saw a career in music teaching as something that was

too easy and too obvious. I wanted to rise above the expectations of my peers and community

and escape to something that was deemed more prestigious and grand. My love and obsessions

of geography, maps, architecture, and art seemed to magically converge perfectly in the field of

urban planning. My nights of playing SimCity on our family computer supported with notebooks

of drawings and print-outs of maps, community data profiles, and atlases could be applied to a

successful career in the big city away from the town and school that I could only escape from when I went to music festivals.

I entered my freshman year at Indiana Wesleyan University—eight hours and three states away from the town I lived in for eighteen years—as a social studies and political science major. The plan was that in four years I would graduate with this dual degree and enter a Master's program in Chicago or New York and begin studying for an urban planning degree that would hopefully position me for a career working for the Metropolitan Transit Authority in New York City. I had already picked out my brownstone home in Brooklyn.

My transition to music education

Unfortunately for those future plans, I decided to study saxophone privately and perform with the university's Wind Ensemble that first semester. I could not pass up an opportunity to perform in an ensemble regularly that had a full instrumentation, nor could I turn down an offer to receive personalized instruction on the saxophone for the first time ever. I soon discovered that reading books and articles that had little application or depth beyond stating facts was a tedious existence. In contrast, my time in the practice rooms or rehearsal hall had immediate personal satisfaction. This marked contrast between the courses within my chosen major and those that I was taking for personal enjoyment led me to seriously consider how I wanted to spend the following four years or more of my undergraduate study. I changed my major to music education much at the reluctance of my parents. I reasoned to myself that this was just the stepping-stone to my urban planning degree. In my exhaustive research, I knew that music majors still could pursue a Master's in urban planning.

Through the mentorship of a friend who was two years older than me and also a music education major, I began to lose sight of my big city planning dreams and began to see the

possibilities of my role in music and education. Conversations and coursework began to paint a picture of education that I was not used to seeing from my personal small town experience with my retiring educator parents. I began to see education as a challenge, something that took effort and artistry to do well as opposed to what I perceived as a daily grueling grind. I soon realized that the problems and obstacles that my parents were bemoaning late in their career, I was being trained to overcome from the beginning of mine. Music and education seemed like the perfect tools for me to change the world, something that my university encouraged its students daily to do.

Looking back, the planned arrival into a career of music education changed in appearance each semester. Depending on what I was learning in coursework, I planned on being a band director in a large suburban district, an elementary general music teacher, a choir director, an urban music teacher, or a university teacher educator. I had no intentions of ever stepping foot in a school similar to the one I experienced growing up. My planned graduation date was in the winter of the academic year—a time when I knew finding a full time position would be tough. My plan was that I would not move home, but I would find substitute teacher positions in the districts where I would ultimately work, either suburban or urban but definitely not rural small schools.

Reality hit hard. With no promise of sustainable income from substitute teaching, the lure of financial stability, food, and shelter of my parents' home was incontestable. I moved home and began substitute teaching in my home school district immediately. School districts in Pennsylvania also seemed to have lost record of my future plans of a music educator in a large urban or suburban district. These schools only seemed to want educators with several years of experience or other qualifications that I did not have at the time. The majority of positions that I

was eligible and eventually interviewed for were rural, small, school districts similar to my own experience growing up.

Statement of the problem

Unfortunately for myself or anyone with similar plans to teach in a large suburban or urban music program in the state of Pennsylvania, it is more likely one will be hired to teach in one of the state's rural public schools. As of the year 2011, 1,266 or approximately 40% of Pennsylvania's public schools were located in rural areas (NCES). I have been gainfully employed by one of these rural, small, school districts for seven years. I spent my life to the moment of my hiring doing everything in my power to escape being in the position that I currently am in. Twenty-four years of my life was spent planning for and pursuing dreams that would take me away from being a high school band director in a small town, to escape the problems that I grew up living with and continue to experience daily. These problems, which can lead to moments of debilitation, dejection, failure, rejection, frustration and any other negative adjective imaginable, also lead to the most hard-fought and rewarding moments of satisfaction. My potential for success has been with me my entire life. As annoying as I found it at varying points in my life, my success is in reality my small town street smarts that help guide me as a rural music educator.

Growing up in a rural community and attending rural schools allowed me to have experience with music in a rural school setting on a first hand basis and prepared me for some of the challenges that I have met as a high school instrumental music educator. Some of the challenges I personally have encountered include scheduling conflicts, the sharing of students between activities, the teaching of courses outside of my specialty area, the creation of well-balanced ensembles, inadequate funding, and inadequate equipment. It is a daily battle to

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overcome these challenges to give my students specifically the best instrumental music education and more importantly the best music education possible.

In 2014, I facilitated a panel discussion entitled *The Crisis in Rural Music Education* at the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association annual in-service conference. At this time, I was finding that there was not much conversation happening about the perceived unique circumstances of rural music teachers at conferences I was attending, in music education journals I was reading, or in the monthly trade magazines I received in my mailbox. I found in my conversations with my colleagues in western Pennsylvania who taught in rural schools a recurring theme of not being understood when we talked about our teaching positions. The only people we found who seemed to understand our challenges and could offer help were other colleagues in similar teaching situations. To help my colleagues who seemed to be increasingly frustrated and feeling isolated as rural music educators, I formed a panel of three rural music educators from the state of Pennsylvania. These participants were asked to discuss their experiences teaching and living in rural communities. We also discussed the role of the music educator in rural schools, as well as the role of the music program in a rural community. While each educator had their fair share of challenges to overcome, it was unanimously decided that their overall experience of living and teaching music in the rural communities was an enriching one. We found that the true crisis in rural music education is that many times as rural music educators, we lose sight of our good and fulfilling experiences for the challenges that we might encounter on a daily basis.

These challenges for the rural music educator include high teacher turnover, classroom environment, a demanding schedule, and low school enrollment (Hunt, 2009; Isbell, 2005; Wilcox, 2005). Hoffman (1943) remarked that rural schools were only desirable to some as a

stepping-stone to start one's teaching career, and Isbell (2005) more than a half-century later reiterated this thought. Isbell (2005) identifies many of the problems that a rural music educator might face including insufficient resources, isolation from other music teachers, low school enrollment, scheduling conflicts, and inadequacy of rehearsal and performance spaces. Rural music programs can also be identified by the following traits: high community involvement and scrutiny, sustained student contact from Kindergarten to twelfth grade, and itinerant teachers (Hunt, 2009). Despite these challenges several case studies have been conducted on individuals who have overcome these challenges to create successful rural music programs (Brobst, 1938; Stevens & Davis, 1994; Sussman, 2012; Wilcox, 2005; Wolfe, 1960).

Need for this study

While many articles were written concerning rural music education before 1960, little literature has been created in recent years even though two-thirds of all public schools in the United States are considered rural by some definitions and educate one-quarter to one-third of all school-age children (Isbell, 2005). The literature written mostly before 1960 specifically concerns the challenges of teaching music within one-room school houses rather than the consolidated schools that exist today (Brobst, 1938; Burns, 1925; Hanscom 1939; Hoffman, 1943; Hood, 1935; Logerwell, 1944; Pearson, 1937; Rice, 1954; Wolfe, 1960). With few exceptions, contemporary studies on rural music teaching are typically written as case studies and examine specific individuals and teaching situations. Challenges and teaching strategies are gleaned from these unique situations by the authors and are given to the rural educators to decide what will work for their own situations. Hunt (2009), Isbell (2005), Tozer (2015) attempt to detail the rural instrumental music program and its complexities, as well as offer strategies to find success in these teaching situations.

A study dedicated to the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators is important for several factors. First, such a study will add to the research and literature concerning instrumental music education, especially the sparse contemporary literature regarding rural music education. Second, this type of study would help to reiterate the issues already identified, as well as potentially expose those that have not in prior studies, in rural instrumental music education. When these unique issues and obstacles have been identified, potential solutions and strategies for overcoming these issues can be discussed and shared. Finally, an awareness to the needs of rural music educators, specifically to rural instrumental music educators, needs to be made, so that conversation and dialogue can be continued through the research in an area that is severely lacking.

Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is singular. I intend to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. By identifying and describing the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, it is hoped that teaching strategies and professional development can be developed and implemented to more efficiently and effectively help these educators.

Research questions

At the conclusion of this study, an attempt will be made to answer the following research questions: 1) How do the needs of practicing rural high school instrumental music teachers compare to the unique needs of rural music educators identified by other researchers in previous studies? 2) Why are the needs of a rural high school instrumental music educator unique? 3) How are the needs of a rural instrumental music educator distinctive?

Through the answering of these questions, it is hoped that music educators who are teaching in rural areas will have research to help them develop appropriate instructional practice and be better equipped to overcome the challenges of rural music education.

Definitions

The definition of the term "rural" that is being used in this study is essentially of that of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES usage of "rural" and "town" in regard to geographic classification of schools are being combined for this study under the term "rural" due to their similarity as small population centers with distance from urban areas.

The term "high school" that is begin used for this study is that of a school that educates ninth through twelfth grade students.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this review of literature I present a background of past research and discussion related and of benefit to rural music education. In addition to articles of historical perspectives of rural music education, I present a review of current literature found relevant to the field of rural instrumental music education.

This review of literature is divided into the following six sections: a) *Historical perspectives of rural music education,* b) *Bias toward rural music education,* c) *Poverty in rural music education,* d) *Isolation in rural music education,* e) *Role of community in rural music education,* and f) *Solutions for rural music educators and programs.*

The first section gives a historical background on the concerns and status of rural music education in the United States between 1900 to approximately 1970. The second section presents historical and contemporary bias against rural education and rural music programs. The third section explores how poverty affects rural education and rural music programs. The fourth section summarizes how geographic and professional isolation affects rural music education. The fifth section surveys how the local community and rural music program interact. The final section lists suggestions and solutions for the rural music educator.

Historical perspectives of rural music education

Historically, rural music education seemed to be a concern of music educators and researchers as it was an active topic in journals and music publications prior to 1970 when one room school houses were common across the United States. Over half of the population of American children lived and studied in rural communities in the 19th century, but music was taught mostly in city schools (Lee, 1997).

Lee (1997) gives a historical account of rural music education between 1900 and 1925. With the industrialization of the United States, people migrated from the farms to the cities. Economists worried about the collapse of rural America with the decrease of population. As a result, ways and means to make rural life more attractive were employed. The rural reform movement was initiated. Music began to be seen as an important social tool by reformers. Music was seen as a way to improve the economic and social conditions of rural people. Universities began to expand course offerings for teacher education in music. Importance was given to the Community Music Movement and the Pageant Movement. Rural reform led to a greater acceptance of music as an important aspect of education and social necessity.

During this time specific teaching strategies were developed to help make the learning of music more beneficial and efficient to these students. The phonograph and recordings became widely available to be used as a teaching model and tool. State music contests and festivals were organized to reach a larger amount of rural people. Pageants were written and performed widely in schools. Finally states began to require music as a part of the curriculum (Lee, 1997; Wolfe, 1960).

Charles A. Fullerton was critical in the development of a statewide music program in the rural schools of Iowa (Wolfe, 1960). His strategies for teaching music to the rural students of the state included putting phonographs and recordings in the schools to allow the children to hear model singing and performances. Fullerton also conceived a chorus combining the singers from all of his schools so that students could experience singing together when otherwise individual schools would not have enough students to outfit a chorus. He wanted every child in every "forgotten small school" to have a chance to learn.

Maguerite Hood (1935) gave first hand account of teaching music in a one-room rural school. She states that she and most of her colleagues are in isolated communities, and almost none have anyone to help them with their music. She detailed that their musical lessons are divided into singing, rhythm work, and listening lessons. She proudly mentioned that all their schools have phonographs to use for listening lessons.

Hood was a leader in the music education profession in the 1930s and left her position in her one-room school house soon after the publication of her article to began a series of radio broadcasts in 1936 in an effort to reach all children in Montana in rural one room school houses (Cooper, 2005). These radio broadcasts allowed teachers to bring to their classroom musical instruction of a high quality and experiences to their students that would not have otherwise been possible. Teachers were able to receive companion worksheets, workbooks, and tests to utilize along with the radio broadcasts. Hood recognized the need to utilize contemporary resources in music education, a need that still exists today.

Another rural music teacher, Brobst (1938), described his experience teaching in a grouping of rural one-room school houses in Pennsylvania. He taught in several school classrooms of vast age differences. Despite his beliefs during his study in college, he discovered when he was hired that not all children go to up-to-date and consolidated schools. In his article, Brobst discussed his music rehearsals including a weekly orchestra rehearsal that garnered membership from all the schools he taught and the two operettas he and his students produce each year. Brobst admitted that while the program is not where it maybe should be and that some of his students leave his classes with little musical gain, he expressed how gratifying it is to work in these communities.

The concern that "a program is not where it maybe should be" or that "not all children go to up-to-date and consolidated schools" was a reality that music teachers like Brobst had to face when entering the rural music classrooms of the time. While Brobst found success in his situation, not all teachers did. Many left these educational situations for positions in city schools. In an essay, Mary Hoffman (1943) stated her concern at witnessing many teachers get a job in her county out of college and then leaving as soon as they could get a city position. "Is the rural-school music position desirable only as a stepping-stone to a city system?" she asks. She stated that she values living a community where she knows people and they know her. She has been in many homes in the community and has watched her graduates become members of the community. Her job keeps her busy because she is the resident expert on music and is expected to have answers dealing with any musical question or issue. Even though she may teach at a small rural school, her students have success at music festivals. She believed that one of the handicaps of teaching in a rural school is sharing students with other teachers, and few students are interested in music as a profession. Despite these handicaps, she remarked that her school has a larger percentage of music participation than the city schools.

The difficulty of solving any problem of rural life is overcoming the condition of isolation since the population is widely dispersed (Burns, 1925). Burns remarked that musically talented students are difficult to get together due to the difficulty of transportation. Schools were too small to have enough work to justify the employment of a dedicated music specialist. Burns recommended the consolidation of music services on a county basis to allow the teacher to visit multiple schools, allowing the hiring of a dedicated music specialist. He also discussed the formation of music ensembles on the basis of the county level as opposed to the school level allowing students to benefit from a full ensemble. He also recommended the putting on of

pageants utilizing more than one of these county music specialists. Burns in his article warned that much consideration and attention must be given to local likes, dislikes, and ideas.

Some rural areas of the United States did consolidate their services at the county level. Logerwell (1944) described the growth of the music program in the rural schools of Shasta County, California where she taught. She discussed that there is a cost attached to this growing program since there is a need for music teachers to travel from school to school. Since teachers needed to travel between multiple schools for music instruction, Logerwell's primary concern is that the smaller schools need to pay more per hour of instruction than the larger schools, which have the enrollment needed for a dedicated music teacher and not an itinerant instructor.

In the one-room schoolhouse, the classroom teacher was expected to teach music along with every other subject. Unless, an agreement was made between multiple schools, as mentioned above, a dedicated music specialist did not exist. Pearson (1937) stated that there has been a failure of providing a program of music education and appreciation to rural students. He attributed this to the administrative failure to provide a plan of organization and supervision, the lack of classroom teachers who are able to provide by themselves proper instruction in music, and rural communities that have not been educated to the need for and worth of understanding and appreciating music. Pageants and musical programs as well as the yearly music festival were solutions to help combat this ignorance. Similarly to Burns (1925), Pearson (1937) detailed the strength of a county music program is that it provides real music education and engenders appreciation. Burns believed that a rural music program's purpose is not to develop great choruses, but to develop an understanding and appreciation of music and an ability of music.

A college music professor in a state teachers college and a parent of an elementary school-aged child submitted a letter to the *School music problems round table* in 1938 criticizing

the shortfalls of music education in the rural schools and the poor training teachers receive in college. She proclaimed, "The rural school is the root of the evils in our graded music system." She complained, "The rural school graduate is completely lost in music education courses offered in training schools." She witnessed that even if the student is hired in a city school, the teacher continued this vicious cycle and would not teach music. Her son is the victim of this shortfall and has not received music instruction since Kindergarten.

Hanscom, a fellow college professor, offered a reply to this concern in 1939. He believed that the majority of his students at the college level came from rural communities with little to no musical training. These teacher education students were expected to take one semester of music training in college after receiving none at the high school level and then return to the rural schools again where they would not teach music unless they were compelled to do so. Hanscom started a music festival that included twenty schools to help break this cycle of non-music training within these schools.

Eventually, a need for a rural school music curriculum was proposed in 1945 in the *Music Educators Journal.* It stated that small rural schools are not on the same level of achievement with larger schools due to inadequately trained teachers and a lack of adequate materials and equipment rather than a lack of ability in the students. Rural classroom teachers and not music specialists are responsible for music instruction because there is no one else available. The committee of this proposal recommended that induction programs for new teachers conducted by local administrative units and in-service follow-up by supervisors. Echoing Hanscom (1939), they also recommended more attention given by colleges and teacher-training institutions and refresher courses for emergency teachers teaching music. They recommended that the general goals of the curriculum should be divided between primary, intermediate, and upper grades

rather than specific grade levels. They stated the need for textbooks for one-, two-, or three-teacher schools especially written using a three-tiered system. They believed that instrumental music instruction could be carried on successfully in rural areas through the services of visiting instrumental teachers.

Despite the call for this curriculum, a decade later Rice (1954) bemoaned that very little was being done to improve the attitude of the one-room rural teacher toward music teaching. He stated that the very "excellence" of music teaching in urban areas tends to create a "what's the use?" attitude elsewhere. Rice believed that time allotted for instruction and the proper materials are of importance to success of a rural music program.

The attitude that rural communities were in need of better arts and music education continued into the early 1970s. A letter was sent to the *Music Educators Journal* (1972) in response to an article about professional music groups visiting schools and communities. The author asked why professional groups are not sent to visit rural schools or civic groups. He stated that those in rural areas are "starved" for the arts. The editors responded that there is increasing activity of groups to reach out into the communities due to grants being awarded and perhaps those with an interest should contact the groups desired for a performance directly.

The concerns of rural music education in the first half of the 20th century can be generalized into several categories. Funding of a music program was a major concern. The geographic and professional isolation of a rural position from larger population concentrations was another concern. Several were concerned about the high rate of attrition of music teachers from rural schools to urban positions. Finally, proper training for those entering teaching positions at rural schools was a concern for those at all levels of the educational process.

Despite these concerns, most rural music teachers found many benefits in their position. Many of these teachers were able to develop music programs that could be seen on par with those of their city counterparts. They found their students willing and able to achieve at a high level. Most importantly, they found the opportunity to be a vital part of their rural communities gratifying.

Bias toward rural music education

Bias toward rural music education is a historical and contemporary problem. Unfortunately, a careful reading of the research mentioned in the previous section will reveal an underlying theme of this bias toward and against rural education and rural music education. Most notably, one finds that the rural reform movement was initiated by the government to educate and elevate rural people from their current circumstances (Lee, 1997). In this movement music was seen as a way to increase the "social" condition of rural peoples, implying that their current culture was inferior. The city's music and its way of teaching were brought to save these rural people from themselves. The phonograph was seen as an invaluable tool for rural students to hear "model" performances of music as opposed to their teachers or other community members (Lee, 1997 and Wolfe 1960). Fullerton who brought a state music education standard to the rural schools of Iowa was deemed a "rural school music missionary" by his biographer Wolfe (1960). Pearson (1937) implies that music did not exist in his school or community prior to coming since he entitled his article "Bringing music to the small school." He stated that a county music program would provide a *real* music education. The inadequate music education of rural education was the "evil" that was causing a professor's child from receiving music instruction in a city school ("School music problems roundtable," 1938). Finally, the letter mentioned above written in 1972 was entitled "rural starvation" implying that the arts are lacking and are in

extreme want. These historical efforts in rural reform were not to introduce music where there was none, but to substitute the informal music making found in these communities with formal music instruction (Bates, 2013).

While this bias is in the past and the body of music education research and philosophical thought has certainly progressed, rural bias continues to occasionally rear its ugly head in contemporary education, music education, and research. As a result, it is a problem that the rural music educator must face.

The word "rural," as in rural communities and rural schools, connotes stereotypes and assumptions for many people, even to rural citizens and students, due to their portrayal throughout history. "Rural" can be seen as synonymous with deprivation and decline. Rural communities are seen as backwoods, backwater, and backward. People who live in rural communities are portrayed as ignorant, lawless, and provincial. On the other hand, "rural" can also conjure up images of romantic nostalgia. Pastoral simplicity mixed with a lost Golden Age of better times. In many of these images, rural connotes "white" either salt of the earth hard working blue-collar citizens or white trash (Tieken, 2014).

Bates (2013) finds literary archetypes of the urban and rural in the account of Lehi's "Vision of the Tree of Life" in the *Book of Mormon*, Aesop's fable of the country mouse and city mouse, and much of the lyrical content of country music. In each instance there is rural oppression and urban dominance. Bates presents these three literary pieces as examples of irony that the dominant view is that the urban life is superior due to its conveniences. However, rural populations find satisfaction due to their deep ties to family, place, and community.

Modern urban schools were developed upon principles of standardization and efficiency––a factory model. From the late 1800s to the present, the story of rural schools has been

consolidation and modernization, as it is deemed necessary to replicate these principles in the rural setting (Bates, 2013). The small, community based school, deemed inferior, outdated, and outmoded by its suburban and urban counterparts, closes in favor of larger, modern, and globalized schools (Peshkin, 1982; Tieken, 2014).

The idea that rural schools are inferior has crept into the minds of their students, staff, and communities. Theobald & Wood (2010) depicts an account of a student in a school assembly they had attended. This student remarked, "[We] are well aware we don't have the best schools, we don't get the best teachers or the best education. We know that we're going to have to catch up when we go to college," (p. 17). What astounded the authors was that the comments should have been insulting to the administration and teachers in attendance, but there was no protest or rebuttal. Instead they seemed to agree. In the minds of this school community, to be rural meant to be sup-par and deficient.

Rural education has long been an assimilatory project as it continues its missionary work of cultural elevation in a backwards country (Schafft, 2010). Unfortunately, school texts are a business and are produced by for-profit companies. The largest market for school texts are the urban and suburban school markets since the majority of school students reside in these communities (Theobald & Wood, 2010). As a result, the texts are written in an urban-centric manner that may portray rural life as part of the agrarian past and left behind in the pursuit of industrial progress.

Often the curriculum that is written and endorsed by the state makes the assumption that bigger is better (Theobald & Wood, 2010). This has trickled down to the attitudes of the teachers and students of our schools. Teachers are deceived to measure their own success as an educator by the size of school that they work.

Newly graduated teachers are led to believe that they should compete for positions in these supposed auspicious large urban and suburban schools and districts (Theobald & Wood, 2010). Theobald & Wood state that teacher training can be interpreted as being anti-rural from the sheer fact that rural teacher training is often omitted. Robinson (2012) investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions of employment preferences when they considered future teaching positions. The results indicated a stronger preference to teach in suburban schools than in urban, rural, or private. This coincides with past research that states that students desire to teach in schools similar to those of their pre-college music experiences (Kelly, 2003). A majority of the participants in Robinson's study were of suburban background.

Peshkin (1978) studied a rural Illinois school in the late 1970s. He found that teachers taught a curriculum and set goals for students with the notion that students were to eventually leave and live outside of their town. Rural education is both an agency to conserve country life and an agency to adjust its participants to general society. These two points are seen as the primary and longest tension of education reform (Schafft, 2010). This tension leads to a diminishing population to promote the values and lifestyle of the rural community. The school mobilizes people out of their current state and attempts to elevate them. The school as a result becomes set apart from its community (Corbett, 2010). This decline of population and the diminishment of industry as it is increasingly globalized continue to push students away from their rural communities. The community and school are seen as leftover and residual. As a result, a student is not deemed successful unless he or she leaves (Tieken, 2014). As former students and citizens leave, the community withers. As Theobald (1997) explains in language easily understood by those who fish in country ponds and lakes, "The increasing mobility of persons from the rural to the urban is leaving ponds populated by bullheads and suckers." (p. 104).

Bates (2011) recounts his personal experience growing up in a rural community in Utah and participating in music. Bates learned music instruments such as accordion, guitar, and piano through the imitation of his parents. His school did not have a music specialist until he went to high school. There he and his siblings played band instruments, which was a positive experience but perhaps not as fulfilling in the long term as his out of school musical experiences have been. He contends that his high school band experiences focused on rehearsal and presentation while his home music experiences were participatory and not achievement focused. His experience on a school instrument, music style, notation, and formal performance traditions did not translate well to home performances. However in his journal from high school, he bemoaned how much he is missing in fun and fashion living where he does. He wished he were middle class and living in the city. He was determined that a love of classical music and formal music training would help him transition into the middle class.

As a result of his own experiences, Bates (2011) questions the belief that traditional school music practices are "good for" children in the sense to foster economic and social mobility. The inclusion of music in schools is often advocated with statistics linking formal music education with participation in higher education and subsequent wealth and economic gain. This advocacy reinforces prior beliefs in a kind of cultural meritocracy – that the wealthy have attained their status due in part to "elevated cultural values" while a "culture of poverty" keeps the poor from financial success. Bates argues that it is likely that wealthy people come from wealthy families who are able to afford formal music instruction or attend school with enhanced arts electives. However, the belief continues to persist that music education will help children to rise above their current circumstances.

In the Western world, music teaching has exhibited little fundamental change over the course of its history according to Regelski (2006). Music teaching is mainly the efforts of cultural patrons, namely the socially elite patrons of the fine arts, to bring "high culture" to the masses. As a result in many places the rural school has become in effect the cultural center of its community and an attempt to spread culture to the masses (Raessler, 2003; Regelski, 2006).

Rural music was viewed early on as vulgar and inferior to "real" music or music being performed in urban centers (Bates, 2013). "Fine" living, scientific innovation, and other advantages of city life were offered as antidotes to the conservatism, isolation, coarseness, and ignorance of rural life. According Bates this has transformed into the modern school band traditions focused on competitiveness, efficiency, exceptionalism, and means-end pragmatism mentioned in Allsup & Benedict (2008).

Music education as aesthetic education, a philosophy forwarded by Reimer (1970, 1989, 2003), purports that knowledge is received wisdom from experts. It conceives that art is an object, and that music is works. The value of music is intrinsic to the music and is universal to all music. Lastly, the purpose of music education is the development of connoisseurship and insights into nature of feeling.

According to Prest (2013a), Bennett Reimer's philosophy of music education as aesthetic education (1970, 1989, 2003) creates several assumptions that contradict rural school realities. This philosophy assumes that exclusivity fosters a music program's success when in reality in the small rural school inclusivity fosters a music program's success since a smaller school needs a higher percentage of the student population to function. It assumes that music festival standards are objective determinants of success, but in reality for small schools, music festival standards disregard foundational differences such as socioeconomic differences and geographic isolation to

musical resources. The third assumption is that rural postings are less desirable than urban postings, when in reality rural postings may be very attractive. A fourth assumption is that multicultural education is achieved through curriculum content where music around the world is perceived as art and produced through performance. In reality multicultural education is achieved through curriculum content, ethno-pedagogy, and awareness of other cultural ways of knowing. Divorcing songs from their original cultural environment and intention distorts their meaning. True inclusiveness is not only performing the music of different cultures, but also considers the cultural reference points that inform the music making. The fifth assumption is that professional development is readily accessible, but in rural schools it is not. The rural music teacher may be the only school music teacher in a large geographic area making collaboration impossible. A rural teacher may find another music teacher to collaborate with but this other person may hold to the aforementioned five inaccurate assumptions.

These assumptions permeate the philosophical leanings of the larger music education community as they merit "successful music programs." *School Band & Orchestra*, a monthly trade magazine circulated widely among band and orchestra directors, often features a cover story on an instrumental music director. In these articles, a box insert is included in the text with a short summary of the teacher's program. This information typically includes the school population, size of the instrumental program including the number of ensembles offered, and a long list of accomplishments achieved by the ensembles. Rarely are small or rural school programs and their directors featured in this section. One instance was the feature of Willie Wright in Worland, Wyoming who was a professional football player who became a band director (Sussman, 2012). Another time was to feature Robbie Hanchey, the director of bands at Idaho's Valley Elementary, Middle, and High Schools who resurrected a defunct program to a

high student participation rate (Sussman, 2014).

A distinction that has been seen to esteem music programs in the United States is the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation's "100 Best Communities for Music Education." Bergee, Eason, and Johnson (2010) identified factors that discriminate communities maintaining and promoting high-quality music programs from communities that do not. The research team visited three communities that won the NAMM Foundation's "100 Best Communities for Music Education" and three that did not. These communities were paired based on size, urban/rural status, and socioeconomic status. Bergee et al (2010) found that the communities involved tended to encompass school communities rather than whole communities and researchers were analyzing school systems as a result. Schools who applied were from the higher end of the music education continuum, meaning that the schools that applied deemed themselves successful rather than struggling. The researchers discovered that funding levels did matter for success. The successful rural district had marked difference in parental support – most students in the successful district studied privately while the unsuccessful rural district had very few. Given these factors of socioeconomics, it can be assumed that rural schools, which are typically of lower socio-economic status, would rarely be given this distinction.

The "standard" against which rural music programs are measured needs to be redefined. Dake (2012) speculates that rural music teachers would be more apt to stay in smaller communities if the music education community valued their music programs. An article published on the National Association for Music Education's (NAfME) website entitled "Backwoods to big city: Pluses and minuses (Smith, Heuser, & Kaschub, 2010) compares the positive and negative aspects of working in rural, suburban, and urban schools with the intention

of helping future teachers decide where they want to teach. However, this article perpetuates the devaluation of rural schools by simply referring to rural schools as "backwoods!"

Rural bias is a historical and current issue in education and music education. Rural bias perpetuates the stereotype that being rural is inferior to being urban or suburban. This bias has led to the closing and consolidation of schools, skewed perceptions of quality teaching positions, the continued depletion of the rural population, the utilization of music as a means for salvation, and the perpetuation of philosophies of music and teaching that do not sufficiently meet the realities of the rural music program.

Poverty in rural music education

Poverty is an obstacle and problem facing many rural educators (Edmondson & Butler, 2010; Howley & Howley, 2010; Schafft, Killeen, & Morrissey, 2010). Many see a parallel between rural and urban schools and communities largely in part to the high levels of poverty found in both. Many sociologists and policy-makers have called for coalitions to combat the similar problems found in urban and rural communities but in reality there are many divergences including how poverty is experienced in a rural context (Edmondson & Butler, 2010). When discussing poverty in a rural context, the definition of poverty needs to be broadened beyond that of socio-economic status to include its other meanings of deficiency, insufficiency, inadequacy, sparseness, and shortage. Beyond low-socioeconomic statuses, Isbell (2005) identifies many of the problems that a rural music educator might face that fall into this broader definition, such as insufficient resources, low enrollment, scheduling conflicts, frequent turnover, instrument disrepair, lack of funds, and inadequacy of performance and rehearsal spaces. Rural poverty as it relates to socioeconomic status, school enrollment, school environment, and training need to be explored as they relate to rural music education.

Socioeconomic status. Rural communities have a high rate of low socio-economic status due to the low diversification of industry within their economies (Edmondson & Butler, 2010; Schafft, Killeen, & Morrissey, 2010). Giroux, Jah, & Eloundou-Enyegue (2010) state that there is a rural-urban inequality as the urban elite transfer resources to urban centers to create centers of power and privilege. Those who remain in rural areas are stricken the most with poverty. This migration of resources and people away from rural areas and to a globalized and urban economy has led to a labor market contraction, the prevalence of low-paid service-sector employment contributing to rising inequality, increased levels of household-level poverty, and economic insecurity (Schafft, et al., 2010). Schafft et al. (2010) state that these changes in a rural community have additional secondary effects including reductions in housing values and revenues available to local governments in the form of property tax, decreased disposable income for local residents, and closure of locally owned businesses.

The increased instance of poverty has resulted in the increase of transient students in some rural areas. These students have a high mobility rate, moving between multiple districts within a single year, as their parents and guardians seek employment and finance. These students have low academic achievement and struggle to keep up with their peers who remain in one school with one curriculum (Schafft et al., 2010).

The function of school is for students' economic roles later in life (Schafft, 2010). The school is to mobilize its students out of their current state in hopes of later economic gain. (Corbett, 2010). What results is that those who attain higher levels of education go elsewhere for work. The exceptions to this are teachers, doctors, and lawyers. These highly-educated people are still in great demand within rural communities (McDonough, Gilders, & Jarsky, 2010). As

former students and citizens leave, the community and its resources begin to diminish (Tieken, 2014).

Rural school programs and offerings are heavily influenced by the needs and capabilities of the communities they serve (Tozer, 2015). Talbot (2009) explores the quality of arts programs in rural public schools as they are influenced by the government, partnerships, and other community support organizations. It was found that quality and offerings were primarily affected by local funding and resulted in differing capabilities in each school. An example is the offering of string instruction. Smith (1997) examined how readily string instruction can be accessed in American public schools. The finding indicated that string instruction is most often offered in average-socioeconomic level, medium- and large-sized school districts. It is offered least often in low socioeconomic districts regardless of location or size.

The capabilities of a school district need to be considered when addressing the quality of rural music programs. Unfortunately not all distinctions and ratings given to music programs take socioeconomic capability into consideration. As mentioned previously in the Bergee et al. (2010) study examining factors that influenced NAMM's selection "Best 100 Communities for Music Education," most students studied music privately in addition to what was offered within the district's school in the rural school district that was given the distinction. On the other hand, the unsuccessful district had very few students who studied privately. Also, Bergee & Westfall (2005) and Bergee (2006) found that district expenditure was a predictor to a student's score in solo and small ensemble festivals. They found that the higher a student's school funded their music program, the higher the rating the student received. These socioeconomic differences and the potential of geographic isolation to musical resources need to be considered when one examines the quality of music programs within rural schools (Prest, 2013).

We need to be able to recognize the social forces that perpetuate poverty. Bates (2012) believes that without intervention, the markers for success that we have traditionally developed in music, such as participation in select ensembles, first-chair placements, leading roles, high scores at festivals, will always be reserved for middle-class and affluent students. Teachers should not believe that students excel primarily by virtue of talent or hard work. Students act and fit into the situations and networks that they live in. Students who have the means and wealth to further their musical education have the opportunity to take advantage of their situation. Logically, students in low socio-economic situations can only take advantage of what is offered and available to them.

Enrollment. Low enrollments in rural schools call into question the very existence and survival of rural band programs. The size of the rural school creates difficulties when recruiting and maintaining band members and limits the amount of large performance opportunities (Raessler, 2003; Tozer, 2015). Inadequate instrumentation or enrollment for the traditional band to be effective is of concern (Jarvis, n.d.). Concert, marching, and jazz bands are dependent on a certain number of participants to be able to perform. A variety of instruments and multiple players are necessary to perform musical works written for these ensembles. With the smaller pool of students in a rural school to draw from, a smaller school needs a higher percentage of the student population to just exist let alone thrive (Prest, 2013a). Schools will not offer these ensembles without a minimum number of students enrolled. If a band program continues existing with a low number of participants, it may be eliminated (Bates, 2013).

In a rural band program, students typically participate in athletics and other activities offered by the school and not solely band (Wilcox, 2005). While a school may have a small enrollment, they still offer a multitude of activities that need manned. As a result, multiple

activities must share the same student participants to be able to continue. Zamboni (2011) found that competing after-school activities as hindrances to student retention in band programs.

A southwestern Wisconsin newspaper article laments the shrinking participation in area high school marching bands. These smaller bands have led to a decrease in their participation in community parades and also simpler halftime shows. While this shrinking is undoubtedly linked to the diminishing enrollments in the area high schools, it is also because of the increased availability of school and club sports offered in the area. Many band performances are in direct conflict with sport tournaments and games, which causes students to have to make a choice in their participation (Ingebritsen, Prestegard, & Harris, 2013, October 23).

School environment. A lack of school funds available can lead to inadequate classroom environments, equipment, and staffing. Rural music teachers and band directors may find that their classrooms or the lack of classrooms, as well as the equipment available, does not meet the needs required to effectively teach their courses. Bobbett (1990) in his study of rural Appalachian band directors found that band facilities are "marginally adequate." Jarvis (n.d) lists inadequate facilities and equipment for the traditional band to be effective as challenges for the rural music educator. Rural music teachers often are required in their teaching duties to teach in multiple schools and as a result may not have a traditional classroom (Hunt, 2009).

Rural music teachers are presented these challenges in an overwhelmingly daily time commitment. Often they are the only one with the responsibility of teaching music to all students Kindergarten through twelfth grade in their school district (Raessler, 2003). Smith et al. (2010) in their article outlining the benefits and difficulties of teaching in a rural school listed among the difficulties limited funds with plentiful responsibilities and limited budgets and resources. Hunt (2009) also identified demanding teachers' schedules when she interviewed rural music teachers.

Sometimes a rural music teacher's responsibilities include teaching other subjects outside of the field of music. Prest (2013b) identifies this a potential strengthener to a music teachers mission to musically educate. Teaching other subjects besides music allows the music teacher to connect musically to an even larger number of students in a relevant manner. These demanding schedules require that administrators hire music teachers who are good organizers (Bobbett, 1990; Wilcox, 2005).

Competition with other courses such as vocational training as well as the increasing emphasis for achievement on standardized tests has placed music and the arts in a background role for many rural schools (Raessler, 2003). In Zamboni's (2011) study of rural Pennsylvania instrumental music teachers, scheduling and preparation for standardized tests were listed as impediments to student retention in their programs. Isbell (2005) and Tozer (2015) state that the scheduling of courses in direct conflict with band is an issue facing rural band directors and their students.

In a case study, Wilcox (2005) examined the teaching situation of rural music educator Stan Johnson in Shickley, Nebraska. Shickley is an agricultural community of approximately 380. The school has 150 students Kindergarten through twelfth grade. 38 of the 45 high school students are in band and 26 are in chorus. Wilcox found that Johnson was successful because he was more organized than average. His supplies and funds were limited. Johnson's schedule is full and busy with lessons before school, eight classes, and private lessons after school and in the evening.

Training. New teachers are not motivated to go to rural schools (DeLorenzo, 1992; Hunt, 1999; Raessler, 2003). New and inexperienced band directors who are hired to teach in rural schools have a lower propensity to remain in their current position (Pohland, 1995). If new and

inexperienced teachers are leaving rural music programs, logically it can be surmised that the vacancies that result are typically going to be filled again by new and inexperienced teachers since they are the ones in most need of a job. As a result, a vicious cycle of high teacher turnover is created in rural music programs (Jarvis, n.d). This is of concern since it is believed that the consistency of a band director in a rural school affects the longetivity and quality of a rural band program (Ingebritsen et al., 2013).

Hancock (2008) studied the effects of teacher characteristics, school conditions, teacher efficacy, external support, and remuneration on music teachers' risk of attrition and migration. Data for 1,931 music teacher participants was collected. According to the author's analysis, significant predictors of this risk were young age, teaching in a secondary or private school, extracurricular hours, school wide concerns, limited support, lower salary, and dissatisfaction with salary. While Hancock states he found no effects for older teachers, education, mentoring, and school location, including rural areas, we must take note that his significant predictors are inherently present and of great concern in rural education!

Professional development for a music teacher in a rural school may not be readily accessible (Prest, 2013a). A lack of preparation and professional development for music teachers who are hired in rural school districts especially at the beginning of their teaching careers is a concern. Conway (2002) collected data from a group of first year teachers who graduated from a Midwestern university on their perceptions of their pre-service training. These first year teachers believed that student teaching was the most valuable aspect of their pre-service training. They did not believe that the courses that were taught through the college of education at their university were applicable or beneficial to their current circumstances. They also did not think that their instrumental methods courses were taught with the objective of pedagogy in mind.

They believed that an extended period of student teaching as well as an increase of courses taken between the instrumental, vocal, and general tracks would have been more beneficial in preparing them for their current teaching positions. Conway (2012) revisited these teachers ten years later to see if their perceptions of had changed. The majority of the subjects still agreed with the findings of the original study and believed that experience is the best teacher.

DeLorenzo (1992) identified the perceived problems of beginning music teachers and the perceived usefulness of professional assistance in the first year of teaching. This study found that teachers in rural schools report more difficulty in planning sequenced learning than do teachers in urban and suburban locations. DeLorenzo believed that this could be because teachers in urban schools have more colleagues or a detailed curriculum compared to rural schools with fewer teachers or a curriculum that may not exist.

Poverty as it relates to rural education and rural music education is not a discussion that is limited to socio-economic status. While students and communities of low socio-economic statuses are a concern in rural education and music education, the interplay of poverty as it relates to low and diminishing school enrollment, the school environment (i.e. school funding, facilities, staffing, and scheduling), and the lack of teacher training and preparation are all crucial components to the study of rural music education.

Isolation in rural music education

Geographic and professional isolation is another obstacle facing rural educators, especially rural music teachers. To many in rural areas, the resources and conveniences offered in urban areas are not accessible due to distance and time. This distance between the urban and rural creates a socio-artistic gulf between these regions (Regelski, 2006). While poverty can exist in urban areas like in rural areas (Edmondson & Butler, 2010), urban areas presumably are

surrounded by more affluent areas. Areas of deficiency within an urban context can draw on the resources of the affluent neighbors and witness a greater mobility as people travel between the these two areas frequently. In contrast to this urban reality, rural schools and communities are typically surrounded by, interact, and perform daily with rural communities. As a result, their cultural and financial statuses are seen as normative and rarely challenged by their surroundings (McDonough et al., 2010).

These differences due to geographic and socio-economic isolation create rarities and impossibilities for rural music students and educators. Students may not have access to a music store, opera company and symphony orchestra educational programs, music festivals, free concerts, live music role models in a variety of genres, and musicians and educators who can be hired as clinicians (Prest, 2013a). Performances are an important aspect of rural music programs since they serve for some within these communities the only source of live music (Brook, 2011).

Professional isolation is a difficulty facing rural music educators (Isbell, 2005; Smith et al., 2010). Professional isolation can be an outcropping of physical geography or school environment. Due to No Child Left Behind, teachers are required to fulfill professional development requirements to remain licensed. For rural instrumental music educators, the more directly applicable the professional development is to their current teaching situation, the more beneficial the professional development (Burkett, 2011). Conway (2008) identifies that the most powerful form of professional development for music educators was informal interactions with other music educators. However, the rural music teacher may be the only school music teacher in a large geographic area making collaboration and informal interaction impossible (Prest, 2013a).

Sindberg (2011) observes that music teachers comprise a small amount of the teaching staff within a building. This can range from one teacher in a building to three or more. It is also

not uncommon for music teachers to travel to multiple schools as part of their teaching assignment. Isolation from other music teachers is a problem for music teachers since they need to discuss their work with more experienced mentors (DeLorenzo, 1992; Isbell, 2005; Krueger, 2001). As a result some music teachers seek out as music teachers they already know such as former university professors and cooperating teachers from student teaching (Krueger, 2001).

A study examining the issues of professional isolation among public school music teachers was conducted by Sindberg and Lipscomb (2005). One hundred randomly selected Illinois public school music teachers were surveyed to determine the extent they felt professional isolation and to discover its causes. They found that new teachers are likely to be more vulnerable to feeling isolated than their veteran counterparts. Sindberg and Lipscomb state that more experienced teachers may accept isolation as a working condition and have become used to it. Regardless, they found that isolation has a negative effect on teaching.

Geographic isolation in rural areas prevents students and teachers from having access to resources readily available in urban and suburban areas. This geographic isolation also separates rural music teachers from other music teachers, preventing ready and accessible professional development. Interactions between teachers are needed for the continued growth within their profession. The professional isolation that rural music teachers experience has a negative aspect in their professional growth and teaching.

Role of community in rural music education

When examining rural schools, one will find that the rural communities within which these schools reside are an entwined and enmeshed part of the examination. Rural schools and their communities often enjoy an established close and symbiotic relationship (Prest, 2013b). They control the hiring, funding, and curriculum of their schools through elected school boards

of education. In turn, the school maintains, preserves, and develops the local economy (Tieken, 2014). But as rural schools are closed, consolidated, and increasingly mandated by the state and federal government, the local community identity is threatened (Tieken, 2014).

In Peshkin's (1978) study of rural community life, his narrative switches between the school and the community at large frequently due to this symbiosis. He observed the community's social integration focused on family, religion, conservative patriotism and attachment. The majority of residents could not imagine living anywhere else. Residents of the community as well as the students at the local school felt that they were accepted as someone special within their community and were not just a number, in contrast with what they believed would be their experience living in a larger urban area. Bates (2013) remarks that in a small rural community it is possible for every individual to know everyone personally. Together they work, participate in leisure activities, adhere to tradition, feel connected to their location, and help each other. Relationships are central to rural community living (Prest, 2013b).

These relationships are started early during their time at school. Peers in a rural school have a close association with each other and as a result act as somewhat of a family (Peshkin, 1978). These students do not only go through school together, but also end up going through life together as they enter into the community (McDonough et al., 2010).

In small communities, the distinction between the school and the community is minimal since the school is the central point of activity within the community (Bergee et al. 2010). Within the community, schools provide a central meeting place for life and activity, acting as cultural and value-based strongholds. They evoke the community's emotions through athletics, special programs, plays, and graduation (Peshkin, 1978).

Raessler (2003) states that if a music education program makes no impact on the community it serves or improves the quality of life of that community, then there is not enough reasons for the program to exist. Raessler believes that the rural community clings to a rural music program for its cultural vitality. As a result in small towns, the music teacher is the cultural leader of musical activity within the community. The music teacher often becomes admired and cherished by the community because they "are the music" (Smith et al., 2010). This role of the teacher and the music program can result in a fishbowl effect for the music teacher and increased community scrutiny of the program (Hunt, 2009; Spring 2014).

Music teachers need to seek positions that fit their own values and philosophies otherwise they risk compromising to find success (Maltas, 2004; Peshkin, 1978). A band director or music teacher needs to find a program that fits their personality, philosophy, and values to lead to success (Lang, 2011).

Typically, communities only want teachers and administrators who fit within their small community and its values. Peshkin (1978) recounts the discussion of a rural school board as they conducted interviews for a new superintendent for their school. The deliberations and debate between members of the school board brought to light what the residents believed constitute the values of the school and community. They rejected the candidate who they believed had "too many ideas" or had "ideas good for bigger schools." Instead they wanted someone who would work slowly and deliberately. Likewise, they wanted someone who was thoughtful and conservative in the spending of money for the school. A comment was made that one candidate was "too intelligent." While they were not anti-intellectual, the board wanted a superintendent who did not talk over the heads of the people and could make himself understood plainly. Echoing their agrarian lifestyle of knowing no official office hours of when to farm, they

appreciated the candidate who seemed to be always on the clock working for the betterment of their school. They saw the candidate who displayed an ethic toward strict discipline as an asset for their community. The successful candidate for their superintendent position was hired because he was "country."

While school boards and communities seek out teachers and administrators who fit within their small community and its values, the unique social configuration of each rural community offers clues to music teachers regarding their particular community's musical and music-related strengths (Prest, 2013b). This relationship between a music teacher and the community within they teach is important. An effective music teacher must develop community support (Wohlfeil, 1986). Wilcox (2005) observes in his profile of rural band director Stan Johnson, that the music program had continued success because it garners a lot of support from school administrators, school staff, and members of the community.

Rural music teachers must acknowledge their sense of place and their teaching roles within the community (Spring, 2014). The rural school band director is often expected to not only lead the school band but to become a community server (Pohland, 1995). Dake (2012) sought to discover the roles and identities that emerge in rural music teachers. She found that rural music teachers identify and act in four roles that she termed the nurturer, the builder, the teacher/colleague, and the community member. Rural music teachers teach the whole child and not just the musical, continually improve and strengthen their programs, work to improve and strengthen their school, and are active participants in their communities. Dake concludes that rural music teachers need to have a real commitment to the rural places in which they teach, knowing the importance of traditions and values associated with small communities.

Brook (2011) found that rich place-based music education programs were highly regarded by their communities. These music programs valued musical learning activities and performances that were reflective of the musical practices in the communities while also celebrating their diversity. Students in these programs were active members of their communities by honoring their past and brightening their future.

While community scrutiny and a lack of privacy can occur due to the high level of community involvement in a rural music program, the close relationships that are formed between the rural music teacher, the students, the music program, the school and the community are ultimately gratifying and satisfying to many who choose to work in these situations (Hunt, 2009; Raessler, 2003; Spring, 2014; Tieken, 2014).

Solutions for rural music educators and programs

Many educators and researchers have sought solutions to the problems of bias, poverty, isolation, and community that are encountered by rural music educators. They offer recommendations for logistics and pedagogy and call for changes in praxis and philosophy to the rural music educator so that they can overcome these problems and teach more efficiently and effectively.

Several authors recommend concrete and practical solutions to overcoming issues related to rural music teaching. Tozer (2015) offers solutions to student recruitment, parent involvement, fundraising, as well as details his yearly schedule of planning and implementation month by month for his rural high school marching band. Isbell (2005) outlines several ways for rural music teachers and band directors to combat many of the problems that they may encounter in their classroom. Solutions to overcome problems related to low enrollment include combining two or more existing music groups; encouraging experienced students to mentor, direct

rehearsals, and give private lessons; suggesting students try different instruments and vocal parts; forming small ensembles to perform traditional and nontraditional music; providing both simple and challenging music parts; rewriting music to fit the needs of a particular group; and arranging trips to boost morale. He also suggests asking parents to help with fund-raising, chaperoning, concert duties, and other tasks. He believes that the teacher needs to foster a good relationship with school administration, the school, and the community. He encourages music students to give extra performances for the school and community. Lastly, he suggests that the music teacher learn about the school's master schedule and how he or she can influence its structure and contents. Jarvis (n. d.) says that the rural teacher should arrange music to fit the ensemble they have and to show success whenever possible to the students and to the school community. Zamboni (2011) found intrinsic motivators such as multi-age student involvement, popular music, and successful music experiences are utilized to keep students interested in instrumental music programs.

The teachers studied in Conway (2002) believe that teacher training can be altered to align better with future teaching experiences. They suggest an extended student teaching experience, a variety of courses taken from instrumental, vocal, and general music tracks, and instrumental methods courses taught under the supervision of music education faculty to focus on pedagogy rather than performance.

Several characteristics of teachers have been found to be more effective for rural music teachers. Being organized, proactive and having a plan was seen as helpful to music teachers in the rural context (Krueger, 2001; Wilcox, 2005). Wohlfeil (1986) deemed the following characteristics effective in teachers in rural small schools: autonomy, insistence on a schedule favorable for performing groups, flexibility in scheduling, ability to develop community support,

ability to maintain a large percentage of student participation, an area of a particular strength, high expectations, consistent enforcement of rules, immediate feedback, high regard for students, emphasis on solos and small ensembles, and use of high quality literature. He also found the following personal characteristics effective: flexibility, persistence, diligence, conscientiousness, sensitivity, and assertiveness. Jarvis (n. d.) begs the rural teacher to stay positive and show love and passion.

Bates (2012) admonishes rural music teachers to avoid cultural bias. He cautions them to not assume that students from impoverished backgrounds are disorganized, dishonest, vulgar, careless, and disrespectful. Bates suggests that music should be provided as a free and equal education. The teacher must understand and respect each student's cultural background and recognize the social forces that perpetuate poverty. He recommends to not attempt to rehabilitate a student's musical taste but meet them where they are in their cultural influences.

Bates (2011) states that it is essential to consider what rural populations may already find meaningful musically and explore ways to facilitate the continuation and proliferation of these musical practices. Students should be involved actively in local musical practices and traditions. They will be able to deepen their understanding of their own musical backgrounds and cultures, and be enabled to explore the local context through a musical lens. Concretely, he proposes school courses in country music appreciation, a genre very familiar and beloved to many rural populations. He advocates for the development of musicianship through guitar education and songwriting. He suggests providing opportunities for students to perform their own music such as pop, rock and country in an informal open-microphone setting.

In a later article Bates (2013) reaffirms his prior thoughts and advocates for music that is based less on mechanization and more on place. He believes that small ensembles with more

intimate venues where individual skills can be honed and applied are more effective in rural contexts. He believes music should be taught for the current needs of the students and community and not its future. He states that musical skills develop through participation and that making-music together such as games, sing-a-longs, dances, and ensembles are best suited for this purpose. He reasons that these activities can open discourse about local musical tradition and events, and how school music might be tied more closely with the local community. He believes that current music curricular models are risk-based and permeate competition that creates winners and losers between and within music programs, carrying the notion that this is necessary to student motivation and to compete in the global economy.

Prest (2013a, 2013b) echoes Bates' thoughts and suggests that rural music educators consider a praxialist music education philosophy. This philosophy emphasizes experience or practice as a means to acquire knowledge. A praxially transformed curriculum needs to feature more models of and opportunities for music making of all kinds, involving a range of music chosen for inclusion based on the local music world to benefit all students. The value of music becomes contextually and socially bound with the ultimate purpose of music education being self-growth, self-esteem, and self-knowledge. Prest believes that praxialism frees rural music educators from the constraints of trying to shape their programs into a mold that does not fit their context.

Authors and researchers have made several recommendations to rural music educators to help them find more success. Some have given outlines of effective teaching and organizational strategies for rural teachers. They have stated characteristics of effective rural music teachers. Others believe that a change in philosophy must be implemented or the identified problems of rural music education will persist

Conclusion

Perhaps, problems relating to rural education and rural music education are non-existent. If so, attempting to discover and identify these problems would be a misguided effort. Instead, identified "problems" need to be reframed more accurately as "realities" or "characteristics." The term "problem" carries the weight of a question requiring a solution. Rural education and rural music education are not in need of fixing. Instead, research findings need to be framed in a manner to display the realities or characteristics of rural education.

In this review of literature, we have found that bias against rural education; poverty as it relates socioeconomic status, school enrollment, the school environment, and teacher training; geographic and professional isolation; and the role of community are not only historical issues facing rural music education but continue to remain as contemporary characteristics, realities, and sometimes obstacles to rural music education. Many have attempted to solve the "problem" of rural music education, but the most effective solutions are actually adaptations. As researchers continue to research rural music education, the implications on and the tension between philosophy and pedagogy can be lessened. Research on how to best approach and overcome these obstacles through praxis, strategy, technique, and philosophy is necessary to the future of rural music education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The qualitative research paradigm

It is difficult to find a universally agreed-upon definition of qualitative research. Gabrielian (1999) defines qualitative research as an interdisciplinary term that unifies very diverse methods defying a simple definition. Holloway (1997) defines qualitative research as a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences in the world in which they live. Malterud (2001) states that the aim of qualitative research is to investigate the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by the people themselves. Qualitative research is social research that is aimed at investigating the way in which people make sense of their ideas and experiences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The emphasis on qualitative research is the process flowing from philosophy, to theoretical lens, and finally to procedures of inquiry (Creswell, 2007). The following are common characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Qualitative research occurs in the natural setting of people whose experiences are the object of study (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

2. The researcher is the key instrument of data collection in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

3. Data is gathered from many sources by many methods (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

4. Qualitative research has an emergent design and process (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008).

5. Qualitative research has a complex and cyclic reasoning process (Phillips, 2008). Analysis and interpretation of the data occurs at the beginning and throughout the study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

6. Qualitative research is subjective to personal orientation and is fundamentally interpretive (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

7. Qualitative researchers use a theoretical lens to view their research (Creswell, 2007). Research philosophy and justification of strategy demonstrate congruence between philosophical and methodological stance of the researcher (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

8. In qualitative research, the researcher searches out views, perceptions, meaning, and interpretations of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

9. The qualitative researcher reflects on his or her role, the role of the reader, and the role of the participants in shaping the study (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008).

10. Qualitative researchers pursue a holistic account by developing a complex picture of the problem or issue under study (Creswell, 2007; Phillips, 2008).

Autoethnographic research design

This study utilizes the autoethnographic research tradition. Ellis and Bochner (2000) define autoethnography as "autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation" (p. 742). While Harris (1968) defines ethnography as a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group, in autoethnography the ethnographer is "a complete member in the social world under study" (Anderson, 2006).

Autoethnography pursues the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences treating autobiographical data with critical, analytical, and interpretive eyes to detect cultural undertones of what is recalled, observed, and told (Chang, 2008). An autoethnographer approaches research with the perspective that they belong to an underprivileged or otherwise disadvantaged class (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Chang (2008) states, "autoethnography should be ethnographic in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation" (p. 48).

The researcher's role

The role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument as well as part of the phenomenon being studied obliges the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study. My perceptions of rural instrumental music education have been shaped by my personal experiences. For my elementary and secondary schooling (1989-2003), I attended rural schools. I was a member of my school district's band program from fourth grade through twelfth grade (1993–2003). After receiving my bachelor's degree in music education, I returned to western Pennsylvania to teach music. I have been teaching instrumental music in a rural school district for eight years (2008–2016). The rural instrumental music teachers that were asked to take part in this study were previously involved in a panel discussion presented at the 2014 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association annual conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania that was facilitated by myself. Discussion and exploration on the unique issues facing rural music teachers was initiated between these participants and myself at this time.

Since I am an active member within the group being studied and the participants have prior association with me, research in this area would be considered "backyard" by Glesne and Peshkin (1992). My understanding of and connection to rural instrumental music education

enhance my awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to many of the issues surrounding rural music education and will be of great value to this study. However, due to my previous experiences working in this field as well as my prior connections with those requested to be participants, I bring certain biases to this study. Every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, but these biases may shape the way that data is collected and interpreted. I began this study with the perspective that rural instrumental music educators are unique from their urban and suburban counterparts in the challenges that are encountered. I believe that every rural instrumental music teacher teaches in a unique situation when in direct comparison with other rural instrumental music teachers. While situations may be unique, I believe that commonalities exist and can be generalized. Informed by my review of literature, I believe that rural instrumental music educators encounter bias, poverty, and isolation that interact with their local community in a unique manner.

Bounding the study

Setting. The primary setting of this study is my home and classroom. I teach in a high school with approximately 651 students enrolled in grades 7–12 and classified as rural distant by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The second setting is a high school with approximately 614 students enrolled in grades 9–12 classified rural-fringe by the NCES. The third setting is a school with 291 students enrolled in grades 9–12 classified as town-remote by the NCES. The fourth and final setting is a high school with approximately 494 students enrolled in grades 7–12 classified as rural-distant by the NCES.

Actors. I am the primary participant in this study as an instrumental music teacher in a rural western Pennsylvania high school. Three other participants were asked to be a part of this study. All three are instrumental music teachers in rural western Pennsylvania. One of these teachers is a female with between ten and twenty years of experience teaching in rural schools.

The second is a male teacher with over twenty years teaching in suburban and rural schools. The third is a female teacher with over twenty years of experience teaching in rural schools.

Events. Using autoethnographic research methodologies, the focus of this study is my everyday experiences of events and the perceptions and meaning I attach to those experiences. Anecdotal events and experiences were also collected from the other three participants. These events emerged as the study progressed.

Processes. Particular attention was paid to the role and procedures of the participants in their encounters and navigation of obstacles related to bias, poverty, isolation, and community within their teaching.

Ethical considerations. The right of privacy for participants in research is problematic, particularly in small communities and places where it is difficult to guarantee anonymity for the setting and actors (Gristy, 2014). Anderson and Lonsdale (2014) explain that ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality can present challenges in the context of rural research. For instance, the school in a research project may be the only school in the community. Similarly, the band director, the music teacher, the principal, etc. may be as much of an identifier in a rural community as a person's real name. It is likely that everyone in the community will know what or to whom the report is referring (Anderson & Lonsdale, 2014). Anderson and Lonsdale's (2014) ethical model of "respect, responsibility, and reciprocity" for social, historical, cultural, and place-based contexts and perspectives was followed as data was collected, analyzed and reported.

The following safeguards were employed to protect the participant's rights: 1) the research objectives including how the data will be used was articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the participant, 2) written permission to proceed with the

study as articulated was received from each participant 3) a research protocol form was filed and approved with the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), 4) each participant was informed of all data collection devices and activities (see Appendix B), 5) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports were made available to the participants, 6) the participants' rights, interests and wishes were considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data, and 7) the participants' participation in this study will remain anonymous and will be referred to by pseudonym when possible with final decision regarding participant anonymity and the disclosure of identity resting with each participant.

The participation in this study and any personal information that is provided by the participants will be kept confidential at all times and to every extent possible. All written and electronic forms and study materials will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet located in my home office. The responses of the participants will only appear in data summaries. Any study materials with personal identifying information will be maintained for three years after the completion of the research and then destroyed. Video and/or audio recordings will be kept confidential through the storage on an external storage device that will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed after three years.

Data collection strategies

I collected data from August 2015 through April 2016. My personal data includes daily journal entries (for format, see Appendix C), an emerging collection of personal inventories (for sample inventories, see Appendix D), photographs of the classroom and working environment, and a summary of yearly, weekly, and daily schedules and procedures. The other participants were interviewed three times. The first was through e-mail (for initial interview questions, see Appendix E). A follow up interview was conducted through an hour-long recorded phone call.

Soon after, a final hour-long interview was conducted and recorded on-site at a time that the participant was not in direct contact with students to continue prior dialogue and observe the participants' working environments. Photographs were used to document visual aspects of the interview. A field journal was utilized to plan questioning and utilization of time as well as aid in the transcription and analysis of interviews. This field journal was also used to record personal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions throughout the research process.

Data analysis procedures

Creswell (2007) says that qualitative data analysis is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports. Chang (2008) states that in autoethnography data collection will continue with data analysis and interpretation to fill gaps and enrich certain components of data. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that analysis, interpretation, and evaluation are always emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished. During data analysis, the data was organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded using a combination of emerging codes and predetermined codes from past research. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Using the analysis and interpretation strategies recommended by Chang (2008) for autoethnography, I 1) searched for recurring topics, 2) looked for cultural themes, 3) identified exceptional occurrences, 4) analyzed inclusion and omission, 5) connected the present with the past, 6) analyzed relationships between self and others, 7) compared cases, 8) contextualized broadly, 9) compared with social science constructs, and 10) framed with theories.

Verification

To ensure internal validity, the following strategies were employed:

1. Triangulation of data—Data was collected from different sources of information to build a coherent justification of themes. Data was collected from journals, interviews, observation, and document analysis.

2. Member checking—The participants checked data findings throughout the analysis process for the accuracy of themes and meanings.

3. Rich, thick description—Detailed descriptions of the setting and events were utilized to help results become more realistic and rich.

4. Bias—At the outset of this study, research bias was articulated under the heading *The researcher's role.*

5. Negative and discrepant information—Real life situations composed of different perspectives is reported.

6. Prolonged time—Regular and repeated observations were conducted over a period of nine months.

7. Peer debriefing—A teaching colleague as well as a music teaching colleague served as peer examiners to help ensure the study resonates with people beyond the researcher.

The primary strategy in this project to ensure external validity is the utilization of rich, thick description so that anyone interested in transferability will have a framework for comparison. Three techniques to ensure external reliability are applied to this study. First, I provide a clear account of the focus of this study, my role, the participants' positions and basis of selection, and the context from which data was gathered. Second, multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used. Finally, data collection and analysis strategies are documented in detail to provide a clear and precise depiction of the methods used in this study. An external auditor familiar with qualitative research methods reviewed all stages of this study.

Reporting the findings

The basic procedure in reporting the results of a qualitative study is to present descriptions and themes that convey multiple participants and detailed descriptions of the settings and individuals (Creswell, 2009). Results are reported in a combination of a descriptive narrative with a scientific report. Thick description and narrative is used to portray my experiences as a rural instrumental music educator as well as the experiences of the other participants. The final report is a synthesis of the participants' and my own experiences with the meanings attached to them to illustrate the needs of rural instrumental music educators.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents findings from my research journal and participant interviews as they relate to the research questions composed for this study. I intend to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental musical educator. The following research questions informed this study: 1) How do the needs of practicing rural high school instrumental music teachers compare to the unique needs of rural music educators identified by other researchers in previous studies? 2) Why are the needs of a rural high school instrumental music educator unique? 3) How are the needs of a rural instrumental music educator distinctive?

A daily journal was kept of my experiences as a band director. Spanning over nine months of time, this journal documents professional and personal significant episodes that I encountered as a rural instrumental music teacher. I also took an inventory of my own personal beliefs and guiding values for my teaching. The three participants selected for this study were interviewed three times: 1) email, 2) phone, and 3) in person.

Participants

The primary participant in this autoethnographic study is myself. I am an instrumental music teacher in a rural western Pennsylvania high school. I teach band in grades seven through twelve. My duties as a high school band director include a junior high and senior high concert band, instrumental music lessons for grades seven through twelve, high school jazz band, and an after school marching band. I have taught in this district since the start of my career eight years ago, and it is the only teaching position I have held.

Three other participants were asked to be a part of this study to help enrich my own experiences in the rural high school instrumental classroom. To protect their identity, all names mentioned except for my own are pseudonyms, and all geographic references are generalized.

The first is Lucy Cooper, a band director in a nearby school to my own. She has been teaching instrumental music in a rural setting for eighteen years. She has taught in two different rural Pennsylvania districts including the school district that she attended. She has taught instrumental, vocal, and general music at both the elementary and secondary levels. Currently she teaches elementary band, junior high concert band, high school concert band, instrumental lessons at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels, jazz band, music theory and appreciation, and music theater tech.

The second participant interviewed for this study was Michael Kennedy. He is a high school band director in a rural small town in western Pennsylvania. He has been teaching instrumental music for approximately twenty-four years. He began his teaching career in suburban Cleveland but has been teaching over twenty years in the rural school district in which he was raised. Mike teaches middle level band and lessons as well as high school concert, jazz, and marching bands.

The third and final participant interviewed for this study was Cathy Murphy. Cathy also is a band director in a rural western Pennsylvania town. She has been teaching for twenty-five years. One year was spent teaching vocal music at another school before getting her current position as the high school band director in a community neighboring the one in which she was raised. Cathy teaches instrumental music to grades four through twelve including beginning band, middle level band, high school band, and high school orchestra. She also teaches extra-curricular marching band, percussion ensemble, jazz band, and dance team.

Introduction of themes

Through the reading and coding of my personal journal and interview transcriptions, re-occurring themes began to emerge. Four themes emerged that address the needs of my

participants and myself as a rural high school instrumental music teacher. These themes are: a) *Need of balance,* b) *Need of support,* c) *Need of identity,* and d) *Need for understanding.*

Need of balance

My life as a band director can be time consuming, hectic, and overwhelming. A lot of time is dedicated to creating and maintaining my program at the level that I believe it should be. The following journal entry describes a moment during this school year that exemplifies these feelings:

Today was an extremely hectic day for me that ended remarkably.

I had a female student in jr. high request to change rooms because she had heard that her roommates wanted to smother her with a pillow and she felt threatened. At first I said absolutely not but when she told me her reasons I contacted our travel agent to see if it was possible. I will change her room once we get to Disney World.

I spent most of the day trying to collect t-shirt sizes for our Disney shirts. During band periods I rehearsed county band music for the first time even though the festival is this Friday. In junior high we discovered we are missing one of the pieces, which didn't make the host happy. After band, I was reminded that band uniforms were coming back from the dry cleaners so I gathered some people to help and we unloaded the uniforms and put them on a rack in our storage room since I didn't really have the time to put them away numerically or in their garment bags.

I also got an email from PSEA's Voice magazine to do an interview about the cajon project I did last year and they wanted to set up a time to bring a camera crew in to talk with my students and me.

Today was also the first day for my student teacher!

Today was absolutely draining physically and emotionally. I feel honored to be

featured in a magazine for that project…but there are too many things going on for me to

relish in that success (1/19/2016).

In this episode I am balancing several different administrative tasks in addition to instructing my students musically. I am being pulled in several different directions with student relationship issues, student musical preparation, program administration, and trip preparation. The fact that it is my student teacher's first day in the classroom appears as almost an afterthought to the chaos surrounding me. The tasks at hand keep me from celebrating the fact that a news entity is interested in an interview.

Personal investment. The time commitment and juggling of responsibilities for student benefit creates an attitude of personal investment toward my students and my program. During our August band camp, an episode arose that bring to light this personal commitment and investment. A conflict arose with a senior student who missed the beginning hour of morning band camp rehearsal to go to the guidance office to have her schedule changed, dropping concert band in favor of another class:

Today I had a confrontation with a senior student who dropped concert band while at

band camp. I told her that she was no longer welcome to be in marching band because

she dropped band. I discussed the issues that were caused by this as well as some of her

less than savory antics in the past that led to her dismissal. Her mother came in an hour

later and we had a very heated discussion. I was accused of *taking this personally*

[emphasis added], which I was. I am the teacher and she dropped the class because she

didn't like "band."

This discussion was very emotional for everyone involved. I have put a lot of extra effort and allocated more financial help to this student's playing that most others because she wanted it. Unfortunately, she rarely showed appreciation and instead told me my class was "boring." This has always hurt but I chalked it up to teen ignorance and angst. When I discovered that she left band camp to drop my class, I found it to be an absolute slap in the face of trust and dedication…We all made up but there were are some wounds on all sides (yes this is VERY [emphasis original] personal) that will have to heal (8/13/2015).

The student is found guilty of breaking band policy and is dealt appropriate consequences of being asked to leave. In the past she has displayed an interest in extra help, and I have put my own time and resources toward this want. Ultimately she was unappreciative and found my class "boring." The student and her mother could not understand why I would take her dropping my class personally. To them, they saw concert band as only a "class" completely separate from the experience of marching band and from me as a person. I saw band as a holistic experience and not compartmentalized into separate entities. In this account I see it as my livelihood, a commitment of time and energy sometimes at the expense of my personal needs.

Relationship stress. I have been in a domestic partnership for the past three years. My partner is not a music teacher or even another teacher, although he is a musician. While he can understand the commitment that I have for my position as a band director in my community, it has often caused stress on maintaining a harmonious relationship. It was not until a journal entry in November, I began to realize that some of our conflicts are rooted from my work stress rather than other perceived causes. I write:

I am taking out my work stress on my partner and it's really not fair to him at all. He

might not be doing everything I wish he was doing, but I'm also doing almost absolutely

nothing at home because I'm consuming myself with school and band (11/19/2015).

I found many of our conflicts were initiated by me and occurred soon after arriving home from a

work-related obligation.

A significant episode that happened during this year was the death of my partner's

grandmother. While my journals recount us taking the time in December to visit her in the

nursing home one last time, it is noteworthy to see that my journals do not recount her death or

funeral. Her funeral occurred the week of district band, a three-day honors band festival. It was

determined that it would be too much of a hassle for us to make arrangements with the school

and student parents for my absence from the festival and then to arrange transportation for the

two of us to meet and travel to the funeral. It was dismissed from our consideration, and as a

result I deemed it not noteworthy for my journaling.

While the relationship with my partner is referenced often in my journals, the

relationships with my friends who are not work colleagues are rarely mentioned. References to

social activities with friends who are not related to work mostly happened during holidays or

long weekends as opposed to regularly throughout the school year. The first mention of "friends"

does not occur until the night of October 31st. I write:

After last night's game, I had a lot of energy so Matt and I went to Pittsburgh to hang out

with some friends and go to a show…I get really pumped up after a good

performance…I'm glad I was able to spend that energy hanging out with friends and I'm

glad that I have the weekends to rest!

The game referenced was the ninth football game of the season that the band had attended. Friday nights and weekends that are traditionally times that people gather with their friends had been taken by my obligation to be at football games with the band.

Physical health. Inevitably, I had periods of physical illness. Two of these instances occurred during public events for the band that I organized and facilitated. In the fall I had a prolonged illness that lasted over two weeks, spanning from our annual marching band banquet to our holiday band concert. The illness started as a fever and feeling under the weather:

> I knew I made a mistake as soon as I got into the car to go to school. As soon as I arrived, I asked for the school to call for a sub…I made arrangements for a sub to take over for me for the day. I went home at 8:30 and slept all day. Tonight was the band banquet and I knew I could not miss that…I also was not looking forward to being in front of everyone for a couple hours feeling this way…I wasn't able to shake anyone's hands or give hugs to anyone like I normally do which made me feel awkward and sad.

> The annual band banquet is a big deal…I tried my best to medicate and rest beforehand so that I could get through the evening. I think it went well and everyone enjoyed themselves. I just hate that there are some days that I cannot possibly be sick! Because it was such a big deal, I needed to be the band figurehead and do my civic service (11/23/2015).

Balancing my obligation as the band director with my personal health was tricky in this situation. I took time away from my relatively non-essential duties, which in this instance was my school day to go home and rest, but felt that my absence from the annual band banquet was not an option.

This illness continued through Thanksgiving Break and the week of my concert. I had to navigate balancing my own health as I prepared the final rehearsals for my students' public performance. I write about going to the doctor and trying to rehearse the band when my symptoms began to indicate an ear infection:

> Today I show up to school sick but still wanting to do rehearsal. My ears are in a lot of pain. I gather my first period students together to set the stage for the concert. While this is happening, a colleague asks me if I am ok. I break down crying on the side of the stage because it's obvious that I am not ok. It hurts to listen to the bands especially the percussion. I left school and went to the doctor. I am given a Z-Pak and a throat culture is taken. I am given a shot of steroids to help with the pain. They take effect in the evening.
>
> This sickness is making preparing for this concert a nightmare! I am glad that I have colleagues who care and help put things into perspective for me (12/1/2015).

The perceived need to push my body to its limits to finalize concert preparations ultimately led me to the doctor again for medication. However, it was a colleague who had to put the situation in perspective for me.

I found days that I stayed home from school to recover from illness, being interrupted by duties and obligations for my school and position. After the Disney trip in February, I found my body at its physical limits and called off work soon after returning. I wrote the following about my day off:

> Today I called off because I am finding I am still way too tired…I decided to stay home and rest for the day. However the truck with our luggage is due back today.
>
> It's becoming a pattern that even when I call off work, I'm still working. Today was no different. I still had to be in constant communication with parents. I still had to go

to school. I still had to put on a smiling face and greet my students and their parents. I still had to know what was going on! It's very difficult for me to fully walk away from my job since it is so multi-faceted (2/15/2016).

The demands of my position are "multi-faceted" and I have to make myself available after regular school hours to complete some of my duties and obligations.

Mental health. For me personally, the imbalance of my personal needs with my professional obligations manifest themselves in anxiety. When coding my journal entries, I found myself using the code *anxiety* very frequently. Words such as "overwhelmed," "stressed," "dread," "exhausted," "emotional," and "tired," often are used in my journal entries. In one entry, I gave a listing of the things causing me stress:

I'm on the edge of being completely stressed and burned out with everything going on in my life. Trying to mentor a student teacher, applying for grad school, being out of school every couple days due to honors bands and illness, home problems and the need for renovations, and region band preparations. I need a vacation from everything and it's becoming clearer every day that this situation is not ideal for me and is actually making me extremely miserable (2/29/2016).

The list of things to do at home and at school as well as the perceived lack of time to do it was taking its toll on my mental health. I recognized this an issue in my life, but lacked an appropriate coping strategy at this particular time.

During the summer months, this anxiety frequently manifested itself as insomnia. During band camp I gave an account of this issue:

I fell asleep last night very early. I was drifting off at 8 pm and in bed by 9 pm. This summer I've consistently been up until 3, 4, 5 am each night not able to sleep. I was tired

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after two intense days of rehearsals. Unfortunately, I woke up at 4 am and was not able to fall back asleep. I finally got out of bed at about 4:45 am. I checked my email and answered two messages…I mindlessly surfed the Internet for a couple hours until I felt sleepy again and went back to bed.

       Sleep has been a real problem for me this summer. One night that I couldn't sleep I began to analyze what I was thinking 'bout while I was in bed. Some of it was personal relationship and friendships, but I discovered a good portion was related to work, band, students, and parents. I started taking anti-anxiety medication again after stopping it for over a year. …Unfortunately, it's not all taken care of and is manifesting itself by turning me into an early riser if I go to bed early the night before. I can't say that I find that aspect totally disagreeable especially if it might happen when school begins. I wouldn't mind getting to school a couple hours early to work (8/7/2015)!

The insomnia was triggered by feelings of anxiety toward work and my band program, and I began taking anti-anxiety medication to deal with these feelings. I still found myself twisting the situation as a benefit to my productivity in getting work done for the band program instead of a problem that needed resolving.

Coping. To cope with increased stress and anxiety of balancing home and work, I utilized several strategies besides medication to help myself remain mentally healthy and sustainable. After arriving home from our Disney trip I remarked the following day, "Deservedly so, I spent the majority of today in bed sleeping and overall doing nothing" (2/14/2016). Physically resting at the end of weeks with stressful situations is commonly mentioned throughout my journaling. I recognize the importance of rest and allowing for at least one day of my week to be free from work obligations. This day is typically Sunday:

Today was quiet as per usual for my Sundays.

I learned long ago that I do not handle Sundays well and as a result I try not to schedule activities or do too much school work on them. They usually are just answering emails as they come (if I get any) and doing my lesson plans for the week (1/17/2016). My Sundays are reserved for tasks that need to be accomplished at home and can be completed in a non-intensive manner. Typically these include mowing the lawn, grocery shopping, or light de-cluttering of my space. Lesson plan writing for my classes takes no more than thirty-minutes due to the model that my district uses and the detail that I include in their writing.

During times of high activity and the need to "get things done," I resorted to the initiation and completion of menial, mindless tasks to both calm my mental state but to also help myself move forward with progressing to an end goal. During preparation and planning of the region band festival that brought students and band directors from fifty-six schools to my building, I found myself often completing such tasks. Traditionally, the host school creates signs or banners for each participating school to hang in the auditorium as decoration. I used the creation of these banners, or mobiles as I designed them for this particular event, as a creative outlet during a high-stress period:

> The mobiles I'm finding are taking my mind off of the stuff that is making me anxious. There isn't much I can do with the festival at home. Instead of worrying and fretting about it, I'm finding that the banners are helping me feel like I'm doing something for the festival but at the same time taking my mind off of it (3/7/2016).

Other times these productive tasks took the form of de-cluttering rather than a creative outlet. I write, "It felt good getting some of my frustration out by scrubbing the bathroom. I felt like something had gotten done and that our lives were moving forward" (4/10/2016).

During the school day or when I am actively in a supervisory or teaching role I find that flexibility and re-framing a situation positively helps with lessening my stress. I write, "Changing my perspective and vocally expressing my expectations helps me to rationalize my feelings and stress I've discovered" (10/23/2016). In a series of episodes, I was given the directive by my administration to modify our pullout lesson program, so that students were not scheduled to leave "core academic" classes (math, English/language arts, social studies, and science). While this created a difficult schedule for me to personally teach effectively, I looked for ways that this could positively affect the musicianship of my students:

> Because of the difficult lesson schedule, I created some alternatives for students to do instead of physical lessons. One is a YouTube video report. Today I took time out of class to show them a variety of YouTube videos that they could watch and write about in place of a lesson.
>
> I think watching professional musicians and ensembles might prove to be a blessing for us. Students will have the opportunity to see worthwhile models of musicianship. I'm hoping that maybe they will emulate some that musicianship (9/17/2016).

This sense of optimism and hope combats the sense of hopelessness and loss that anxiety sometimes causes.

The experience of others. While the three teachers who I interviewed did not explicitly discuss experiences of stress or anxiety, inferences of stress-inducing situations and the need to find balance were made. In the initial email interview, all three teachers detailed a month-by-month calendar of their schedule for the year. All three had duties to fulfill for their programs twelve months of the year. Cathy and Lucy were more detailed in this calendar than Mike and

indicated multiple projects, initiatives, and obligations happening simultaneously. Neither Cathy nor Lucy showed any times in their year where activity slowed. The way that these three teachers coped with the demands of their work life and found balance varied.

   "We put our foot down." In my conversations with these three teachers, the need for balance was the most pertinent with Lucy. Lucy recently has gotten married and has now had to navigate the transition from being a single person teaching band in her community to a married woman with a husband, children, and a household. In our phone interview I asked, "How does your role in the community play out? Cause it's almost like, your personal and professional life just blur." She responded:

> Yeah and now that I just have gotten married, we actually did have to put our foot down, my husband and I about a couple of things like, I have band parents that wanted to call and text after ten o'clock or even after eight o'clock or call and text at like five o'clock in the morning and my husband had to put his foot down about that. Like they, there's a boundary issue I think when you grew up, when you live in the community you grew up in and a lot of these parents see you grow and all of the sudden you're teaching their kids."

A few minutes later she continued with the theme of boundaries:

> It's a boundary issue, you know. It's almost like they come home from work and, "Oh I come home from work and I need to see how my kids are doing. Ok my kid didn't make drum major. Oh my gosh! What you didn't make drum major? I need Mrs. Cooper right away and see what's up with that." Well you know what? That is my job. Your kid not making drum major, that is my job and I left that at school. You know you need to make an appointment with me during my school day and discuss that with me because we are

not going to discuss that after hours because that, your kid not making drum major, that was part of my job and I have now left my job.

Lucy is explicit with when and what is appropriate communication with her regarding issues with the band program that she leads. She and her husband have set clear times as to when she will respond to parent communication avoiding late nights and early mornings. She also believes that issues with student achievement need to be discussed professionally through the proper channels while she is at work.

"Clutter bothers me." Mike is soft spoken with a soothing voice that demands the listener to slow down what they are doing and to listen to what he says. He is a captivating speaker, and I found myself slowing my own thoughts and speech, so that I could fully digest the words that he carefully chooses to share. During our site interview, Mike took me through the facilities of Lafayette High School and shared with me the storage areas and the band room. After a brief discussion in the auditorium, he led me to his band office:

> Mike: So I'll give you the grand tour. This is my office and these are pictures of my family.
>
> Me: It's clean.
>
> Mike: Yeah. I'm actually a neat freak. Some aspects of this you will see. Some you won't, but it's one of those things. It just bothers, clutter bothers me.

Mike's way to find balance and order was stated directly in the above exchange. "This is my office and these are pictures of my family." Mike feels the need to keep his desk clear and his office orderly. He also keeps numerous pictures of his family, especially his children, on his walls surrounding his desk, hanging on the door - anywhere that he might turn in his office, he

can see a picture of someone in his family. I asked Mike about what in his office is definitive of him, his teaching, or his time there. He responded:

I think the pictures of my kids, my family, I mean there's my favorite hockey player, you know. You know the massive amount of time that I spend here just to be able to look over at the door and see pictures of Joel and Maddie and Sandy. You know, thank goodness for Shutterfly. I think that picture of him was free or something like that. You know a four-dollar frame at WalMart and I have a 16 x 20 poster of my son playing hockey. You know we only have one bathroom in our house. It's a little farmhouse. I inherited it from my dad who inherited it from his mom and dad, with four of us now that need to get in and out of the bathroom, and I have always come to work early but now it's a necessity that I come to work early. I walk through the door at six o'clock in the morning at least from six to seven thirty when I'm here doing work, practicing, you know I'm looking at my family. I'm surrounded by them. That means a lot to me. You know I try to, I try to keep everything as organized as possible just so I can try to stay one step ahead. You know I look at, this top stack here is where I would keep my festival folders and I'm real big into these manila folders. I'll put district band, region band, everything. And when the stack is done, that means all the festivals are done. So I can just as I'm sitting here in between classes, I'm constantly looking at what needs to be done. What needs to be taken care of next. And that, you can tell when I'm overwhelmed when this whole desk is full because I really like to have an empty desk. As soon as this next folder, this next folder is the big one, that's SLO, soon as I can listen to all these recordings that I made and you know check off the boxes in the rubric and then write up the report on that that will be off my desk and taken care of for the year. It's just the way I look at it is one

thing at a time and just try to stay one step ahead of everything as I can. I've been trying to make this office as comfortable as possible.

Mike's office is where he gets his work done and where he spends the majority of his time while at school. Creating a comfortable space that allows him to feel connected with his family during his time away as well as a space that allows him to keep at the task at hand and find balance with his professional and personal life.

"*Desire, determination, and dedication.*" Cathy invests a lot of her time and energy into her program. Cathy is exciting and exuberant to talk to. Stressful situations become adventures and she seems always ready for an adventure. During our phone conversation, she began to explain her program's philosophy of the three "D's" – determination, desire, and dedication. This philosophy is not just for her students but it is also expected of herself and her staff:

> Because then they [the students] understood that the reasons why the crazy insanity of us starting at 7:30 in the morning and finding their instructors still at their [school] at 11 o'clock at night. It just showed that it took that dedication and the determination to make them be good. Because all thought that we were just sick people.

Until she created her program of the three "D's," her students and parents did not grasp why their instructors would spend that much time at school. This dedication to an end-goal is now shared and understood by the students in the program.

In our phone conversation I made the comment, "I feel like when I take away from [my students] to do something like this that I'm actually cheating my students out of an experience." She could relate:

See, yeah. Yeah. I feel that way an awfully a lot with my kids. You know I just took this

trip, and I'm thinking, "Wow that was so unfair. I was a very selfish person for doing it."

And it's just the guilt that I had going into the trip and things.

Her feelings go hand in hand with her philosophy of dedication and determination. Walking

away from her position as band director to take a personal trip leaves her with feelings of guilt

and selfishness.

Cathy finds balance in her surroundings. Cathy's storage areas are cluttered and her

office is unusable. She and others have tossed stuff that does not have a place in these areas

without being properly put away. This seems to not overwhelm her. She instead has taken her

entire band room area including the classroom to create an environment that is welcoming and

positive. She has designed her classroom as a refuge of comfort. Every summer, she comes into

her band room and redecorates in the theme of her marching band show. She covers the walls

with brightly colored paper, writes the theme of the show as a border, and has objects hanging

from her ceiling. Her chalkboard, bulletin boards, windows, and walls are covered with

achievements of students, letters, poems, quotes, pictures, and newspaper articles. In her chaos,

she finds balance through her environment to continue striving toward her three "D's."

Need of support

The need of support was a second theme that emerged. Support took many forms

including appreciation, encouragement, advice, and the completion of tasks. On the other hand,

instances of miscommunication and conflict sometimes resulted in the absence of needed

support. Contributors of support ranged from colleagues, administrators, and students' parents.

Colleagues. In an emotional description relating to the aftermath of being confronted by

an administrator I wrote the following about my school colleagues:

I had an encounter today that left me feeling small, inept, and underappreciated. I was almost in tears by the time I came back to my classroom and immediately sought the council of one of my good friends in the building. She was not available but I ended up going to another close friend. After I expressed my initial reactions and concerns to her, I went to my building representative to confide in her about the episode and to report what happened. She was encouraging and helped put things into perspective. She was concerned about what happened, but she helped ease my fears and look toward the future. I was told to go to another person who is a union officer as well as a band parent. He commiserated with me and was helpful in helping me not feel alone in my encounter. By the end of the day, I began to feel empowered because I felt that I was surrounded by a support system that could help me get through "stuff." I began to realize that this support system is what I have been missing all summer. I felt alone in my anxiety and stress and there was not anyone to empathize with me. Friends, family, and significant others who are not teachers have a vastly different perspective on school problems. They do not understand the politics or the frameworks of how a school operates unless they are teachers. Having colleagues again, colleagues who could help by listening and advising is amazing and something that I will never take for granted again (8/25/2015).

In this account I summarized my initial emotional compulsion to go to a person I trusted. As I continued to search for support and advice in how I should handle this situation, I began to feel "empowered." The empathy as well as advice help put the situation into perspective and helped to direct me into a positive direction.

During my time at the annual state in-service conference I summarize my feelings toward a music teaching community that refers to themselves as the "IU#9," a grouping of school

districts of which the high school I attended was a part. In this instance a group of music teachers who currently teach or had once taught in these schools were gathered at a table in the hotel restaurant:

I'm finding that the loyalty to the IU#9 is very unique. Most of the directors sitting at our table were no longer there or retired but we all had that organization and geographic area in common. These were the first directors I latched on to when I went to a festival as an adult and it's stayed that way. [A former director] said that [a retired director] told him, "You will never leave. You will become too close to these people." He was right with part of that.

The organization of the IU#9 created a support system for these band directors as well as myself since these schools are similar in their rural make up as well as their isolation from the rest of the state. The support system that these directors have created has resulted in a loyalty that exists even when a director retires or moves away. In my situation, while I was never a band director but a student, this loyalty and support still exists.

Administration. The support from administration was either welcomed or it was missing. In the episode of the student who dropped concert band during band camp, the parent had alerted the administration as she came to the school, and we almost moved our meeting to the office where the assistant principal could mediate. After the student, the parent, and I had come to a resolution, I debriefed the assistant principal. He agreed with my original decision of kicking the student out of marching band and supported me in my decision. I wrote as a reaction:

It was a great big change knowing that I had an administrator willing to back me up! Usually I cannot follow through and have to make empty threats but this time, my immediate supervisor was on my side and willing to help (8/13/2015).

Support from administration in decisions that I make have been undermined in the past and have caused me to approach my supervisors in a cautious manner. I was surprised when a decision that I had deemed appropriate was also seen as fair and appropriate by my administration.

Support from administration was also appreciated when it was presented simply and in situations where encouragement was needed. I write the following the day after my holiday band concert during which I was sick:

Got an unexpected email from the superintendent saying that the concert was good.

I was caught off-guard by the email from the superintendent especially since I did not know he was at the concert. It was nice to see that my supervisor knew I was sick and see how much energy I had to put into that concert (12/4/2015).

In this case the support that was appreciated and needed came in the form of his attendance at a public performance and in the effort he made to compliment the concert and wish me well.

Parent. In working toward the goals of my program, parent help and support is necessary. In preparation of the upcoming Disney trip, I recount one of my band boosters coming in to help ready a mailing to solicit donations to local businesses:

Today my band booster treasurer came to help mail out donor letters to local businesses. This was something that I had started on my own but was not able to finish.

Each trip year, we blanket local businesses with donation letters. I got the letter ready this year and printed off labels, but have not had the chance to stuff the envelopes and get the letters ready for mailing. I had mentioned this to my treasurer earlier in the week in passing and she offered to come in on Friday…It was a relief to get those letters out of my room and into the community. It was also a relief to have the opportunity to

talk to her about Disney plans and hash out some details. This was a time and situation where parent support was critical for the job to be finished (11/20/2015).

A parent who had the time to spare completed a task that I was unable to finish on my own. Her support was "critical" and a "relief."

The experience of others. The need of support emerged explicitly and implicitly in the conversations I had with my three teacher participants. All three perceived a lack of needed support.

"Many people think they support music." Lucy has found that her administration and her community give music education lip service but in practice she has not seen the effects of this support. I asked her in our email interview, "What barriers and obstacles do you encounter in the pursuit of your vision for your classroom and ensembles?" She responded:

I encounter small-town atmosphere. Many people THINK they support music. And, they really do their best. But, when push comes to shove, they don't support music like they should. Just this week my festival kids got thrown under the bus for missing two days for a festival. They are stressed out and taking homework with them to do during breaks. People think they support things that all the kids do, but they only really support the kids' music when it's not inconveniencing them.

In the incident that she recounts above, she tells of students who are achieving in music by going above and beyond what is required but instead of these students receiving recognition for this achievement they are instead being "punished" by other teachers who in the past have said they support music. She sees their support as a matter of "convenience."

Lucy has experienced relatively recently what happens when her community does not fully commit to the support of music education. After the retirement of the high school band

director at Covered Bridge High School three years ago, he was not replaced. Instead Lucy was "promoted" in the words of her administration to the role of both the elementary and the high school band director. During my site visit I asked her to tell me about the items that she surrounds herself with in her office. She gave the following lament when she describes an award given by our state's music education association that is hanging over her desk:

> Of course my Citation of Excellence award is probably, now that just reminds me of the way things were at Covered Bridge. It's not so much reminds me of me. It reminds me of the way things were and the way I wish they were again. Because that's when I got excellence in music at the elementary level. And there's not a prayer that's going to happen again because of the way things are down here. That kind of reminds me of how things were here and the way I wish they were again. That's kind of a bittersweet award for me. That's why it hangs right there. Because it reminds me that Covered Bridge once took very great pride in their band program. Since, not so much.

Her award reminds her of a past for her program that she believes had the support of her school and community and now is lost for good.

"*They just go on and on.*" Mike finds the support of his community very welcome and the lack of support from his administration frustrating.

Mike has found that his community is a great supporter of his program and music in general. This is due in part to the historical organization of civic musical groups within his town that still exist to this day. He finds that the average person in his community is proud of their band program:

> What I'm finding out is that to the average person that I don't know, they're very proud of the work that I've done. They're very happy to see the band program excel the way that it

has. They just go on and on at the grocery store, at the mall, wherever about seeing the band at the parade. How big it is. How good it sounds. How fun they are to watch.

The community shows its support of its band program through their compliments and their pride to Mike directly who is then able to share this with his students.

In his email response Mike, identified administrative support as an obstacle in the pursuit of his vision for his classroom and ensembles. He later expands on this need in our phone conversation:

> *deep sigh* I think understanding from the administrators that we work with on what our needs actually are…The flexibility of, the understanding and the compassion of just "Boy, Jon needs to leave twenty minutes early with his group of kids so they can get there on time. Let's not give him a hassle. Let's just let him do it." It's simple things like that we see as really not a big deal, but if we don't *have* [emphasis added by the speaker] those opportunities and that flexibility then it becomes a complete mess for us and things just snowball from there.

Mike's initial deep sigh indicates his feelings of frustration in dealing with a lack of support, or "understanding" in his terms, from his administration. Simple action or inaction from administrators can cause a "mess" later when dealing with the needs of the program.

"Pay it forward." In her email response, Cathy notes a lack of support from her school community for her program since the focus is on the "test." Students are pulled from her middle school band regularly on Wednesdays to do the work they were supposed to do as homework but did not. These students are also placed into "Bubble Groups" which are study groups to prepare them for the state standardized tests. During our phone conversation she posed the following question as a response to a comment that I had made:

Is that because of you know within our schools, there's obviously this testing stuff and

the priority of excelling in something such as music is no longer on the priority list of

anybody? Does that sound ok? *laughter* I always feel like I'm on the bottom of the

totem pole.

Cathy feels that music is no longer seen as important by the school community and excelling at

anything other than the test is seen as unimportant.

Since Cathy feels that she is not receiving adequate support from her school, she has

turned to the community at large to garner support. This support has led her program to

accomplish things that are rare for small rural programs such as a successful competitive

marching band program, annual trips throughout the United States, and international parade

appearances every three years. She says the following during our phone conversation about

winning the support of her community:

…if they want you to [do] a parade, you'd better do it. *laughter* you know what I

mean? Because we do our Memorial Day every year and so when it comes time for

asking for money from the Legion because it's their parade, they're more than willing to

help us out financially. And another thing we do is that we always serve the fire

department dinners. They don't pay us a whole lot, but on the flip side of that though

we're still giving to the community so it's kind of like pay [it] forward type of feeling.

Her attitude toward getting the support of the community financially and otherwise is through the

active support of the community's organizations. It is a mutual support as opposed to a one-sided

venture.

The lack of support can lead to professional isolation. I asked Cathy about how she

combats professional isolation during our phone interview:

I look forward to festivals. Within Jackson County you know we have our four band directors, so we do a lot of conversation via email. Other than that, now I do try to make sure I try to talk with my administration at least once a week…It's a good day when my assistant comes in because then I feel like I'm talking to someone who knows what I'm doing.

Cathy has created a support system with the other band directors in her county. While she may not feel the support of her administration, she is proactive in making sure that her administration is informed of her program regularly. Festivals are an opportunity for Pennsylvania high school music teachers to connect though these opportunities are dependent on the success of a school's student participants. When asked why she looked forward to festivals, she responded:

Oh to be able to talk to the other directors to see what's going on. Just to stay in touch with what the current thing is, I guess…It's just good to go out and know that what you're doing and the experiences that you're having are not that abnormal. That people have trouble with [things] too and finding out how they combat some of their situations and using that information to help yourself out.

Festivals provide an opportunity for Cathy to find support with her music teacher colleagues and to help her overcome obstacles that she may be encountering in her own situation.

Need of identity

Tradition and ritual emerged as an important guiding force in the decisions that were made about my band program. These traditions and rituals help create a unique culture to my program as well as give us an identity as the Marion Center Band. Creating and maintaining our identity as a band was a need to unite our band students, our school, and our community.

Ritual. Several rituals were identified in my personal inventories and journaling as having significance to our band program's identity. Some of these include the Clearfield County Fair Parade, the Cookport Fair, and the fall marching band banquet.

Our band traditionally performs in several parades during the summer months. The most anticipated parade performance is the Clearfield County Fair Parade. It is one of the few instances that our program takes competition seriously. In the following entry, I question the priorities of the band and the identity that we want to create:

> While a first place trophy might be nice, I don't think more rehearsals and time spent marching would be worth it for my students. I also wonder if our community wants a first place band or rather a band that is entertaining, novel, and unique. I have really tried to tap into creative ways to approach marching band and the students have started to own it. I want it to be their band, which in turn is the community's band (8/3/2015).

Competition is also the focus of another ritual that our band partakes in at our annual appearance at the Cookport Fair. Each year after our scheduled performance, student volunteers sing the national anthem for the fair's log-sawing competition. Several years ago, some students from the band decided to enter in the teen division. This participation has increased since with many students taking part:

> Our evening performance went very well. Afterwards we headed to the log-sawing contest, an annual tradition that I have encouraged with our band…The tradition has grown that some student have won trophies and once had plaid button down shirts made. This year for the first time ever, we had band students place 1st, 2nd, and 3rd!
>
> Log-sawing has become such a tradition that I have pushed back our leaving time from the fair so more students can participate. It's such a strange and small town event

that I put a lot of pride in my students competing. I want them to try it in such a welcoming atmosphere. It's so weird! I've done it several times myself and it really is fun. It was very exciting to bring home trophies from the contest. To me those are worth more than our parade trophies (9/16/2015).

The ritual of competing as an organization in this event has become a cultural identifier for our group. It brings our group together to support each other in something that we consider "weird" for us to be doing. The trophies that we win are still seen as awards worthy display even though they were earned doing something unrelated to music. Instead, they award our teamwork and cooperation.

At the end of the marching band season, we hold a banquet celebrating the students for their work and recognition to our seniors and student leadership. The band votes for students they believe are worthy of recognition in each grade. The award winners are presented with a homemade trophy that has a doll, stuffed, animal, or toy attached to a spray-painted wooden base playing a toy version of their musical instrument. Students and parents find humor in the awards and appreciate the effort that goes into making them. I wrote the following about shopping for the materials for these awards:

It's grueling shopping for inexpensive toys and searching for Christmas tree instrument ornaments or plastic toys. A lot of times I am thankful for the scrap book section at Michael's to help with some instruments. I end up at many different stores heading to the toy section and getting weird looks as I put Barbies in the shopping cart, but I find myself really trying to pick out a toy that each student would like and appreciate. (11/21/2015).

This ritual of award creation causes me to consider the personalities of each of my students as well as seek out the most unique way to celebrate their achievements as band members.

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Experiences. The creation of memories and memorable experiences for my students appeared several times in my journaling. While this memory creation is not necessarily ritualistic in nature, it is something that I hold culturally valuable to our band program. One of the events that was facilitated this year during marching band was "Glow Night":

At tonight's game, we decided to use the theme "Glow Night" for the band. [My assistant] and I purchased glow sticks, necklaces, and bracelets for the students to wear…Since it was the game before Halloween, the kids brought in candy to pass around to each other in the stands. A lot of the band kids took the glow sticks and wrapped them around their instruments…After the game, we marched down to the school and I opened up the auditorium. I had them line up by sections throughout the auditorium aisles. After a countdown from 10, I turned off all the lights and they started to cheer. We played Daft Punk from our halftime show, which has choreography in it. They seemed to get really into it. While it was only 5 minutes of lights out, they became very energetic and excited about it. One student even wrote a note to us directors on our band Facebook page thanking us for buying the glow sticks and saying that it was one of her favorite band memories (10/30/2015).

This event was facilitated to give students a fresh perspective on their musical performance at the end of the season and to also help them create a cherished memory.

The trip to Walt Disney World was also facilitated to give students a memorable experience. After our return, we took time out of class to share our experiences with each other. I remarked in my journal, "This Disney trip was monumental for me and for my kids (2/16/2016)." On our arrival back to the school from our trip, I made an extra effort to make sure that this trip would remain a memorable experience, "When we arrived at the school I dismissed

the busses individually where I could say goodbye and thank you by shaking each kid's [hand] one by one (2/13/2016)." Students expressed their gratitude in return for a great experience. This action on my part ritualized our memorable experience and brought closure to our experiences together.

The annual attendance of my students to district, regional, and state band is also a cultural identifier that my students have embraced. While musical achievement at these events has been memorable, it has been the experiences and rituals that take place during the trip on the day of the festival that are noteworthy. In the following except I discuss our trip to state band:

We loaded up the van and left and everyone seemed to be very much in a good mood…We then drove to Carlisle where we stopped for laser tag, go-carts, and the arcade. We had fun running around and letting the students let loose before three days for intense rehearsals.

We then rushed to Fuddruckers for dinner and then off to Hershey High School for auditions.

Giving my students a memorable experience when I take them to festivals is extremely important to me. While I would have preferred to do something more out of the box, the laser tag was fun and I hope that they remember that for years (3/30/2016).

A pre-audition meal is always shared with my students and myself when we attend these festivals. We make an attempt to eat at restaurants that none of my students have eaten at before. We also try to have a memorable experience doing something in addition to this meal. This typically is visiting local tourist spots. My wish of "doing something more" is because I felt that this particular activity could have been done anywhere and was not unique enough for our journey to states.

The experience of others. Identity was at the forefront of the conversations I had with my colleagues when I visited their classrooms. During the guided tours of their facilities, each teacher made it a point to show me the achievements and unique attributes of their programs. This identity is displayed prominently through pictures, trophies, banners, and other artifacts throughout their classrooms.

"*It's our thing.*" Lucy repeatedly showed me artifacts in her school and recounted rituals that her students consider their "thing." She began her tour by showing me a bulletin board in her classroom that is made to look like the solar system. Each planet displays a different honor band festival throughout the year, and on each planet are alien characters that represent the students attending the event. She explained that the students take pride in the display of their alien on the board and it is considered bragging rights. At the end of the year they will take their alien creature and put it on their band locker:

> These are band lockers out here, they want them for their band lockers and I don't know
> if any of them are in here but it's funny because it's also like a rite of passage if you look
> at [student name]'s locker. They collect things believe it or not and they put them outside
> their band lockers and this is what they do.

Students in Lucy's program ritualistically gather items that identify them as part of the band to put on their locker that is assigned to them for band.

She showed me her trophy case that had a few trophies from the past few years, but in front of the case taped to the glass was a collage of student pictures and quotes. My attention was immediately taken from the trophies to the collage:

> I make a collage for them every year. I haven't gotten my region pictures downloaded
> yet. But every festival they did I make a collage of the pictures I take. I put them on

poster board and put them out here and put little captions on them for them. It's kind of

like a, whatever senior goes, …they just cut it across. You know cut out pictures that they

want. And that's what they do. Then the collage is a big thing. They'll probably be after

me if I don't get them. I'll have to do the region one tonight.

Her students take seriously their identity as members of the band. They take pride in the

prominent display of their achievements in music and band and ask for it to be done.

Later in our conversation, we paused in the band room and she showed me the music that

the band was working on for their spring concert. She listed the charts that her jazz band would

be playing and then showed me an arrangement of "The Final Countdown":

And then we always do the Final Countdown and the senior saxophonist always gets the

big solo…It's the big thing. If you're the saxophone in jazz band, you get the Final solo

at the concert. It's the end. It's the end of the concert. It's the big ta-da thing. I mean, if I

don't do it, my ass is grass. It has become that.

The music that the band plays depicts their identity as an ensemble and community. Her students

demand this music and so does her community. Lucy feels the pressure of this demand with her

comment of "my ass is grass" at the thought of possibly not doing it.

"I always cut it out." Walking into Mike's band room, my eyes are drawn up toward the

ceiling. His walls are white and remain clutter free except for a row of band composites that

encircle the room. Organized by year, these composites contain the pictures of Mike's students in

their band uniforms that have been part of the bands since he began teaching at Lafayette High

School. His room is clutter free and contains only the essentials for what is needed for him to

teach band except for a mannequin in the corner dressed as the school mascot wearing a

Lafayette band t-shirt. These simple items identify that this room is the home of the Lafayette High School Band.

Mike's personal interests in Civil War history have influenced how he approaches the creation and maintenance of identity in his program. He is only the fourth director of bands at Lafayette High School and as a result consistency and legacy can be maintained. His band's website contains a concise write up of this history. He meticulously catalogs the events that his students and bands participate in:

> Anytime I get something in the newspaper, I always cut [it] out and even it it's, you know this is our Christmas concert, I had a guest soloist with us and he sang some Christmas Carols and did a wonderful job but I always cut out and here just Lafayette Mall, Lafayette Area High School Stage Band. Even as small as it is. That way I have historical documentation that yes we did do a lot of those things.

His interest in the history of his program has led him to believe that it must be preserved. This preservation has helped guide him in the creation and maintenance of his program's identity.

"See yourself for the first time." Cathy has gone to great lengths to create an environment in her classroom and school that acknowledges the unique identity of their program. Her classroom being decorated every year in the theme of her marching band show is the most obvious way that her program's identity is expressed. Trophies and awards that the band has accumulated welcome visitors to the auditorium lobby as well as her band room. During my visit to her school, Cathy took me on a tour of the three trophy cases that are full of awards the band has won. These include crystal vases, bowls, and plaques from the parades that they have marched. They also include awards from competitions, mostly at the national level, that they have won or placed in a high scoring finish.

While Cathy has numerous artifacts prominently displayed around her school, it is perhaps an annual ritual that helps to create and maintain their cultural identity within the students of her band:

> On the last day, after we're all done, all the first year kids area taken out of this room and put somewhere else and I pass out the t-shirts to everybody else, and then we put them through an initiation ceremony. And all of us in our t-shirts wait in a semi-circle behind, we set it up with three station and after they go through each station, the first one is desire, the second station is determination, and the other one is dedication, and after they go through each station, and they are told what that means and how that evolves with band and things, then they are taken to the walkway up a small hole, up the stairs, where the drum major and field captain present them their t-shirt and they have a mirror and they say, "See yourself for the first time as a Marching Eagle." Then they walk them down to the semi-circle and by the time we are done we have a full circle.

This ritual of initiation creates an atmosphere of seriousness to introduce new members to the philosophy of the three "D's" and to remind the old members of their commitment to this philosophy. This ritual also seeks to physically transform the members of the band from students who look like any other student in the school to one who is now identified as a member of the band program.

Need for understanding

The theme of understanding emerged as the fourth theme in this study. Understanding is closely related to the need of support. But where support is the need for action, understanding is the need of acknowledgement. The need for understanding is communicated through three interactions. The first is the need to understand the students and community in which the band

director is teaching. The second is the need to understand how one's teaching philosophy influences the priorities of their program. The third is the need of understanding from others within the profession that the interplay between teaching philosophy and student/community makeup result in programs that are unique and may be different from the familiar.

Understanding of students. Within my journaling, student background and perceptions rarely were generalized or mentioned. Often, I would reference in passing instances of individual students not being able to afford certain conveniences or allude to my knowledge of a student's home life. However, this omission was not because I lacked understanding of my students. It may be attributed to the fact that I have already navigated understanding the perceptions of my students, especially since I was raised in a similar community to that in which I teach.

It is only when I forcibly remove myself from my teaching situation and come back and view my surroundings with a critical eye that I question my perceptions of my students. While I was driving around the back roads of western Pennsylvania I wrote the following:

> So many people have junk in their yards. I don't know if it's because they can't afford to dispose of it properly or it's the thinking that they may need it someday. A lot of it is visible hoarding. You can't help but think about living that house and attending the local school. They're our students (3/28/2016).

The poverty of the people living in the area becomes very apparent. Houses are in disrepair and the yards are ill kept. Scrap metal, old cars, and unused building materials are just some of the things that litter the yards of some of these residents. I must understand that I have students who live in this type of situation and their perception of the world around them may greatly differ from my own.

Understanding of philosophy. Simple differences in philosophies of music education can result in very different programs in schools that may be otherwise similar. These philosophies can be very dynamic and can change as the teacher grows in their experience and understanding of their students and community. In completing a personal inventory for this study I was able to articulate the following teaching philosophy:

> My teaching philosophy is centered on the ideas of grace. My personal faith in God has remained steadfast over the year, even though my understanding of theology and my experience with religion has changed drastically. I am firm with what I want, but my students are not always there with me. I find myself continually allowing second and even third chances when they make mistakes since I see myself as more of a parent figure rather than an authoritarian dictator. At the end of the day, I want my students to be able to look past the behavioral issues and be able to recall the things that matter – the music, the performance, the relationships. I believe that grace can help that. I also strive for professionalism, which is the idea of high quality and upright behavior, and creativity, which is a thinking outward beyond tradition and what has been done.

After I articulated this philosophy, I re-read my research journal and discovered that this philosophy informed and influenced my decision-making as well as the priorities that I set for my band program. Within in the themes presented in this study, this philosophy enriches particularly the context of my struggle to balance my personal and professional life and my approach to creating and maintaining identity and culture within my band program.

While Lucy, Mike, Cathy, and myself teach in communities with similar demographics and are assigned similar teaching duties, our philosophies of teaching differ and contribute to the

marked differences in the programs that we lead. Lucy Cooper articulates her music education philosophy as follows:

> I want my students to be independent learners. I want them to love music to the point where they can guide themselves to discover music on their own. I want them to use the conductor or director as a guide, not as a musical "dictator." I don't think it is our job to put music in front of [my students] and say, "You must play this, this way." I want them to understand that there is not an exact answer. Music is a feeling discipline and conveys something different to everyone. That's the goal and the place I would like my musicians to strive toward.

Lucy's teaching philosophy centers on the idea that her students need to become independent, individualistic musicians and learners. Her program as a result celebrates and prioritizes individual achievement and identity.

Mike's teaching philosophy centers on the idea that it his responsibility to expose his students to great music and to be good people. Mike states the following:

> The question that guides me through my job as a rural high school band director is the following: since I am the only instrumental music teacher that our students will have from grades 7 through 12, if I don't, who will? It is up to me to expose our students to great composers and great music. I teach them to accept nothing less than the highest expectations and efforts of themselves in their class work and career. As I have evolved and grown as a teacher, my philosophy has adapted to the ever-changing situation that I find myself teaching in.

Mike has created a clean and orderly classroom environment so that distractions from the music that is presented are eliminated. The focus is on maintaining a high quality musical product that his community has historically produced and expected.

Cathy's teaching philosophy centers on her students as the main priority. She weaves character-building strategies within her musical instructional delivery. She states:

My students are my number one priority, and all the other demands of education go on the back burner. I always make sure they have a functioning knowledge of the fundamentals. I like to choose music they will enjoy, yet be a great teaching tool. I choose from new and traditional literature. I really feel that it is important that not only these students learn the music, but that they also learn how to be good people by working in it together to have that goal that they all achieve at the same time. I'm very concerned about their behavior and the people that they become. Music is just one of those vehicles that works very well with that.

Cathy focuses her program on working toward a common goal to help her students become better people. This focus results in her developing a marching band program that performs music that contains themes of character growth and development rather than simple entertainment. Her philosophy also supports her program's priority and celebration of competition.

Understanding from the professional community. There is a need within the music education professional community to acknowledge and accept that the needs of a student population and a difference in philosophy may result in band programs that are unique and different from their own experiences. In my research journal, I give a reaction to two episodes where I felt that I did not receive appropriate understanding from my colleagues for my unique situation. The first episode took place during a board meeting for the state music educators

association. Within a debate the concern for geographic representation as well as representation

for smaller-sized school music programs was raised:

> I made a comment very timidly about representing rural and small schools and our needs
>
> being different than other people…The president from [Pittsburgh] spoke after me and
>
> said, "I don't believe it is a rural, suburban, urban issue because we are all dealt the same
>
> cards…"
>
> I feel passionately about the role rural schools play in music education and that
>
> we just get policy and expectations slammed at us. I started my comment off with "I've
>
> been doing a lot of research and the research says…" but then get rebutted by a guy from
>
> suburban Pittsburgh who says that we are all dealt the same cards really got me boiled.
>
> We most certainly are not.

In the second episode, I had taken the marching band to a marching band show competition in

suburban Pittsburgh, so that they could experience and witness how schools outside of

immediate area perform and approach the activity. By doing this though, we had to conform to

the expectations of the organization that sponsored the show, and we were adjudicated by a panel

of judges. This was something that neither my students nor I had experienced before:

> Most of the judges' comments were helpful or in regards to things I already
>
> knew…However three judges seemed to be very critical of my students, my program, and
>
> me. They questioned if I was actually educating my students. Recommended that I
>
> conduct weekly check-offs for music, and finally compared my program to Seneca
>
> Valley – a suburban program that has a student population of probably eight times ours.

In both episodes there was a clear lack of understanding of my band program and our needs. In

both instances, we were categorized as being the same as everyone else. In the first episode, I

was told that I was "dealt the same cards." In the second episode I was perceived as "not educating" my students to the standards that these judges expected of all band programs. This lack of understanding was very apparent in the second episode when my program was compared with a school district much larger and with very dissimilar student demographics to my own.

The experience of others. In our phone conversations my colleagues and I discussed the isolation and poverty that our students experienced and how it influenced our teaching and our expectations. We felt that these needs were unique to us as rural music educators. Occasionally, comparisons were made between their program and another program that was perceived to be more affluent.

"The word." Lucy was very aware of how her students perceived the world in her conversations with me. She immediately recognized that understanding was a need for rural instrumental teachers. She provided insight into this area of need during our phone conversation:

The one thing you have to understand, well that's pretty much *the* [emphasis made by the speaker] word right there—you have to understand, you know. I think that the one thing that band directors don't do is try to understand. You know, my kids, my students, are very over scheduled. They are, they sometimes become very overwhelmed and a lot of times I have to be understanding and help them through that as much as I can. And a lot of times it takes a lot of fancy scheduling, a lot of weirdly timed things just to get them to do what they need to do. I think being understanding in that realm and being understanding about the fact, you know, there's not even a stoplight in my district. I mean, they have to, there's no culture there. And a lot of times even when I get my most frustrated I have to stop myself and say, "You know these kids aren't seeing things the way that I see them. They have not had the opportunities that I've had." and sometimes

you literally have to stop and switch yourself in their shoes and say to yourself "What

have they seen?". They have not seen what I've seen. So I think a lot of times, I think we

just have to understand what they are trying to understand and if we do we get a totally

different perspective of what they're dealing with. And I think when a lot of times if we

just, you know, put that into perspective I think it would be a lot more helpful for us.

In her insight of the need to understand, she addresses the unique needs of her students and the

need for her to understand their perspective and experiences. She recognizes that even though

she was raised within the same community, she has had experiences and opportunities that the

majority of her students have not. As a result, there can sometimes be a disconnection between

her students and her teaching.

"They're handicapped." Of the three participants, Mike has a unique perspective on the

need for understanding. While he grew up in the community that he currently resides and teaches

in, he spent the beginning of his career in a situation that was less isolated and more affluent.

During our phone conversation he described how when he returned to Lafayette to teach, he had

to change his understanding of his teaching situation:

Because even though we have the city of Lafayette, there are stores in it, you know you

still have to drive a good hour to get to what I would call a good shopping area where you

have a good size mall. You have department stores, you have chain stores, you have

chain restaurants. You know you have everything you need basically at your fingertips

and not be considered a small town and I think we struggle with that identity here in

Lafayette. You know the big difference between the music programs in relation to those

in different geographical areas is that if I told you know say, a kid came in as a tenth

grader and into the symphonic band and they were a pretty good musician and they

wanted to end up in the wind ensemble their eleventh and twelfth grade years, the first thing that I would do is sit down with them and with mom and dad and say you need to go to one of the half a dozen colleges that have music departments and sign your kid up either through their prep department or directly with one of their studio teachers. Get a hold of somebody in the Cleveland Orchestra or the Ohio Chamber Orchestra or you know I mean blah, blah, blah the list goes on and on and on. Here if a kid comes in and "Mr. K. I really want to try to go to all state band when I'm in high school." The first thing I tell them is, "You need to get lessons. You need to take lessons now as a seventh or eighth grader." and they look at me and the parent, "Well from who?" and right there immediately, and I think this goes back to kind of the poverty of resources we don't have the people to teach private lessons. You know I kind of alluded to this before, even in a 24 hour day, I wouldn't have enough time outside of that workday that I'm hired by the Lafayette Area School District to teach every kid the private lesson that they would need to be taught to get to that upper level, and we just don't have the people teaching private lessons here. So in respect to the rural area how the kids are handicapped, I think that's the biggest thing right there. You know you may have some good amateur semi-professional musicians living in that rural area but do they even want to teach lessons? Are they able to teach lessons? *Can* [emphasis added by the speaker] they teach lessons? I think that's one of the biggest hits to the rural situation that, and that became black and white to me the instant I moved back.

Mike saw a drastic difference in the availability of resources and opportunities for his students to grow musically when he returned to Lafayette from Cleveland. He commented about how in rural areas kids are "handicapped" because of this isolation.

"There is more to the world." Cathy understands that her students have different perceptions and experiences than her own and takes an active approach to combat this difference. She looks for ways for her students to gain a broader understanding of the world beyond their own community and does not let the geographic isolation of her community hinder their achievement. During our phone conversation, she had the following to say:

> When we compete, we try to only do only two or three local competitions and then the rest we like to go out and see other bands, go to other territories. So it's not uncommon for us to go into Pittsburgh competitions, or we've actually gone to Tyrone in the past. We've gone to Mechanicsburg, so that we are able to expose the kids to what band programs are outside of our little corner of Pennsylvania. That's how we try to get out of there geographically. In return we bring them to our show. They get to see where we come from. Then geographically, I could put in there the trips we do, just to expose the kids to the fact that there is more to the world than welfare in Centerville, Pennsylvania. Like to Washington, DC, Indianapolis, we've gone everywhere. Of course the Ireland trip is a big, big eye-opener to the kids. Huge. You know, another country, another currency. How to make purchases wisely knowing that your dollar is actually only worth sixty cents.

Not only does she want to expose her own students to the world outside of their community, but she actively takes interest in bringing those from the outside to her own community so that they can see what Centerville is like. She believes in an exchange of cultural ideas that can help broaden the understanding of her students and others.

Summary

      In this chapter, I presented the findings of the study. These findings are based on the analysis of my research journal, personal inventories, transcriptions, and observations of each classroom I visited. Four themes emerged that addressed the needs of a rural high school instrumental music teacher. The first was the *Need of balance*. Personal investment and obligation toward the music program can result in increased stress and imbalance between personal and professional needs. When this imbalance remained unchecked, it led to issues of mental and physical health. The second theme was the *Need of support.* The support of colleagues, administration, parents, and community were all identified as needed to achieve the goals set for these music programs. The third theme was the *Need of identity.* Rituals, traditions, and experiences were shared that were deemed as creating a culture that was unique and cherished by each program. The fourth theme identified was the *Need for understanding.* A need for understanding students, teaching philosophy, and the professional music education community was found to be important in effectively working toward the goals of our music programs.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. By identifying and describing the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, it is hoped that teaching strategies and professional development can be developed and implemented to more efficiently and effectively help these educators. I conducted research through the collection of daily journal entries, an emerging collection of personal inventories, photographs of my classroom and working environment, and a summary of my schedules and procedures. I interviewed three participants three times. These interviews were conducted by email, phone, and a face-to-face interview at the participant's school working environment. In this chapter, I review, analyze, and discuss in light of the relevant literature the findings of this study. I also outline the implications for rural high school instrumental music teachers and the potential impact for teaching strategies and professional development. I conclude this chapter with suggestions for further research.

Discussion

Three fundamental questions framed this research:

1. How do the needs of practicing rural high school instrumental music teachers compare to the unique needs of rural music educators identified by other researchers in previous studies?

2. Why are the needs of a rural high school instrumental music educator unique?

3. How are the needs of a rural instrumental music educator distinctive?

The research questions are answered by themes that emerged from the data and were reported in Chapter 4.

Need of balance. Researchers have identified that teaching music in a rural setting is an overwhelming daily time commitment. Often they are the only one with the responsibility of teaching music in their school district (Raessler, 2003). Smith et al. (2010) states that rural music teachers are often tasked with plentiful responsibilities. Hunt (2009) also identified demanding teachers' schedules when she interviewed rural music teachers. The rural high school instrumental music teacher in Wilcox (2005) had a full and busy schedule before, during, and after school. Pohland (1995) found that the rural school band director is often expected to not only lead the school band but to become a community server.

Consistent with prior research, participants in this study reported a full and busy schedule that continued year round. However, the effects of this demanding schedule on the high school rural instrumental teacher have not been addressed previously. In this study, I found that the rural high school instrumental music teacher makes a personal investment to the success and maintenance of his or her program. This personal investment does not follow the schedule of the school day. Rural instrumental music teachers often are asked to do perform services that require commitment before school, after school, on weekends, and holidays.

I found that these professional commitments and obligations intrude on personal needs including relationships and personal health. Stress is imposed on relationships as increased time is spent performing work duties. Much time is spent away from spouses and children. I found that my relationship with my partner was adversely affected when my work obligations demanded me to be away from home during times that are traditionally reserved for family such as evenings, weekends, or holidays. Lucy Cooper has recently made the transition from being single to married with children and has had to readjust how she schedules her day and create clear boundaries with her work obligations to create a harmonious home life. Mike has

intentionally created a work environment that brings images of his family into to his line of sight so he can still feel that he is with his family when he is at work.

Personal health is sometimes compromised for the sake of professional obligations. Inevitably, rural instrumental high school music teachers will at some point fall ill but unfortunately it can be at crucial points in their schedules. My illness during our annual marching band banquet and holiday concert rehearsals led to a prolonged struggle to find balance between recognizing the personal need to get well and the need and obligation to lead the band program in prior scheduled public appearances.

The struggle for the rural instrumental music teacher to find balance between personal and professional obligations can lead to symptoms of anxiety. Smith et al. (2010) state that the rural music teacher often becomes admired and cherished by the community because they "are the music." This role can result in increased scrutiny of the program. Stress, feeling overwhelmed, and dread was frequently mentioned in my journal entries when professional obligations outweighed my attention to personal needs.

Past research has identified characteristics that are beneficial to rural music teachers but does not address the need for balance. Characteristics of successful rural music teachers included organization, being proactive, autonomy, flexibility, high standards, conscientiousness, sensitivity, perseverance, and passion (Jarvis, n.d; Krueger, 2001; Wilcox, 2005; Wohlfeil, 1986). To cope with increased anxiety or to find needed balance between the professional and personal, my colleagues and myself utilize several strategies. Mike created a work environment that was organized and free from clutter. Cathy created a work environment that is inviting and positive. Lucy has established clear boundaries with communication between parents, students, the community, and herself. To cope with anxiety and stress, I make a concerted effort to set

days aside free from obligation for rest, the utilization of menial tasks to occupy an over active mind, re-framing stress inducing situations into positive outcomes, and the counsel of professional help when needed.

Need of support. The need of support for rural high school instrumental music educators was the second theme that emerged from the data. I identified the need of support from colleagues, administration, and parents. In addition, my participants expressed the need of support from the community.

The lack of needed collegial support due to isolation was an issue that was addressed in prior research. Instrumental music teachers hired to teach in rural contexts were found at greater risk to leave these positions (Pohland, 1995). Prest (2013a) states that professional development for a music teacher in a rural school may not be readily accessible. Several researchers identified isolation from other music teachers as a problem for music teachers since they need to discuss their work with more experienced mentors (DeLorenzo, 1992; Isbell, 2005; Krueger, 2001).

I identify colleagues as a valuable resource for support as a rural high school instrumental music teacher. The advice, empathy, and appreciation from colleagues allow me to navigate successfully the obstacles I encounter as I strive for a successful band program. The support from colleagues was actively sought from teachers within my school building as well as music teachers who taught in other school districts. I sought collegial support almost exclusively from colleagues that taught in similar contexts as myself that being colleagues in my school building or other rural music teachers, especially band directors. The similarity of situation and context allows a close network of support to be formed. Cathy has created a support network of her colleagues through active email communication as well as actively seeking out their support when she attends band festivals.

The lack of school administrative support for rural music educators was also discussed in prior research. This lack of support most commonly came in the form of increased emphasis for achievement on standardized tests and class scheduling (Isbell, 2005; Raessler, 2003; Tozer, 2015; Zamboni, 2011). I found that support from administrators is critical in areas of classroom management, program administration, and public relations for the rural instrumental music teacher.

Lucy, Cathy, and Mike have all experienced lack of administrative support. Lucy's job description changed as a music position was cut from her district. Cathy has experienced scheduling conflicts as her students are frequently pulled from class rehearsal time to prepare for standardized tests. Mike expressed frustration with a lack of understanding from his administration for what his needs as a band director are.

Administrative support takes the form of awareness and appreciation. Issues of student discipline are frequently a concern and the administration needs to be informed and supportive of the teacher's procedures so that the may not be undermined. This administrative support was witnessed in my episode of potentially dismissing a student from my program due to insubordinate behavior. An administrator's attendance at public concerts and events shows the rural music teacher that the administrator is aware and appreciative of the doings of the music program. Cathy makes an effort to communicate frequently with her administration about what is going on with her program.

I also identified that the rural high school instrumental music teacher also needs parent and community support. Parents are vital in the completion of tasks and endeavors that lead to the success of the band program. For me this included chaperoning, fundraising efforts, and the completion of administrative tasks. Cathy and Mike expand the support of parents to the support

of the community. Mike regularly receives appreciation for the success of the band as he is out in public. Cathy garners the support of her community through the mutual exchange of services. This need of support from the community is congruent with the past research (Wilcox, 2005; Wohlfeil, 1986).

   Need of identity.   The need of identity creation and maintenance by rural high school instrumental music teachers was the third theme that emerged in my research. Through the implementation of rituals and experiences, music teachers are able to develop and maintain a culture that is beneficial to the students, music program, and community. These rituals and experiences result in a unique identity for each instrumental music program that are often reflective of the rural communities that they serve.

   Studies exploring the need of identity creation and maintenance in rural music program are lacking. Past research has identified how rural music programs have influence over the culture and identity of the communities they serve. Brook (2011) states that performances are an important aspect of rural music programs since they serve for some within these communities the only source of live music. Raessler (2003) believes that the rural community clings to a rural music program for its cultural vitality. One study was found that sought to discover the identities that emerged in rural school music teachers (Dake, 2012).

   I discovered several rituals within my band program that occur throughout my school year that result in a unique identity for my band students. I utilize special public ceremonies of recognition, team-building activities, and creative experiences to create a cultural identity for my band that is unique to them. This identity brings my students together as a unified community to work toward the goals that I have set for the program.

The other participants in this study also found ways to develop a unique identity within their band program. Lucy uses a piece of music that rallies her students together as part of long lineage of musicians within her program. This piece of music is held in such esteem that it is not only expected, but also demanded to be performed by her students and community. Lucy also seeks out ways to prominently and creatively acknowledge the accomplishments of her students.

Mike uses the past to build a sense of tradition and honor to his present students. The Lafayette band program is built on a tradition of success that the present student musicians are knowledgeable and aware. This aligns closely to the work of Brook (2011) who found that rich place-based music education programs were highly regarded by their communities. These music programs valued musical learning activities and performances that were reflective of the musical practices in the communities while also celebrating their diversity. Students in these programs were active members of their communities by honoring their past and brightening their future.

Cathy uses ritual of passage at the start of each year to bring her students together as a band to achieve common goal. Her program's identity is formed throughout the season as they participate in competition with other schools. As they find success, it is prominently displayed in the classroom, the halls, and the lobby of their school.

Bates (2011) states that students should be involved actively in local musical practices and traditions. Through this, they will be able to deepen their understanding of their own musical backgrounds and cultures, and be enabled to explore the local context through a musical lens. While Bates is referencing the exchange of cultural ideas between school music programs and the communities that they serve, this statement seems to ring true within a rural school music culture as their own culture and identity are created and maintained.

Need for understanding. The need for understanding by and for the rural high school instrumental music teacher was the fourth theme that emerged in my research. This need of understanding is interpreted in three ways that interact and inform each other in a dynamic manner: understanding of students, understanding of philosophy, and understanding from the professional community.

Rural instrumental music teachers need to understand their students' backgrounds, perceptions, and worldviews. This understanding is crucial for the teacher to be able to develop instruction that is meaningful for his or her music students. I recognized, as did my three colleagues, that our students often come from situations of low socio-economic status. Lucy forcefully advocated for this understanding in her interviews. She recognized that she has had different experiences and opportunities than her students leading her to see the world differently. Mike sees his students as handicapped from others who live in more affluent and urban areas due to their isolation from resources and opportunities. Cathy actively used trips and competitions outside of the area in which her students reside to broaden her students' experiences and perceptions of the world around them.

Prior research recognizes these particularities in rural students. In rural contexts, students are more likely to have a low socio-economic status (Edmondson & Butler, 2010; Schafft, Killeen, & Morrissey, 2010). Bates (2012) believes that students act and fit into the situations and networks that they live in. Prest (2013a) states that isolation creates rarities and impossibilities for rural music students and educators.

Second, I found the need for understanding of how the rural instrumental music teacher's philosophy of teaching is shaped by the needs of their students and directly affects the priorities of their band programs. Rural communities can appear to be similar through raw data such as

relative geographic isolation, size, demographics, and socio-economics, but the music programs in these communities are as distinctive and unique as the teachers that lead them. My three colleagues and myself articulated our teaching philosophies. These philosophies all were student-centered but were otherwise drastically different. The implications of these differences resulted in band programs that addressed the needs of their students in very different ways. My philosophy results in instruction and activities that are creative and strive for high quality, but also encourage positive lasting memories. Lucy's philosophy prioritizes the celebration of individual musical achievement. Mike's philosophy results in a program built on the success of historical tradition. Cathy's philosophy results in a focus on competition through teamwork toward a common goal. The implications of teaching philosophy can also be seen in how each teacher approaches the need for creating and maintaining their program's identity.

In related literature, Dake (2012) found that rural music teachers identify and act in four roles that she termed the nurturer, the builder, the teacher/colleague, and the community member. Dake concludes that rural music teachers need to have a real commitment to the rural places in which they teach, knowing the importance of traditions and values associated with small communities. Other research the importance that music teachers need to seek positions that fit their own values, personalities, and philosophies otherwise they risk compromising to find success (Lang, 2011; Maltas, 2004; Peshkin, 1978).

Music professionals need to understand how the needs of a community and its students and the implications of a music teacher's philosophy result in music programs that may drastically differ from their own. In prior research, this need is not being actively met. Dake (2012) speculates that rural music teachers would be more apt to stay in smaller communities if the music education community valued their music programs. Theobald & Wood (2010) states

that teachers are deceived to measure their own success as an educator by the size of school that they work. Prest (2013a) purports that some philosophies that are routinely supported by the music education community result in failed attempts at success and ultimately damaging to rural instrumental music programs.

In my experiences, I found colleagues questioning my instructional methods and comparing me to contexts that were unfair and irrelevant to the needs of my students. I also experienced other colleagues falling under the assumption that my students and my needs as a rural instrumental music teacher were the same as every other music teacher. This lack of understanding resulted in closed communication and feelings of resentment. Rural instrumental music educators need to understand that their teaching context may drastically differ from that of another rural instrumental music teacher. Rural instrumental music programs are unique and have as many differences as they have similarities. Understanding and empathy is imperative.

Recommendations

Rural high school instrumental music teachers face a variety of challenges and obstacles including bias, poverty, isolation, and a unique relationship with the community that result in unique and distinctive needs. These needs include: the need of balance between professional obligations and personal needs; the need of support from colleagues, administration, parents, and community; the need of the creation and maintenance of cultural identity for their programs; the need of understanding student needs and implications of teaching philosophy as well as the understanding from the music professional community.

The findings of this study point to four recommendations addressing and fulfilling the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, so that they may be better equipped in handling the challenges of rural music teaching. The four recommendations that I forward are:

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(1) mental health support, (2) creation of rural music teacher support networks, (3) creation and celebration of a unique program culture, and (4) advocacy of rural instrumental music programs.

Mental health support. Being a rural high school instrumental music educator demands a high level of involvement and obligation that can interfere with one's personal needs. When one's personal needs are not being fulfilled, imbalance is created and can result in high levels of stress and anxiety. As a result, I recommend that rural high school music educators have ready access to mental health support.

I recommend that pre-service music teachers are instructed in appropriate ways to manage and cope with stress. Pre-service teachers should be made aware of the high stress situations that often occur in rural high school instrumental music positions. Music teacher educators should actively seek out ways to incorporate stress management and boundary creation into methods courses. Additional coursework in psychology, specifically counseling techniques, would be beneficial to the music education student who may be potentially employed in a rural teaching context.

Professional development offerings for current rural instrumental music teachers should regularly include stress and health management. Professional development coordinators can look to rural music educators who have achieved a healthy balance in their approach to work related obligations, but professionals outside the music education field would also be beneficial in providing perspective on this need. Guidance counselors and school psychologists may be easily accessible to provide their expertise to teachers within their local school districts. The expertise of psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed professional counselors, licensed mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists should also be considered as sources for potential professional development.

Lastly, I recommend that the rural high school instrumental music teacher seek out the services of counseling or medical professionals when they find an inability to healthily cope with stress and anxiety. While stress and anxiety regularly appear in the lives of rural instrumental music educators, it can become a dangerous and potentially fatal risk if left mismanaged or undiagnosed.

Creation of rural music education support networks. Rural high school instrumental music educators are often geographically and professionally isolated. As a result, they are often forced to manage and overcome the challenges of their teaching situation alone. I identified support as a need of rural high school instrumental music teachers. To fill this need, I recommend the creation of rural music education support networks.

I recommend that rural high school music teachers find a mentor who teaches or has taught in a context similar to their own. The rural music teacher should regularly communicate with his or her mentor about issues and obstacles that they encounter. Through conversation and sharing of experience both will find an increased ability to manage their respective programs. Due to professional isolation however, finding a mentor may prove difficult for some rural high school instrumental music teachers.

Therefore I recommend the creation of gatherings specifically designed for the networking of rural high school instrumental music teachers. School districts should design professional development opportunities that bring together music teachers from surrounding schools for the exchange of experience and ideas. Receptions at state music conventions specifically designed for teachers who teach in similar contexts at music teacher professional conferences such as rural music would also prove beneficial for networking opportunities rural instrumental music educators. Informal gatherings at the local level could also be considered

through the sponsorship of local music stores, travel companies, or fundraising companies that cater specifically a collection of rural high school instrumental music teachers to fulfill the need of support.

I also recommend the creation of professional organizations or associations that cater specifically to rural music educators. These organizations could easily be created through online social networking communities. Members in online social network groups need limited leadership and direction since all content is typically member created and driven rather than facilitated by a governing body. More formal professional organizations could also be considered such as organizations based on geographic area such as county music associations. Members could easily facilitate semi-regular and semi-structured meetings such as dinners or house parties. Formal networks at the state or national level could also be created, but would require a governing body for management and facilitation.

Creation and celebration of a unique program culture. While communities and schools may be statistically similar in demographics and socio-economics, they may be in actuality very different due to historical events, geographic location, local culture and tradition, and a multitude of other factors. Due to the unique role that the community plays in rural schools, the need arises for the creation and maintenance of an instrumental music program's identity by the rural high school instrumental music teacher. To fill this need I recommend the creation and celebration of a unique instrumental music program culture.

I recommend that the rural instrumental music educator research the history of their community, school, and music program. The teacher should utilize the Internet, visit local historical societies, and talk to community members to better understand the unique history of the community in which they teach. I recommend that the teacher look through past yearbooks

and school newspapers that are cataloged in the school or local library to see how the school and music program has changed and developed.

With an understanding of community and school context, I recommend the creation and utilization of safe and positive rituals that are reflective of the values and goals of the local community and instrumental music program. These include team building and leadership activities, membership initiation ceremonies, and ceremonies of recognition or achievement. It is important to note that these activities be open and transparent to the public, so there is no question of hazing or inappropriate behavior by the students or teacher.

Advocacy of rural instrumental music programs. Bias toward rural music education has led toward misconceptions and incorrect perceptions about rural high school instrumental educators and their programs. There is a need of understanding within the music education professional community to be understanding of the unique challenges and obstacles that rural music educators experience.

I recommend that rural instrumental music teachers be given a greater platform to share their experiences with the music professional community. This includes trade magazines regularly read by high school instrumental music teachers featuring articles about the experiences of rural high school instrumental music teachers as well as articles that specifically cater to the unique challenges of the rural instrumental music teaching context. Articles about working with impoverished students and schools, overcoming professional isolation, developing community relations, stress management, or creating and maintaining a unique classroom culture would be beneficial to not only helping the rural high school instrumental music teacher but would also bring awareness of these issues to the professional music education community.

Most importantly, I recommend that rural high school instrumental music teachers speak more loudly about their experiences and expertise. Rural instrumental music teachers have unique needs that perhaps that they themselves are best suited to help fulfill. Advocacy, research, and articles would be more authentic and credible to the music education community if initiated and facilitated by the members of the rural music education community.

Recommendations for future research

Through this research study I attempted to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. The lack of prior literature and knowledge about this topic has prevented the efficient and effective creation and implementation of professional development and teaching strategies that address the unique obstacles that rural high school instrumental music educators encounter. Although this study represents a start for developing a larger body of research on the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, further research is necessary, particularly in the four needs that I identified within this study.

First, researching the mental health and the balance of personal and professional obligations of rural instrumental music teachers would be beneficial in helping the music education community better understand how to provide services and support for rural high school instrumental music educators.

Second, exploring the support structures of the rural high school instrumental music teacher would be helpful to the recruitment and retention of teachers to rural school music programs. Issues of colleague, school administration, parent, and community support are topics that should be addressed.

Third, examining the identity and culture of rural high school instrumental music programs would aid in the development and creation of positive and safe ritual practices within

rural instrumental music programs. A comparison between programs or teachers would inform rural high school instrumental music teachers in their decisions in building and maintaining the culture of their instrumental music program.

Fourth, a study should be conducted on the urban and suburban music educator perceptions of rural instrumental music teachers and education. The results of such a study would help inform how rural instrumental music teachers could better advocate for their programs within the professional music education community.

Finally, research examining the needs of marginalized or minority populations who teach in rural high school instrumental music education contexts would beneficial. Studies exploring the effect of gender, race, and sexuality on the needs of rural high school instrumental music teachers would help the music education community address the needs of all its members.

Conclusion

The rural high school instrumental music teacher has needs that are unique and distinctive due to the challenges that they face in their teaching contexts. Rural music educators must overcome obstacles of poverty, isolation, and bias. They also teach in communities that are tightly knit and heavily influence the actions of their local schools. Through the reflection and analysis of my own teaching practices as well as those who teach in similar contexts, I found that rural high school instrumental music teachers have four needs. These teachers have the need to balance professional and personal needs. They need the support of colleagues, administrators, parents, and the community. They need to create and maintain a unique identity for their instrumental music programs. Finally, they need to understand their students and their teaching philosophy, as well as receive the understanding of other music education professionals.

The data collected from my journaling and interviews in this autoethnography have generated discussion on how these needs manifest themselves in the different ways from prior research. As a result of this study, I believe that these needs can be met through professional development focused on mental health, the creation of rural music support networks, the creation and celebration of a unique music program culture, and the advocacy of rural instrumental music programs to the music education profession.

The results of this study suggest that rural high school instrumental music teachers have unique and distinct needs. While many teachers in this context have found ways to meet these needs on their own, the field of music education has yet to fully delve into these needs to provide resources to help this group of teachers teach more effectively and efficiently. The recognition that rural instrumental music teachers encounter obstacles that result in unique and distinctive needs is the first step in rectifying the current situation for my colleagues and myself.

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Appendix A: IRB Protocol Summary

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON THE NEEDS OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATORS

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. By identifying and describing the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, it is hoped that teaching strategies and professional development can be developed and implemented to more efficiently and effectively help these educators.

Research Questions

At the conclusion of this study, an attempt will be made to answer the following research questions: 1) How do the needs of practicing rural high school instrumental music teachers compare to the unique needs of rural music educators identified by other researchers in previous studies? 2) Why are the needs of a rural high school instrumental music educator unique? 3) How are the needs of a rural instrumental music educator distinctive?

By answering of these questions, it is hoped that music educators who are teaching in rural areas will have additional information to help them develop appropriate instructional practice and be better equipped to overcome the challenges of rural music education.

Need for This Study

A study dedicated to the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators is important for several factors. First, such a study will add to the research and literature concerning instrumental music education, especially the sparse contemporary literature regarding rural music education. Second, this type of study would help to reiterate the issues already identified, as well as potentially expose those that have not in prior studies, in rural instrumental music education. When these unique issues and obstacles have been identified, potential solutions and strategies for overcoming these issues can be discussed and shared. Finally, an awareness to the needs of rural music educators, specifically to rural instrumental music educators, needs to be made, so that conversation and dialogue can be continued through the research in an area that is severely lacking.

Selection of Research Participants

The primary participant in this study will be the author who is an instrumental music teacher in a rural western Pennsylvania high school. Three other participants will be asked to be a part of this study. All three will be instrumental music teachers in rural western Pennsylvania who teach grades 9–12 in a school identified as "rural" or "town" by the National Center for Education Statistics. These participants will be colleagues of myself, who I have had prior conversations about music education and as a result we have developed a candid, comfortable, but professional relationship.

Procedure in Collecting Data

Using an autoethnographic research methodology, the focus of this study will be my everyday experiences and events and the perceptions and meaning I attach to those experiences. Autoethnography can be defined as autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation. As a form of ethnography, in autoethnography the ethnographer is a complete member in the social world under study. Autoethnography pursues

the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences treating autobiographical data with critical, analytical, and interpretive eyes to detect cultural undertones of what is recalled, observed, and told. An autoethnographer approaches research with the perspective that they belong to an underprivileged or otherwise disadvantaged class. This autoethnography will be ethnographic in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation.

Anecdotal information about the events and experiences of other rural instrumental music educators will also be collected from the other three participants, who teach in the (region). Themes based on these events and experiences are expected to emerge as the study progresses. My review of literature showed themes related to bias, poverty, isolation, and community within the professional lives of rural instrumental music educators. For this reason, particular attention will be paid to these themes while also looking for other emerging common themes. While anecdotal events and experiences from suburban and urban teachers would be beneficial to answering the research questions as stated, at this time due to time and resource restraints this comparison is not possible.

My personal data will include daily journal entries (for format, see Appendix A), an emerging collection of personal inventories (for sample inventories, see Appendix B), photographs of the classroom and working environment, and a summary of yearly, weekly, and daily schedules and procedures. The other participants will be interviewed three times. The first will be through e-mail (for initial interview questions, see Appendix C). Approximately a week after responses are returned, a follow up interview will be conducted through an hour-long recorded phone call. Approximately one month later, a final hour-long interview will be conducted and recorded on-site at a time that the participant is not in direct contact with students to continue prior dialogue and observe the participants' working environments. Photographs will be used to document visual aspects of the interview. A field journal will be utilized to plan questioning and utilization of time as well as aid in the transcription and analysis of interviews. This field journal will also be used to record personal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions throughout the research process.

Procedure in Treating Data

During data analysis, the data will be organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded using a combination of emerging codes and predetermined codes from past research. Recorded interviews will be transcribed verbatim. I will search for 1) recurring topics, 2) look for cultural themes, 3) identify exceptional occurrences, 4) analyze inclusion and omission, 5) connect the present with the past, 6) analyze relationships between self and others, 7) compare cases, 8) contextualize broadly, 9) compare with social science constructs, and 10) frame with theories.

The data analysis will be aided by the use of a qualitative data analysis program called Atlas.ti. I will utilize the Macintosh operating system version of this software. Through the utilization of this software, data such as text, graphics, audio, and visual files can be organized so the researcher can develop codings, memos, and findings into a project.

To ensure internal validity, the following strategies will be employed:

1. Triangulation of data—Data will be collected from different sources of information to build a coherent justification of themes. Data will be collected from journals, interviews, observation, and document analysis.

2. Member checking—The participants will check data findings throughout the analysis process for the accuracy of themes and meanings.
3. Rich, thick description—Detailed descriptions of the setting and events will be utilized to help results become more realistic and rich.
4. Bias—At the outset of this study, research bias will be articulated.
5. Negative and discrepant information—Real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always unite. Data and information that contradicts an emerging theme will be reported.
6. Prolonged time—Regular and repeated observations will be conducted over a period of three months.
7. Peer debriefing—A teaching colleague as well as a music teaching colleague will serve as peer examiners to help ensure the study resonates with people beyond the researcher.

The primary strategy in this project to ensure external validity will be the utilization of rich, thick description so that anyone interested in transferability will have a framework for comparison. Three techniques to ensure external reliability will be applied to this study. First, I will provide a clear account of the focus of this study, my role, the participants' positions and basis of selection, and the context from which data will be gathered. Second, multiple methods of data collection and analysis will be used. Finally, data collection and analysis strategies will be documented in detail to provide a clear and precise depiction of the methods used in this study. An external auditor familiar with qualitative research methods will review all stages of this study.

Results will be reported in a descriptive narrative as opposed to a scientific report. Thick description and narrative will be used to portray my experiences as a rural instrumental music educator as well as the experiences of the other participants. The final report will be a synthesis of the participants' and my own experiences with the meanings attached to them to illustrate the needs of rural instrumental music educators.

The right of privacy for participants in rural research is problematic, particularly in small communities and places where it is difficult to guarantee anonymity for the participants. Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality can present challenges in the context of rural research. For instance, the school in a research project may be the only school in the community. Similarly, the band director, the music teacher, the principal, etc. may be as much of an identifier in a rural community as a person's real name. It is likely that everyone in the community will know what or to whom the report is referring. The ethical model of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity for social, historical, cultural, and place-based contexts and perspectives will be followed as data is collected, analyzed and reported.

The following safeguards will be employed to protect the participant's rights: 1) the research objectives including how the data will be used will be articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the participant, 2) written permission to proceed with the study as articulated will be received from each participant 3) a research protocol form will be filed with the Institutional Review Board, 4) each participant will be informed of all data collection devices and activities, 5) verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the participants, 6) the participants' rights, interests and wishes will be considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data, and 7) the participants' participation in this study will remain anonymous and will be referred to by pseudonym when possible with final decision regarding participant anonymity and the disclosure of identity resting with each participant.

       The participation in this study and any personal information that is provided by the participants will be kept confidential at all times and to every extent possible. All written and electronic forms and study materials will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet located in my home office. The responses of the participants will only appear in data summaries. Any study materials with personal identifying information will be maintained for three years after the completion of the research and then destroyed. Video and/or audio recordings will be kept confidential through the storage on an external storage device that will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed after three years.

Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: An Autoethnographic Study on the Needs of Rural High School Music Educators

INVESTIGATOR: Jonathan Schaller

ADVISOR: (if applicable)   Dr. Stephen Benham
                                    Mary Pappert School of Music
                                    600 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15282
                                    412-396-1887

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the masters degree in music at Mary Pappert School of Music, Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the needs of the rural high school instrumental music educator. By identifying and describing the needs of rural high school instrumental music educators, it is hoped that teaching strategies and professional development can be developed and implemented to more efficiently and effectively help these educators.

                                    In order to qualify for participation, you must be an instrumental music educator who teaches grades 9-12 in a school classified as "rural" or "town" by the National Center of Education Statistics.

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PARTICIPANT PROCEDURES:

To participate in this study, you will be asked to: Respond to several questions about your teaching and music program through email. The anticipated email interview will not take longer than an hour to complete

In addition, you will be asked to allow me to interview you. The interviews will be recorded using an audio recorder and transcribed. One interview will be an hour-long phone interview and the other will be an in-person interview at the participant's school after the conclusion of the school day. Transcriptions and initial analyses of these interviews will be made available to the participants to ensure accuracy of meaning. Photographs will be taken of the learning environment of the participants' schools and classrooms but not of the participants.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

The right of privacy for participants in rural research is problematic, particularly in small communities and places where it is difficult to guarantee anonymity for the participants. Your school in this research project may be the only school in your community. Similarly, the band director, the music teacher, the principal, etc. may be as much of an identifier in a rural community as a person's real name. It is likely that everyone in the community will know what or to whom the data is referring. Respect, responsibility, and reciprocity for social, historical, cultural, and place-based contexts and perspectives will be followed as data is collected, analyzed and reported.

The following safeguards will be employed to protect the participant's rights: each participant will be informed of all data collection devices and activities; verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the participants; the participants' rights, interests and wishes will be considered first when choices are made regarding reporting the data; and the final decision regarding participant anonymity will rest with each participant.

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Benefit for participation includes adding to the knowledge base of rural education and rural music education, so that appropriate and effective teaching strategies and professional development can be developed and implemented.

COMPENSATION: There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your participation in this study and any personal information that you provide will be kept confidential at all times and to every extent possible.

Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. All written and electronic forms and study materials will be kept secure. Your response(s) will only appear in statistical data summaries. Any study materials with personal identifying information will be maintained for three years after the completion of the research and then destroyed.

Video and/or audio recordings will be kept confidential through the storage on an external storage device that will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed after three years.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time by notifying Jonathan Schaller. Data and information that has already collected will immediately be destroyed and not used in the study.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Jonathan Schaller at 724.397.8149, Dr. Stephen Benham 412.396.1887. Should I have questions regarding protection of human subject issues, I may call Dr. Linda Goodfellow, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board, at 412.396.1886.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date

Appendix C: Daily Journal Format

A. Heading

Name: Jon Schaller
Date/Time of Experience:
Codes:

B. Summary of Significant Episode

C. Analysis of the Episode

Appendix D: Personal Inventories

adapted from Chang (2008)

A) Identify five proverbs and sayings of professional and personal value
       1.
       2.
       3.
       4.
       5.

B) Identify and describe five rituals and celebrations that occur professional that have personal value.
       1.
       2.
       3.
       4.
       5.

C) Identify five mentors that have had professional significance and explain their inclusion on this list.
       1.
       2.
       3.
       4.
       5.

D) Identify and describe five artifacts that have professional significance.
       1.
       2.
       3.
       4.
       5.

E) List five professional values and preferences. Choose one of primary importance and elaborate.
       1.
       2.
       3.
       4.
       5.

Appendix E: Initial E-Mail Questions

1. Name:
2. High School attended:
3. Undergraduate study:
4. Graduate study:
5. Current Position:
6. Past Position(s):
7. Classroom Experience (List of courses you have taught)

8. What philosophical principles guide your teaching and approach to students and your classroom? In other words, what values and preferences help you decide what to teach and how to teach? What is the ultimate vision for your classroom, ensembles, or students?

9. Summarize by month, what you do annually for your teaching position.

10. Summarize by day what you do weekly for your teaching position.

11. Summarize your daily schedule as it relates to your teaching position.

12. What barriers and obstacles do you encounter in the pursuit of your vision for your classroom and ensembles?