Factors influencing music teacher retention: A mixed method study

Charles W. Cushinery

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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FACTORS INFLUENCING MUSIC TEACHER RETENTION:

A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

Charles W. Cushinery

Bachelor of Fine Arts
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
1997

Master of Music Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
1999

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the

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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Charles W. Cushinery

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Jian Wang, Committee Co-Chair
Martha Young, Committee Co-Chair
Emily Lin, Committee Member
Lori Olafson, Graduate Faculty Representative

Ronald Smith, Ph. D., Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate College

May 2011
ABSTRACT

Factors Influencing Music Teacher Retention:  
A Mixed Methods Study

by

Charles W. Cushinery

Dr. Jian Wang, Examination Committee Co-Chair 
Professor, Curriculum & Instruction 
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Dr. Martha Young, Examination Committee Co-Chair 
Professor, Curriculum & Instruction 
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine what internal and external factors influence the retention attributions of secondary level music teachers who participated in this study and identify what interactions exist between those factors. Phase one of this study was a survey of a group of secondary music teachers (N=260). The survey was used to quantify those factors that influenced music teacher retention and how those factors were ranked by the survey group. Phase two of this study employed case study methodology, specifically, interviews of six secondary music teachers selected from the initial survey pool, to provide a data source for developing a deeper understanding about their retention decision and factors influences their decisions. A summative report synthesizes data from Phase One and Phase Two to answer the three research questions posed by this study: 1) What are the external factors leading to retention of the music teachers who participate in this study? 2) What are the internal factors leading to retention of the music teachers who participate in this study? 3) How do internal and external factors interact to influence the retention decisions of these participants? It was found that music teachers remain in the teaching profession as a result of their strong sense of altruism, love of their craft and their ability and willingness to marginalize negative factors encountered in the teaching context.
DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my mother, Ellen Cushinery and my father, Sam Cushinery, who instilled in me a desire to learn and a work ethic to persevere, for which I am eternally grateful.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Lastly, I want to thank my colleagues who were always willing to listen, advise and inspire – Mr. Jeff Lacoff, Mr. Nick Aultz, Mr. John Boland, Ms. Betsy Angelcor, Ms. Lisa Ratigan, Ms. Amanda Andreasen, Mr. Paul Firak, Ms. Nicole Johnson and Ms. Kelly Bryan.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Music Teacher Retention

In the spring of 1997 eight students graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee music education program. They were a diverse group ranging in age from 23 to 42, mostly white middle class by background and all eager to begin their new careers as public school music teachers. After investing many hours refining their musical abilities through arduous practice and countless performances and a long four years learning as much as they could about the craft of teaching, their thoughts were only on the future and the excitement that lay ahead as they dove head first into the process of securing employment and making the transition from student to practitioner. There was so much to do, so much to learn, so much to absorb, that the months after graduation were a blur as they settled into new towns and started new lives. Little did they know that, statistically for teachers, half of them would not be in the classroom within five years (Ingersoll, 2001, 2003).

It would be easy in our current society of job transience and rapid change to accept a 50% retention rate in any field as reasonable and normal. The assertion of Grissmer and Kirby (1991) is that the retention rate in education must be placed in perspective and is governed by many factors outside of education, including normal early career turbulence caused by family formation and spouse job changes. Other factors studied include the need for autonomy, financial reasons, geographic concerns, career options and personal history (Bond, 2001; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Leiter, 1981; Papin, 2005). The factors influencing the retention decisions can be categorized into two groups based how
they are controlled in relation to an individual. That is, the external factors that are out of control of the control of the individual. For example, salary is such an external factor that effects retention when teachers compare their salaries to comparable positions outside of education (Han, 1994). The internal factors are those that are centered within the individuals’ control. An example of an internal factor influencing teacher retention decisions is a sense of altruism. Altruism resides within the schema of many teachers and is often cited as important to teacher retention (Foor, 1997; Yavuzer, İşmen-Gazoğlu, Yıldız, Demir, Meecı, Kiliçaslan, & Sertelın, 2006). These studies explain teacher retention statistics compared across professions. The assumption is that factors influencing retention across professions have universal attributes based on the similarities in training requirements. The retention rates illustrate a retention gap across professions. Physicians have a retention rate of 91% within five years (Sox, 2006) and lawyers a 95.7% retention rate for the same period (Melendez, 2008). With a 50% retention rate in teaching, it is clear that education is far afield from other professions. It is further clear that retention research tends to be inconclusive because of the limitations of these studies. Therefore, any research into factors, both internal and external, that govern retention decisions of teachers must be carefully constructed to examine the phenomenon from a perspective focused solely on teachers.

Why This Issue is Important

The teacher retention issue is important for several reasons. One reason, which is teacher centric, is teacher competency. Another teacher centric reason is teacher professionalism. Some of the issues are discipline centric, for example, delivery of the
highest quality instruction possible and adequate supply of high quality teacher. Both contexts have pragmatic aspects. First, typically teachers gain a level of acceptable competence by the third year in the classroom and can achieve an “expert” level of performance around the fifth year of service (Berliner, 2004). Although it is reasonable to assume that not all teachers can become experts in teaching just because of their length tenure, from this vantage, an effective, competent teacher needs to remain in the profession long enough to experience variation and volume of circumstances and situations to allow competent or excellent teaching practice to emerge in any particular individual. Simply put, teachers must be retained to create a profession of practitioners capable of teaching with a sufficient level of competence to allow students to excel in different situations.

Second, retaining teachers is important to create a supply of practitioners who will provide the necessary insights and experience to perpetuate a system that fosters quality and reform minded teaching (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). Teacher quality and reform minded teaching have become more important as the accountability movement gained momentum from legislative action, i.e., the “No Child Left Behind” act of 2001. The quality/reform dialog has been discussed from different angles with the general consensus that teaching is not a static entity but requires continual examinations and modifications based on current and future perceptions of need (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Reflection is an important technique that teachers can employ to better understand their teaching practice (Liaw, 2009; Marcos, Sanchez, & Tillema, 2011). It is reasonable to assume that the longer a teacher is retained, the more likely there will be an increase in the exposure to
circumstances and situations that are necessary for reflection on and reformation of teaching practice for that individual (Richardson, 1990).

Third, retention issues are important to successful teacher training, professional development, and induction. Retained teachers will hopefully develop the dispositions required for them to meet selection criteria as mentors, attending teacher or lead teachers, whichever terminology chosen to describe the construct (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Schwille & Dynak, 2000). These knowledgeable, experienced guides will have the ability to implement program purposes (Schwille, Nagel, & Deboldt, 2000). Experience can only be gained by uninterrupted participation in any endeavor.

It is through the retained teacher that professional knowledge can be developed, discovered, tested and implemented: The application of educational theory is the true test of its worth. Hodenfield and Stinnet (1961) reported teachers needed to know not only “how to teach” but “what to teach.” “What to teach” is learned primarily through undergraduate coursework (May, 1993; Menchaca, 1998) while the “how to teach” is learned “in the field” (Kagan, 1992; Kennedy, 2005). This is a perspective that is addressed in this study. The acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge is seen as an on-going process expected to continue throughout a teaching career. It is logical, therefore, in a reform minded climate that the longer one remains in the teaching profession, the more likely he or she will be able to have the chances to acquire pedagogical content knowledge of a higher quality that can be will be available to the next generation of teachers.
Why Teachers Stay, Why Teachers Leave

Teacher retention has generated a large volume of research over the years. Electronic searches generate thousands of hits referencing teacher retention; a Google search using the terms “teacher retention” recently returned 338,000 hits, MSN LiveSearch yielded 1,610,00 results and a search of the JSTOR database referenced 12,449 scholarly articles referencing the topic. Clearly, this is an area of interest for the education community that has been published in abundance. Retention issues were researched and written about as early as the 1920’s continuing through the 1950’s (Anderson, Vesey, & Rayburn, 1956; Wager, 1925). The retention issue continued to manifest itself in the 60’s, 70’s, 80’s, and 90’s and continues today (Hansen, 1962; Heyns, 1988; Johnson, et al., 2005; Merrow, 1999; Smith & Handler, 1979).

The older retention studies tend to examine the practical teacher-centric ideas. For example, much of the retention literature in the early sixties dealt with the issues of survival and comfort, frequently examining how teacher pay affected a teacher’s ability to provide an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families (Charters, 1970; Foster, 1967; Hansen, 1962; Pavalko, 1970). As the decades progressed and teacher salaries increased, the teacher retention literature shifted focus. Increased pay made teacher survival needs less of an issue in relationship to their retention decisions and researchers broadened the scope of retention research. This is exemplified in the work of Heyns (1988), who reported on the effects of school quality on the retention decision, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) who examined autonomy issues and Strickland-Brunson (2004) who studied the effects of mentoring on retention. These three examples
reflect the paradigm shift in retention research and are by no means a comprehensive list of the now extensive and diverse the area of retention research has become.

The Problem with Retention Research

One of the problems in the retention literature is that retention studies are mostly quantitative and survey-based. The central focus is often on the external factors and conditions that cause teachers to stay or leave the profession; not enough money, long hours, large class sizes, inadequate support from administration, low prestige, lack of community support, and so on. These themes are researched continuously, solutions are offered and tried, but the problem continues (Firestone, 1991; Katkus, 2007). The question why does the retention rate for educators remain at an unacceptable rate needs to be answered.

This discussion of the literature identifies a need for an examination of the motivational factors concerning teacher retention in an effort to explore additional conditions or reasons teacher retention attitudes and dispositions. The internal reasons propelling teachers to their retention decision and the interaction between the external and internal reasons suggests this may be an important area of exploration. Considering that internal reasons for different teachers can be different, the interaction between the particular external factors and teachers’ internal reasons can lead to different patterns of teacher retention. Cohen (Cohen, 1990) speaks of a necessity to understand all factors influencing teacher retention regardless of the locus. Thus, to understand the internal reason and the interaction between the internal and external reasons, a qualitative research methodology is necessary to explore deeper into teachers’ internal reasons for
retention (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This point raises a question, what external and internal factors and interactions of those factors motivate teachers to remain in the teaching profession?

A shortcoming of the existing literature is that the research often approaches the retention issue through a universal lens. For example, the accepted 50% attrition rate for teachers within the first five years of service (Eggen, 2001) is often the result that many studies focuses on the average of all teachers in all disciplines. This is an approach of “one size” sets of data to explain a much more complex problem. Such a universal approach to research the retention issue often leads to a universal interpretation of the problem, which in turn influences policy initiatives to deal with the problem using an across the board manner. For example, Firestone (1991) attempted to explain the success of merit pay policy in regards to teacher retention in various school districts and the implication of those successes for future policy concerning merit pay. Although employing a small sample and case study for data collection and analysis, the subjects and findings of the study were reported as “teachers” without any effort to account for data variance based on whom the teachers in a particular district were. The conclusions and recommendations offered by Firestone typify much of the literature and expose an underlying assumption that all teachers can be considered the same for purposes of policy.

A few studies in the field of teacher retention started to show the problematic nature of this universal approach. For example, Grissmer & Kirby (1991) reported that 57% of physics and chemistry teachers had permanently left teaching in Indiana within five years of service. In the same study these researchers also asserted that only 36% of elementary
school teachers had left the profession during that same period. Madsen and Hancock (2002) stated the retention statistic for music teachers as even lower than elementary teachers; 34.4% of music teachers leave the profession within the first five years of service. This statistical variance is valuable but also points to the limitation in the current research; using an average statistic to describe the retention issue does not adequately describe the phenomenon as it exists for purposes of policy, intervention and solution.

These differences among teachers of varied disciplines may suggest that the external contexts that drive teachers of different disciplines from teaching can be different. For example, science teachers leave teaching because opportunities in other industries exist for substantial increase in salary which may not be the same for music teachers (Bond, 2001). A chemist can expect to earn in excess of $100,000 annually in a job outside of education (United States Department of Labor, 2010-2011). Employment opportunities for music teachers as professional musicians are limited. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010-2011) reports that a professional musician rarely has employment that is guaranteed for more than three to six months and the average salary of that position is reported amortized to $41,000.00 annually, less than half of the expected income for a chemist. This is one example of how a global approach to examining teacher retention does not provide an adequate picture of the phenomenon of teacher retention. Clearly, the context of a music teacher has significant differences in regards to professional options outside of education when compared to a science teacher. Thus, the questions need to be raised about the approach to understanding teacher retention universally in all disciplines and it is important to understand retention decisions within a particular discipline or working in similar contexts.
What Needs to Be Done

The purpose of this study was to examine both external and internal factors, as well as their interactions, that motivate music teacher retention decisions. The attribution theory is used as a framework to examine the reasons individuals believe responsible for their retention (Weiner, 1976, 2006). These reasons (attributions) are contextualized via the control (internal loci) or lack of control (external loci) that an individual believes they have over their retention decisions. The attribution theory also relates effort to the perception of possible success or failure of an action; if success is deemed more likely, more effort will be expended on an activity. This concept will be explored in the first part of Chapter 2.

This study examines secondary music teacher retention to answer three main questions:

1) What are the external factors leading to the retention decisions of the music teachers who participated in this study?

2) What are the internal factors leading to the retention decisions of the music teachers who participated in this study?

3) How do internal and external factors interact to influence the retention decisions of these participants?

By using the attribution theory as a framework, I hope this study will contribute to the understanding of the causes of music teacher retention decisions with a focus on the special contexts that influence music teachers’ retention and the interaction between their internal and external factors that drives their decision making in relation to teacher
retention. This study examined music teachers classified as stayers, that is, music teachers who remain in teaching regardless of where they teach.
CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE/REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Perspective

As music teachers remain in the profession at a higher rate than the general teaching population, a proper explanation of the interaction between internal and external causes for music teacher to make their decision about is necessary (Keigher & Cross, 2010). To explore such an explanation, I use the attribution theory as a theoretical framework to examine how (Weiner, 1972).

As Weiner (2006) stated, “In explaining everyday actions, people focus on reasons, which typically are associated with incentives (costs and benefits) and volitional issues” (p.17). Weiner further explains that causes, as applied to attribution theory, are outcomes, end results and consequences rather than actions. For example, one particular student may believe himself/herself to be a “lucky person” and for him/her luck is an internal characteristic (reason) that he/she believes (attribute) to cause good things to happen to him/her. According to Weiner, a person’s attributions for success or failure determine the amount of effort that will be expended on a particular activity in the future.

The attribution theory provides the framework for this study to explain what perceptions a music teacher has of success or failure as a person and a teacher, how those beliefs came to be, how they interact and how those beliefs are explained by that music teacher. Those attributions can then be placed in context to explain why the music teacher chooses to remain in the profession.

According to the attribution theory (Weiner, 2006), an individual is held more accountable for an intentional act rather than an unintentional act: A person who willfully
points a gun at and harms another will be punished more severely than the person who inadvertently causes harm while holding the same firearm. The dispositions of these situations are seen as obvious. Weiner (2006) stated, “This theory best captures the ordinary person doing ordinary things. But it is beyond reason to expect the average person to explain something such as helping as a matter of the heart versus acting out as a deliberate matter of the mind” (p. 24). Attribution theory is designed to help explain the seemingly obvious.

The term “attribution theory” is a relatively new perspective in the social psychology arena that is closely tied to motivational research. It was first used by Heider (1958) to frame his work on interpersonal relationships. Heider sought to make sense of how individuals order and classify events around them and tried to show how, “we interpret events as being caused by particular parts of the relatively stable environment” (p. 297). He also refined his theoretical perspective to include classification of events as having a dispositional (internal) or situational (external) cause.

Jones and Davis cited in Kelley (1967) molded attribution theory into a testable form. Their work looked into why people perceived their environment via personal experience and observations. Both Heider (1958) and Jones and Davis used attribution theory to explain causal behaviors. Kelley reported seven other areas, beyond the behavioral context, where attribution theory had also been applied. Those areas were: 1) Attributions about the self and the basis of need for information about the self. 2) The assignment of credit and blame. 3) The interplay of language and attribution. 4) Problems of establishing trust in interpersonal relationships. 5) The development of attribution processes. 6) Personality differences in the attribution processes. 7) The relation between
the common man’s attribution processes and the more systematic processes incorporated in scientific methods. These seven areas would later serve as the foundation for Weiner’s application of attribution theory to educational contexts (Weiner, 1976). Weiner’s theory serves as the framework for this study.

The attribution theory began to influence the social sciences in the late 1950’s and into the sixties. This spreading of attribution theory into the research community can be seen in the work of Strickland (1958) who studied a group of 40 undergraduate students at the University of North Carolina. Strickland looked at inter-personal relationships and how persons developed attributions of trust with another individual. Seeman (1963) used attribution theory to explore dispositions of 120 reformatory inmates. Specifically, Seeman was interested in how social learning contexts interacted within prisoners as they came to believe and feel what they did about societal alienation while incarcerated. Rotter (1966; 1967) worked on expectancy and reinforcement, in a study of 547 psychology students, examining the interactions of internal and external forces of individuals as it related to trust issues which eventually led to the construction of the interpersonal trust scale (used in later research). Attribution theory clearly had found a home in the social sciences.

Attribution Theory and Educational Research

The attribution theory has long been tied to an educational context. Katz (1967) wrote regarding the attributions of children being influenced by adults and implied that using attribution theory in the classroom could be a viable approach but it was Weiner who was responsible for developing the theoretical framework as it is applied in education and

Weiner’s framework of attribution theory as applied to the educational context can be summarized as follows:

A. Each attribution is underlaid by a three-stage process:
   1) Behavior must be observed and/or perceived
   2) Behavior must be determined to be intentional
   3) Behavior is then attributed to internal or external causes

B. Attributions are classified along three causal dimensions:
   1) Locus of control; internal or external, individuals tend to attribute successful outcomes to internal causes, i.e., “I won because I am smart.” And failures to external causes, “I lost because my questions were harder.”
   2) Stability; will outcomes be reproduced if an activity is repeated
   3) Controllability; a factor is said to be controllable if an individual believes it can be altered. A factor is considered uncontrollable if the individual believes it cannot be altered.

An attribution is developed as follows; an event is observed and determined to be intentional, not accidental, and then classified as being caused by an internal cause or an external cause. The attribution is then experienced and retained intact (stability) until it changes by some new circumstance or situation.

Lack of teacher retention may seem like a problem with obvious causes. For example, if a teacher receives low pay, he/she will leave the profession if a more lucrative opportunity presents itself. Is that the case for music teachers? Is that the case for all
teachers? The answer seems obvious, but these questions have yet to be answered through the lens of attribution theory. The issue of teacher retention treated through attribution theory, maintains that teacher retention is an observable, intentional behavior subject to influences internal and external. This study identifies those attributions and subjects them to analysis based on locus of control, stability and controllability.

An analysis of music teacher retention beliefs through attribution theory would center on the empirical evidence based on to the individual music teacher. Further, the discussion framed by attribution theory must explain the persistence of the attributions that govern the retention decision. In simple terms, attribution theory can be used to explain why, in the case of music teachers, the seemingly obvious, is true or not true.

Teacher Retention Literature

The literature is clear that teacher retention is a major issue facing education (Certo & Fox, 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dill & Stafford, 2008). Concerns about retention can be seen from the earliest days of teacher education through the induction years and continuing later into the teaching career (Charters, 1970; Conway, Hansen, Schulz, Stimson, & Wozniak-Reese, 2004; Mark & Anderson, 1978; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002; Smith & Handler, 1979). Teacher retention is a clearly a problem that permeates all phases of the teaching career but is most important in the first five years of service.

There is a wide range of issues contained within the research into teacher retention included under headings such as teacher characteristics, teacher autonomy, organizational control, empowerment, and job satisfaction (LeFevre, 1967; Leiter, 1981; Martinez-
The interactions and relationships between these factors are not discrete but quite often are blurred by the perspective of any single research project. The effort made here justified the need for this project by drawing links between the existing research, existing practice and the gaps that exist in that work (Kennedy, 1997).

Music teacher retention literature is scarce, of the 76 studies concerning teacher retention that were published within the last 10 years, only four were specific to music teachers. Thus, this review was expanded to the more generic “teacher retention” and “teacher attrition” terminology. The literature discussed here was always considered as it would apply to music teachers. Additional terms utilized for exploration were: quality, autonomy, efficacy, evaluation, teacher quality, teacher education, music teacher education, student attitudes, high school students, quality of students, teacher characteristics, teacher traits, teacher personality and an assortment of related terms inspired by individual articles.

This review was framed by attribution theory and as such looked at the literature from the two perspectives defined as locus of control; 1) Literature that deals with internal motivators, 2) Literature that deals with external motivators. Retention literature does not often neatly fall into either category. This review included many instances of overlap, combinations of internal and external factors in a single article and suffered from some inconsistent application of terms. Inconsistencies were also found in the classification of factors in regards to locus of control. For example, Anderson (1987) discussed autonomy singularly but defined it as an external factor under the heading “job condition” while Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon and Kaplan (2007) focused on autonomy as an internal
factor related to teacher quality. Table 1 summarizes how the reviewed literature was classified through the lens of attribution theory.

Table 1
Classification of Literature Based on Attribution Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Factors</th>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Curtis, 2005; Miller, 2002; Mau, Ellsworth and Hawley, 2008; Weiqi, 2007; Siebert, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Characteristics</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1990; Pembrook and Craig, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Wang, Odell and Schwille, 2008; Odell and Huling, 200; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004; Gordon and Maxey, 200; Griffin, 1985; Hawk, 1987; Odell and Ferraro, 1992; Strikland-Brunson, 2004; Mchllhagga, 2006; Conway and Zerman, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Colley, 2002; Weller, 1982; McDermott, 2007; Carlson, 2004; Richmond, 2006; Gossom, 2004; Mohapatra, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assignment</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Ingersoll, 2001; Jacob, 2007; Buckley, Schneider and Shang, 2004; Darling-Hammond and Youngs, 2002</td>
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Internal Motivators

**Autonomy**

Autonomy refers to the philosophy of personal independence. It is a largely researched topic in regards to education. Teachers consider autonomy more important than pay, assignment and administration (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Petty, 2007; Viadero, 2008). Autonomy is discussed in the literature from two general perspectives. First is a line of thought outlined by Greene in Darling-Hammond (1996), who stated, “If we are to create a public space for democracy, schools must consciously create community from the sharing of multiple perspectives and develop ‘the kinds of conditions in which people can be themselves’” (p. 6). Similarly, Eisner (1998; 2002), and Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (2005) speak of autonomy as an inherent and necessary component of the teacher. Autonomy is inseparable from the transference of knowledge and the creation of a situation conducive to learning from this perspective. This research also suggests that teachers need to have a sense of autonomy if they are to create an environment for their students to develop the same sense. This is further confirmed by Roth, et al. (2007) as a result of a survey of 132 female teachers from seven Jewish urban elementary schools and 1255 of their students.

The second train of thought concerning autonomy speaks to a teachers’ need to have control over their work space (Anderson, 1987). Roisum-Foley (2004) surveyed 103 music teachers in Minnesota and Wisconsin. These survey subjects were characterized as superior educators who had a highly developed sense of control and autonomy in their classrooms and in their careers. It was found that there was a strong correlation between retention, quality and autonomy.
A survey of 8,488 Catholic school teachers by Lee, Dedrick and Smith (1991) found that reasonable teacher autonomy was a more important factor in teacher retention than pay and reduced class size. Perie and Baker (1997), in a study conducted for the National Center for Education Statistics, reported that teachers with greater autonomy are more satisfied in their jobs. This study was based on an analysis of data contained in the 1993-1994 NCES Schools and Staffing survey. The importance of job satisfaction is again confirmed by Curtis (2005), whose surveys of 633 high school and middle school teachers found that job satisfaction was the most significant factor in teacher retention.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005) chose to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy, on-the-job stress, empowerment and professionalism of 171 K-12 public school teachers in Florida. Their findings were that teachers needed to have a sense of control over their work space if they were to stay in the profession. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) found stress affects teacher retention decisions in a meta-analysis of 65 independent studies with a cross study N of 2527. In addition, Coughlan (1970) linked stress and morale as factors of retention in a study of 258 teachers situated in middle sized urban school districts. This is an example of the blurring that occurs in much of the retention literature. Stress and morale can be thought of as internal motivators but they are inextricably linked to job conditions, an external motivator.

Retention issues are not restricted to education communities in the United States. There is a thread of retention literature concerned with interactions between teacher training, cultural pressures and the strength of a teachers need for autonomy that has a global presence, particularly in the United Kingdom. Two studies in particular typify the research concerning retention and autonomy set in non-United States teaching
communities. Hobson, Malderz, Tracey, Homer, Mitchell, Bidddulph . . . Tomlinson (2000) surveyed 2446 teachers at the end of their first year of service in England and found that those teachers considered autonomy an important factor that made their first year of teaching more successful and influenced their decision to remain in teaching. It was significant that this study found 95% of these teachers planned to remain in teaching the next academic year and 91% planned to be teaching for the next four years.

Sloboda (2001) implies that a study of 750 United Kingdom music teachers, done by York in 2001, produced a finding that those music teachers preferred to work in an environment where their practice was considered “introverted.” That is to say, these teachers believed it was important they be allowed to teach without influence or control from outside of their classroom.

These findings indicate that teacher attitudes and dispositions concerning autonomy can be a cause for teachers’ retention decision and music teachers in England highly value their autonomy. However, the study exploring US music teachers about their attitude towards autonomy and its influence on their decision making in relation to retention possibility is rare.

**Efficacy**

Teacher efficacy concerns how teachers perceive their ability to successfully do their job. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy (1998), in an examination of efficacy theory and measurement methodologies, found new teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy looked at teaching in a positive manner, experienced less stress and were more inclined to remain in the profession. “Teacher efficacy has proved to be powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers’ persistence,
enthusiasm, commitment and instructional behavior, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy beliefs” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001, p.783). These findings are confirmed in Billingsley (1993), who reviewed thirteen research studies concerning retention among special education teachers conducted between 1980 to 1992, Williams (2001), who conducted a qualitative study of 12 teachers with more than 15 years of service and Weaver-Shearn (2007), who studied efficacy attributions of 252 first year teachers who were employed by the same school district. These studies suggest that efficacy is important in teachers’ retention decision making.

**Teacher Characteristics**

Teacher characteristics include those traits inherent in the personality of teachers that manifest in observable behaviors. For example, a teacher may demonstrate a positive work ethic by remaining at school on a consistent basis or a teacher may volunteer to coach a school sports team, demonstrating their commitment to their school community. The research concerning teacher characteristics offers a broad range of descriptives but suffers from a lack of consistent application of terms as well as a universal definition of those terms. This inconsistent and imprecise application of terminology in the area of teacher character research is illustrated in the work of Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) as compared to Pembrook and Craig (2002).

Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) surveyed 1,218 teachers from 78 elementary schools in Tennessee and found that personality traits such as resiliency, hopefulness, vitality and spirituality are possible links to an individual's ability to sustain a career. Similarly, the Task Force on Music Education in the Nineties (1987) developed a list of characteristics thought necessary to ensure success and retention of music teachers. This task force
placed characteristics into four categories: 1) personal, 2) intellectual, 3) musical and 4) instructional.

Teacher character research is dominated by articles producing laundry lists of desired characteristics. The literature is dominated by studies concluding good teachers are more likely to do a good job teaching for a longer period of time. The missing component is a consistent and concise definition of the “good” teacher. However, very few studies examine how these characteristics are related to teachers’ retention decision making; they are not clearly explained through a theoretical lens, especially in regards to music teachers.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, an internal attribution, is important because it interacts with many external factors: some within the immediate control of the teacher and many that are out of their control (Mau, Ellsworth, & Hawley, 2008). This context illustrates the complex nature of attribution assignment, formation, definition and interaction. There is also a problem with how job satisfaction is described and defined in the literature. This study chose to define job satisfaction as those attributions held by an individual that are related to internal and external factors and their interactions in relationship to the global construct labeled working conditions. The feelings of satisfaction that are associated with the job context are influenced by internal attributions, such as efficacy and autonomy and by external factors such as pay, support and environment (Loeb & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Mohapatra, 2005). This is an example of multiple factors with multiple loci of control interacting to form an attributional set that resides internally but is strongly influenced by the external.
Miller (2002) surveyed 675 K-12 Midwestern school teachers and found a strong correlation between teacher pay and job satisfaction. Weiqi (2007) discovered when studying over two hundred teachers in Guangzhou, China, that job satisfaction was closely tied to teacher retention decisions. Job satisfaction in Guangzhou is influenced not only by pay but other factors as well, including satisfaction with the education system, leadership and administration, work environment, peer support and social status.

Siebert (2008) conducted a qualitative study of a fifteen member focus group that was empanelled with teachers having between five and twenty three years of service. Various combinations of panel members were devised to achieve homogeneity of experience and current teaching circumstance. Findings indicated the two primary reasons for teacher retention were job satisfaction and positive sense of self-determination (autonomy). Seibert does not explain how the panel members came to believe what they believed.

This literature shows a strong tie between teacher job satisfaction and retention decisions. Job satisfaction is linked to such external factors as pay and administrative support. This relationship illustrates how external factors interact with internal factors to form an attributional stance. The limitation of this literature is that is considers all teachers and is not focused on one single discipline. This study looks at the job satisfaction contexts that are specific to music teachers. This will add to the current body of knowledge concerning job satisfaction from a more focused perspective than currently exists.
External Motivators

Pay

Teacher pay is a well-documented issue in regards to teacher retention. Teacher pay is repeatedly cited as a factor influencing teacher retention (Bond, 2001; Rumberger, 1987). The research indicates that the more teachers are paid, the more likely they are to remain in the profession, although the source of that research is often a teacher advocate group or labor union (Antonucci, 2008; Beck-Frazier, 2005; Gould, Abraham, Bailey, Caravatti, Cecconi, Cochran, Drown, Jenkins, Mingarelli, Morson, & Muir, 2007; National Education Association, 2008).

Caution must be exercised when exploring literature concerning education spending. It is a highly polarizing issue fraught with political undertones which can be present in scholarly works of questionable nature. For example, Antonucci (2008), working as an agent of a private think tank, used publicly available statistics from federal, state and local governmental bodies to study teacher salary. The data in this study were framed as a comparison of teacher salaries to salaries of the entire work force. Antonucci found that teacher salaries ranged most often in the upper third of all salaries of all workers and questioned whether teacher compensation was a justifiable reason for job dissatisfaction. Closer examination of the tabulated data revealed that statistics were carefully selected to create a scenario that served to support the researchers’ hypothesis that higher teacher pay improved both teacher quality and teacher retention rates. This suggested that Antonucci’s arguments concerning teacher retention and salary are compromised by either inadequate research methods or by an agenda framed under some political stance. Examples such as this make it difficult to give a large portion of the literature concerning
teacher pay much credibility. It is imperative for researchers to carefully sift through the clutter and discover true research vs. political advocacy; money is difficult to talk about.

There is research concerning teacher pay and retention that falls more within the parameters associated with standard scientific methodologies. For example, Snow (2005) found in a study of 279 high school teachers in the Pomona Unified School district that teacher pay was a significant external motivator for the retention decision. Snow subjected data collected from a six year period to different statistical analyses including ANOVA, t-test, cross tabulation and correlation. Findings reported the strength of relationship of salary and retention compared across various contexts including: salary to length of service by all subjects, salary to length of service by gender, subject, and ethnicity. The relationship between salary and retention remained strong regardless of the various statistical contexts used to examine the data. This follows Murnane, Singer, Willet, Kemple and Olsen (1991) who stated, “teachers who were paid more were more likely to stay longer in teaching” (p. 7). Their quantitative research was based on statistical analysis of data provided by a survey conducted by the National center for Educational Statistics. These findings are duplicated in Ponce (1994) who surveyed 54 choral teachers in the state of Ohio and Papin (2005) who surveyed 385 inner-city teachers in Phoenix.

Hess (2006) extended the salary/retention research as well with a study that examined the effects of differentiated salaries in hard to staff urban schools on teacher retention. The study was conducted as a case study of one particular school, Rolling Hills Middle School in Kentucky. Hess interviewed current teachers and former teachers who had left the school within the past year. Rolling Hills Middle School was a participant in the
Kentucky Department of Education’s Differentiated Compensation Research Project which ran from 2003-2005. Hess found that there wasn’t enough money available to ease the teacher attrition problem in the hard-to-staff schools. In this circumstance, money truly matters.

Bond (2001) examined the links between salary, student achievement and retention in Connecticut, finding higher pay in schools that had higher achievement levels. This multi-faceted study incorporated not only intra-state data captured from state records but also used data collected in the National Assessment of Education Progress tests conducted in various states in the 1990’s. Bond found that higher teacher pay may aide retention in certain schools, but, just as Hess found, there is more to solving the retention problem than money.

In contrast to most available research, Viadero (2008) reported the opinions of Johnson, Berg and Donaldson (2005) and Hanushek and Rivkin (2007), all noted education researchers, that their various research projects found pay was a non-issue. Johnson, Berg and Donaldson (2005) reviewed qualitative and quantitative studies that dealt with teacher retention finding that research on teacher pay was not sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions as to the relationship between teacher retention and pay levels. Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) reported teacher attributions of pay in regards to retention with an analysis of data from Texas public schools. They found pay was not a significant factor in teacher retention decisions.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a practice in which the mentor knows what a novice is expected to learn and how they learn (Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). Key features of quality mentoring
are support, guidance and orientation for the new teacher (Odell & Huling, 2000; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The importance of mentoring for retention is well documented in the literature (Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Griffin, 1985; Hawk, 1987). Odell and Ferraro (1992), in a study of 160 early career teachers, found that mentoring may increase the retention rate. The importance of emotional support was found to be the single most important factor for the protégés. Smith and Ingersoll (2004), in an analysis of data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey conducted by the National center for Educational Statistics, confirmed the importance of mentoring as a component of the induction year experience. Their findings also concluded that the proliferation of mentoring programs that occurred in the 1990’s helped the teacher retention rate, but a wide variation in the type and style of mentoring programs existed and those differences impacted the effectiveness of mentoring as a whole. This was also confirmed by Strong (2005), who found mentoring was correlated with the retention of new teachers.

Current literature seeks to further refine the practice of mentoring, examining the construct with the idea to ensure a codified paradigm exists for high quality mentoring (Odell & Huling, 2000). The importance of this paradigm is confirmed by Strikland-Brunson (2004), who sought to discover the relationship between mentoring programs and induction year teacher retention decisions. This study of 260 mentors and 260 protégés was conducted during the 2002-2003 school year in North Carolina. The data were collected via self-reporting surveys constructed under the framework of a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data were subjected to various statistical analyses; the results of this analysis were used to answer the first two sections of the study. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed for the purpose of validating the results of the
quantitative data analyses. In the end, Strickland-Brunson found that quality mentoring was very important to new teachers and greatly influenced their positive attributions concerning retention.

Retention literature does have some areas of dissonance, caused by inconsistent application of terminology, where similar research projects produce seemingly opposing findings. This can be illustrated by the work of McIlhagga (2006) as compared to Conway and Zerman (2004). McIlhagga (2006) conducted a survey that was designed to answer two questions: (1) which mentoring skills and abilities most influence a novice music teacher's rating of mentor effectiveness, and (2) which measures of time most influence a novice music teacher's predicted future in music education. Data were collected using an internet survey of middle and high school band, choir, and orchestra directors in the state of Michigan. Analysis of data concerning the first question indicated that the areas of classroom management, problem solving skills, and communication skills were most significant in determining a novice teacher's rating of mentor effectiveness. Content knowledge was not a large part of discourse between mentor and novice. Further, both mentor and novice found that the quality of discussion was much more important than quantity. Results in regards to the second research question indicated that none of the time factors addressed by the survey affected the novice teacher's retention attributions.

Similarly, Conway and Zerman (2004) found, in a case study, that the subject, Tavia, found music content knowledge was equally as important an area of discussion as moral (emotional) support. Tavia used vocabulary that is somewhat confusing at first glance. Tavia stated her successful relationship with her mentor was attributed to, “personality,
ability to provide moral support and content-related concerns.” (Conway & Zerman, 2004, p.77) A closer examination of the data reveals that her definition of “content-related concerns” clearly includes elements of classroom management, instructional implementation and day to day issues of survival. Mentoring was important to Tavia in regards her retention decision.

The findings of these reviewed studies agree; mentoring is important to teachers. Clearly, the mentor experience effects new teacher retention attributions. But the inconsistent application of terminology creates a potential for differences in interpretation of findings. Examiners of mentor research must, therefore, be vigilant when accessing these studies and go beyond a cursory examination to confirm that cross study comparisons take into account this phenomenon. A further limitation of this literature is that it does not examine the mentoring context of the music teacher.

School Culture

School culture and in particular, the principal, play a role in the formation of retention attributions of teachers. Principals must be good role models supporting best practice (Colley, 2002) and be sympathetic to the needs of their teachers (Weller, 1982). When principals step outside of the manager role, teachers react with skepticism and distrust and may leave the profession (Johnson, 2007; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001; McDermott, 2007). Carlson (2004) surveyed 214 high school teachers in ten large Wisconsin high schools and found the principal was considered the most important factor in the development of a school culture that fostered a set of working conditions that influenced teacher retention decisions. Richmond (2006) found that the role of the principal had little to do with the retention attributions of teachers, but the teachers of the
study held the view that the principal should have good organizational skills and be the primary source of support for the school. Included in those conditions was a climate that fostered positive student achievement. Further, it was found that in schools where the principal was seen as not fostering that culture, teacher retention suffered. The findings of Richmond (2006), who studied the role of the principal in highly-impacted schools, are in conflict with Carlson, but the context of the studies was significantly different. Carlson’s data were drawn from a group of high schools based on the size student population. Richmond (2006) drew subjects from schools based on sociological criteria. That is, the study was conducted in highly-impacted schools, labeled as such based on the following criteria:

(i) high student mobility rates within each school,

(ii) the number and percentage of students at each school who apply for free school lunch,

(iii) the number and percentage of ethnic minority students at each school,

(iv) the number and percentage of limited English proficiency students at each school,

(v) the number and percentage of students at each school from a single parent family.

The idea of what a positive school culture is and how it effects retention attributions is examined from different angles in the literature. For example, Gossom (2004) studied retention attributions of 120 Chicago teachers from a framework based in needs satisfaction; she found retention decisions were based on the compatibility or incompatibility of school culture and needs satisfaction. Gossom found that 85.1% of
teachers surveyed would become teachers again if they had the choice to return to college and 71.6% of teachers surveyed planned to remain teachers until retirement. And, Mohapatra (2005), who studied 306 Florida school teachers and administrators, divided school culture into six discrete factors; school facility, resources, professional development, collegial environment, new teacher support and teacher empowerment. These factors were found to interplay in such a manner as to strongly influence teachers’ attributions concerning retention.

The literature on the influence of school culture on teachers’ retention decision making in relation to retention showed that a school’s context has a bearing on teacher retention attributions concerning school culture and, in particular, the role of the principal in that culture. In addition, the compatibility or not between school support and teacher satisfaction with their job played an important role in shaping teachers’ retention decision making. However, few studies focused on music teachers’ decision making in this body of literature as I pointed out earlier, teachers in different fields may approach job satisfaction differently.

Teaching Assignment

Teaching assignment is classified as an element of an organizational structure (Ingersoll, 2001) or as a characteristic of a particular teacher (Jacob, 2007). The literature considered for this study was centered around the teacher. New teachers are often assigned to disadvantaged urban schools plagued with discipline problems, poverty, violence and inadequate facilities (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004). These challenges induce stress in not only new teachers, but experienced teachers as well and factor into a teacher’s retention decision (Patterson, 2005). Increased stress caused by teaching
assignment is an external factor that influences teacher attributions of job satisfaction. Low job satisfaction contributes to teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2002a).

Two other factors related to teaching assignment affect teacher retention; one is teaching outside of the certified area and the other is the presence of highly structured curriculum in a particular school. Teachers teaching out of their certified area are becoming a common practice, especially in science; a phenomenon usually attributed by school districts to a teacher shortage (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Pearson and Moomaw’s (2005) survey of 300 Florida teachers was focused on the effect of curriculum autonomy as it related to on the job stress. They found that as curriculum autonomy increased, on the job stress decreased, which manifested itself as attributions of greater job satisfaction. Pierson and Moomaw found that, in addition to the curriculum autonomy-stress relationship, teachers experienced greater levels of stress when assigned to teach outside of their area of specialty. This increase in stress increased the sense of job dissatisfaction. It can be concluded that the literature suggests that teaching assignment is a factor that often influences teacher retention attributions.

This literature shows that teaching assignment is a factor that contributes to teacher attributions of job satisfaction. As I reported earlier, job satisfaction strongly influences teacher retention decisions. The interaction of teaching assignment with job satisfaction is another example of an internal/external factor interaction that contributes to the teacher retention decision making process. There were no studies found that examined music teaching assignment and the effects on music teacher retention.
Evaluation/Feedback

Evaluation is important to teachers when it is purposeful and relevant. Too often evaluation is “. . . utterly unimportant. In many school districts it is a perfunctory bureaucratic requirement that yields little help for teachers and little information on which a school district can base decisions” (Darling-Hammond, 1986, p. 530). Williams (2003) stated, “Test scores and accolades from parents and administrators can’t provide the kind of feedback that good teachers need and want; instead, they look to students” (p.73). Feedback is necessary, is desired, but must be credible and considered useful (Earley, Northcraft, Lee, & Lituchy, 1990).

Higher quality evaluation should lead to higher quality teaching which in turn has been shown to lead to greater retention. Music teachers report a lack of administrators who have adequate knowledge of the music teaching context and understanding of the importance of music programs (Scheib, 2004).

Evaluation is traditionally thought of as the responsibility of the school principal or their administration. Goldstein (2003) found in a case study in the Rosemont, California school district, that when subjected to a Peer Assisted Review procedure, teachers preferred to be evaluated in the traditional manner (by administration). Principals and administrators in Rosemont liked the program; a fact attributed to lightened work load. Goldstein ultimately concluded that the PAR program in Rosemont was not successful due to the ambiguous design and inconsistent implication of procedures. A similar model of group assessment was found to be beneficial for 205 school personnel in a large southeastern school district (Davis, Pool, & Mits-Cash, 2000). These teachers were interviewed on their participation in a program known as PACES (Professional
Assessment and Comprehensive Evaluation). It was found that the PACES program suffered a similar fate as the PAR program in that participants felt the program was fraught with inconsistent implementation due to lack of procedural clarity. Teachers evaluating teachers remains a controversial issue that must be discussed in ethical contexts (Peterson, Kelly, & Caskey, 2002). Evaluation systems contribute to overall school climate which influences teacher job satisfaction. Increased job satisfaction produces higher retention rates. These studies strongly suggest the process of evaluation affects teacher retention.

Discussion

Both internal and external factors contribute to the teachers’ decisions to stay in the profession. A vast body of literature can be captured under the heading “teacher retention.” This retention literature, for the most part, examines education issues in a global manner, not separating or treating various disciplines as unique contexts. The result is a set of findings and recommendations based on a simplistic view of a complex structure.

My review in the above showed the studies examining music teacher retention is small. The work of Madsen and Hancock (2002) is the foundation for most contemporary thought concerning music teacher retention. Siebert (2008) provides an original empirical work concerning music teacher retention. Keigher and Cross (2010) follow up the work of Madsen and Hancock using a newer data set. This study was built on the findings of Madsen and Hancock, Keigher and Cross, Siebert but shifted the research paradigm to a narrower focus based on discipline.
How does this relate to music teacher retention and why is that important? The answer to this question is virtually not answered in the literature. Music teachers are retained at a rate significantly higher than the average of all teachers. Madsen and Hancock (2002) found that at the five year mark 65% (95% when including movers in the statistic) of music teachers remained in the profession whereas the general rate of retention was 50%. A similar finding was reported by Keigher and Cross (2010) in their examination of statistics gathered by the National Center for Educational Statistics during 2008 and 2009. This study examined what makes music teachers unique, what their experiences are, what the essence of their teaching experience was, and how these factors interconnect and interact.

This literature review shows that little research into teacher retention has been conducted in a discipline specific context and even less research has been conducted concerning music teacher retention. The high retention rate for music teachers in relation to other disciplines illustrates a need for research that focuses on particular groups. The internal and external factors and their interactions for music teachers must be examined in context. This exploration of the music teacher retention decision making process will add to the existing body of knowledge from a different perspective than the global approach featured by most of the studies reviewed here.

The United States Department of Education made the teaching of music part of the formal public school curriculum in the last decade (Music Educators National Conference, 2008). These policy makers recognized the value of music education for the students of the past, present and future. Research into music teacher retention has the potential to illuminate interactions of characteristics and attributions in such a manner as
to benefit not only music educators but all educators. In this manner, music education further extends its importance into the education fabric as a whole.

Teacher retention literature reports many influences and contexts come into play when teachers are formulating their retention attributions. These forces are classified as existing within the teachers control or outside of the teachers control when examined under the umbrella of attribution theory. Further, these factors combine in various ways to create the attributional dispositions held by teachers. My study is designed to develop a deeper understanding of these internal and external factors as well as their interactions in shaping music teacher retention decisions.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined both external and internal factors leading to retention of six music teachers. The study also examined the characteristics of those factors in music teachers and the interaction patterns that exist between those factors. Attribution theory framed the research design and guided the categorizing of factors based on the three primary tenets of Weiner’s (1972) theory; locus of control, stability and controllability. In the attribution theory, behaviors must be observable and/or perceived; they must be intentional and be attributed to internal or external causes.

This mixed-methods study was based on chi square and case studies. Phase one consisted of a survey of approximately 260 secondary music teachers and phase two focused on interviews of six individual music teachers who teach in three sub-sets of music: string instruction, band (woodwind, brass, percussion) and vocal (choir). The collective term “music teacher” refers to the two groups of subjects involved in this study; the initial group of approximately 260 participants and the six cases interviewed in this study. This study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the external factors leading to retention of the music teachers who participated in this study?

2) What are the internal factors leading to retention of the music teachers who participated in this study?

3) How do internal and external factors interact to influence the retention decisions of these participants?
In an effort to gather sufficient data to most accurately answer the research questions, a mixed-methods approach supports this study, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative modes of research. Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006, p.3) stated, “When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more robust analysis, taking advantage of the strengths of each.” This project was designed to look specifically at the issue of music teacher retention, which is a departure from the research of “averages” that dominates the existing literature, as evidenced in chapter two. A mixed-methods study generated data from different dimensions providing opportunity for more accurate and viable answers to the research questions posed in this new paradigm. In this study the quantitative data provided a broad view of this particular urban school district’s music faculty’s attitudes and beliefs concerning teacher retention and the case studies provided a finer more precise representation of music teacher retention attributions.

This study was constructed on the embedded mixed-methods design (Figure 1). An embedded mixed-methods design featured the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data with one data set playing a supplemental role to the other (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). In this study the quantitative data collected in phase one informed the data collected in the major portion of the study, phase two.
In this study the quantitative data informed the data collected in the major portion of this study. These quantitative data included an initial subject selection survey (N=260), a primarily quantitative instrument, that guided the selection of subjects and stimulated further interview questions. For the second phase of the study, which is a set of case studies based on a limited number of subject interviews (n=6). A descriptive analysis of the quantitative data is included in the final report and is compared and contrasted to the interview data collected in phase two.

Phase 1: Survey

This project began with a solicitation letter to the supervisor of secondary fine arts in an urban southwestern school district, presently the fifth largest district in the United States. This southwestern school district currently maintains one of the largest secondary
music education programs in the country and is ranked in the top one-hundred districts for music education (American Music Conference, 2008). This context is “information rich,” a standard used when selecting sites for qualitative research (Patton, 1990). This institutional commitment to music education has generated a large pool of potential informants. Furthermore, this teaching population is diverse in ethnic background, training experiences and personal history. The ethnic demographic of this district at the time of this study was as follows: 77% White, 8.9% Hispanic, 8% Black, 8% Pacific Islander, 4% Asian, .7% American Indian/Alaskan Native, .7% Pacific Islander and .7% listed as 2 or more races (Source: State Department of Education, redacted to preserve anonymity). Approximately 80% of all teachers in this district came from out of state. The availability of informants in this district increases the chances for the successful execution of this study.

The solicitation letter requested permission to administer the “Music Teacher Survey” (Appendix B & C) to a group of secondary music teachers during a beginning of year teacher meeting. Surveys were completed by the subject pool and collected by the researcher at the conclusion of the meetings. Confidentiality was maintained by providing unmarked envelopes for each copy of the survey. Upon receipt of the completed survey, subjects became part of a body known as “the initial subject pool.”

The “Music Teacher Survey” gathered both quantitative and qualitative data about the beliefs and dispositions of the entire potential subject pool (n=260). A set of descriptive statistics was drawn from the quantitative survey data to gauge the frequency and strength of both internal and external factors influencing retention attributions contained within this group of subjects. A set of open ended questions, structured in a qualitative
domain, was used to gauge the subject’s potential ability to understand and communicate the issues raised by the ensuing interview questions. These data were examined for clarity and content using a rating system developed in response to the data. This rating system took into account four characteristics: understanding of the issues, ability to focus responses, grammar and response relativity to this study.

Phase II-Interviews were conducted with six subjects drawn from the survey pool based on the four criteria. First was the length of service. This study examined music teacher retention. As such, it was felt that participants in the second phase of this study had to have demonstrated that they were likely to continue in music teaching. It was reasoned that if a teacher had remained in the profession for five years, he/she was more likely to have experienced a sufficient set of circumstances to develop meaningful attributions concerning retention. Subjects were considered for the second phase of the study if they were entering a minimum of the fifth year of teaching. There was no upper limit for time of service.

The second criterion was the area of instruction/level taught. It was a goal of this study that one informant from each sub-set of music education would be utilized; the experiences of string, wind and vocal teachers are similar but each area has its own micro-culture. For example, string teachers participate in various performance festivals, but they do not have a “marching” component to their curriculum as do many band programs (marching orchestra?). Vocal instruction often includes an emphasis on small group performance which is not an element stressed in most instrumental programs. The research questions were focused on that person known as the “music teacher;” therefore, the music teacher must be explored in the most complete contextual cross section.
available. It was important to use secondary level teachers because they are the most prone to leave teaching (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Further, the reasons that a secondary level music teacher chooses to remain in the profession may have implications to other levels as well. Music instruction is sequential in nature; the skills taught at the high school level encompass and add to those which have been acquired in elementary school. The secondary level music teacher therefore, has a skill set representing the continuum of all music teachers.

Criterion three was the ability to contribute useful data. The answers to the open ended questions on the survey were used as an indication of how well a potential subject could communicate his/her thoughts, dispositions and feelings concerning retention. Data were considered useful if they were clearly understood, were germane to the questions and demonstrated an ability in the individual to grasp and articulate responses to survey prompts. It was believed that a particular individual may have never reflected on retention issues but would be able to express concepts related to retention when prompted during an interview. Similarly, a particular music teacher may have thought about retention issues but may not have possessed the ability to accurately express those ideas. Open ended questions guided the selection of subjects based on the clarity of their responses.

Table 2

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<td>List several benefits you have experienced in being a music teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What are reasons that you think teachers (including music teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>remain in the teaching profession?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What are reasons that you think teachers (including music teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elect to leave the teaching profession after having taught for fewer than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>five years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What characteristics best describe a music teacher?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These candidates were assessed on response to questions 5 through 8 of the music teacher survey (Appendix B). A rubric, Table 3, was developed to guide evaluation of the answers to open ended questions.

Table 3
Response Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Qualifier</th>
<th>Example: List several benefits you have experienced in being a music teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>One word response</td>
<td>Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Two or more words as a list</td>
<td>students, security, environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Sentence fragments</td>
<td>enjoy teaching, like kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Complete sentences</td>
<td>I find teaching fulfilling. I feel like I'm doing good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>Complete Sentences, more focus</td>
<td>Teaching gives me a sense of doing good for society. I am helping create the better world I want for those who follow me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>Multiple responses, additional detail</td>
<td>I find teaching personally rewarding. I derive a sense of completeness from doing my job. Teaching is noble work. It is important work. I feel like I am contributing to the world when I teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>Focused, Detailed narrative, complete ideas</td>
<td>Teaching is something I have always wanted to do. It is just who I am. As a teacher, I find the personal rewards are outweighed by the sense that I am doing something for the greater good. I am engaged in helping mankind in my own small way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses were scored on a numerical scale of from 1 to 20 based on clarity, depth and focus. Identifiers were redacted from the original surveys and random numbers were assigned to copies of survey responses for these questions. The redacted copies were re-paired with the original surveys after scoring and ranking was complete. The two top ranked surveys from each of the five discipline categories (String teacher, Band teacher, Choral Teacher, Mariachi Teacher, Guitar Teacher) were then re-screened. This process was necessary because the initial screening provided ten possible interview subjects. The
rescreening was conducted to pare the remaining ten subjects to a pool of six as required by the design of the study.

This study defined ability as the physical availability to continue with the next phase of the study and the linguistic and thoughtfulness necessary to provide meaningful data during the interview process. Data from the “Music Teacher Survey” was tabulated and graded for amount of response (how many items did the respondent list as important) and quality of response (How well did the respondent communicate to the researcher).

The fourth criterion was a desire to participate. A yes/no question on the initial selection survey was used to identify subjects willing to be considered for the second phase of this study.

Phase II – Case Studies of Six Music Teachers

The six candidates were selected based on the above four standards and contacted via e-mail for scheduling interview. One of the initial six selected subjects opted out of the study before the initial interview due to a change in personal circumstances and was replaced by the seventh ranked candidate. Interviews were conducted at negotiated sites to maximize privacy, focus, and comfort for the subjects. Interview questions were based on issues, concepts, and ideas suggested in the literature, for example, teacher autonomy, teacher preparation, salary, and working conditions. The initial subject interview questions were used as stimulus for conversation but subjects were allowed to explore areas not specifically mentioned in the interview document in an effort to enrich the data (Appendix C). The duration for the completion of the initial interviews was 140 to 160 minutes. Contact was made via email to clarify responses.
Six subjects participated in in-depth interviews held at various locations electronically recorded by the researcher. As Merriam (1998, p.6) stated, “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.” Qualitative methodology provides a structure in which factors emerge from data that are not influenced by researcher hypothesis or pre-conception (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative data are descriptive rather than numeric which provides the opportunity for attributions to be expressed in narrative. This phase of the study also included a multi-case comparison component. The six cases were compared and contrasted as one set providing the most accurate picture available with these data, of the “music teacher.” This resulted in an increase in precision, validity and stability in the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Participants

The participants for this study were drawn from an urban public school music teaching community. Table 4 illustrates the numerical break down of surveys used for this study.

Table 4
Survey Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Usage</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Surveys Returned</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Surveys Discarded</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Surveys Used</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Surveys &quot;Yes&quot; for Phase II</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of &quot;Yes&quot; Surveys Discarded</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Selection Pool for Phase II</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Selected for Phase II</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average time teaching in the district of the two hundred subjects was 8.33 years with the average total time teaching was 12.81 years. As shown in Graph 1, their primary teaching assignment in the following categories: Orchestra (63 respondents), Band (68 respondents), Choir (52 respondents), Guitar (13 respondents) and Mariachi (4 respondents). In addition to their primary teaching responsibilities, eighty-eight (88) respondents reported teaching music classes in an area different from their primary assignment and of those 88, fourteen (14) taught two classes different from their primary area, i.e. primary area-orchestra, secondary-band or primary area, choir, secondary-band and guitar. The area of instruction was not a factor considered in this study, it is reported as a subject descriptor only.
Based on Graph 2, there were 132 subjects who responded “yes” to this question of the survey, “Would you be willing to participate in the next phase of this research study, an interview, concerning music teacher retention?” Of those 132 respondents who agreed to continue with the study, 30 were eliminated from further participation because they had less than five years of teaching experience. The remaining 102 respondents were distributed in musical subject taught as follows: Band: 37, Orchestra: 35, Choral: 22, and Guitar: 8. A subjective analysis of survey responses was conducted to determine the selection of the six subjects who would be invited to continue on to phase two of the study.

Graph 2

Subjects Willing to Participate in Phase Two of the Study
Research Protocols

A full application of approval was made to the university Institutional Review Board and research commenced upon approval of that body. The anticipated potential for harm to the individual was minimal. Information collected from this study is maintained in a secure repository. All reasonable efforts to maintain complete subject confidentiality were in place and enforced. Subject identifiers were eliminated from all reports and communications, and pseudonyms were assigned for the case study portion of the study.

Data Sources and Collection

The data collection methods for this project were varied and study driven. It is understood that there is a need for flexibility (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The “Music Teacher Survey” provided a general picture of all the subjects regarding their retention decisions and the factors influencing their decisions. It was also used to recruit subjects who fell into the criteria established for this research. Additional subject demographic data from a second survey (Appendix D) were used to stimulate conversation during the following interview and to cross check interview data.

An in-depth interview (Appendix E) was used to establish informant history, attitudes and beliefs. This semi-structured interview (Creswell, 2005) was audio taped for later transcription and analysis. The attribution theory informed the development of the interview process which then lead to data generated in narrative form. These data determined concepts and themes related to the external and internal factors. Hand written notes were taken and follow up questions were asked as necessary.
The questions in this interview were designed to determine external and internal factors that cause the subjects to hold the beliefs they do about teaching and staying in teaching. These interview questions were presented in a chronological sequence allowing the subjects to trace the development of their beliefs as an unfolding, historical narrative. The questions dealt with influences experienced as a result of environmental, social and institutional contexts experienced by the interview subjects (Appendix E). Attribution theory seeks to explain the causes, both internal and external, of beliefs and uses the cross check of observable behavior to validate spoken accounts. The questions in the interview were constructed in such a manner as to focus not only on what these beliefs about teacher retention are, but also on how they came to be believed and how these beliefs interact.

Field notes were maintained and transcribed to verify the accuracy of interview transcriptions and added data not communicated in the transcriptions. For example, a field note may contain a reference to the emotional characteristics of a subject at a particular time that is not apparent in a written transcription of the narrative. Field notes were categorized chronologically and were annotated in relation to the time line of the recorded interview. This provided reference points to compare field notes to interview data in a precise manner.

Questions that developed from analysis of the initial interviews were clarified by a second in person interview and e-mail correspondence. Data from the supplemental interviews was merged with the initial interview and the two were treated as a whole. It was necessary to acquire a minimum amount of clarifying data from all of the six cases. The questions for this interview focused on gaps and inconsistencies that were indentified
in the initial interview responses. For example, one respondent identified two different people as the major influence in their decision to become a music teacher. The follow up interview clarified how the respondent felt about each individual and where these individuals came into play regarding their decision to become a music teacher.

Data Analysis

The “Music Teacher Survey” was analyzed and reported using descriptive statistics. A frequency analysis was conducted that tabulated responses expressed as percentages. The percentages were interpreted in narrative form and tables were displayed to further clarify data.

Phase two of this study began with a second survey. This survey (Appendix D) provided greater demographic detail of the six subjects selected for the interview portion of the study and was used to verify data from the interview process. The second step of phase two was an in-depth interview with each subject one-on-one.

Each interview question was framed in such a manner as to gather data that revealed the reasons behind subject attributions concerning retention. The questions were also influenced by existing retention literature, for example, interview section four, question four, “Tell me what you think about your salary and benefits” was generated because pay has a large presence in current research. Each question was categorized by its’ research focus in the chart below.

Each case was reported as an analysis of data gathered from that particular subject and stands independently from the other cases. This study was based in a multi-case comparison and contrast methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) in an effort to provide
the most accurate picture of the causes and effects of any interactions of secondary music teacher attributions in relationship to locus of control (Internal or External). Such an analysis was conducted as follows:

Coding Interview Data

Data were coded using the Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS) as a guide. The Leeds system was developed by a team working at the Leeds Family Therapy and Research Centre in the 1980’s (Munton, Silvester, Stratton, & Hanks, 1999). The Leeds team was dissatisfied with existing coding methodology and devised its coding scheme as a way to identify causal attributions expressed during family therapy sessions. It is noted that the Leeds System is an attempt to code qualitative data to such a degree that it can be subjected to quantitative analysis. That aspect of the LACS was not used by this study.

The LACS employs six stages of attributional coding:

*Stage 1* Identify the source of attributions. (through interviews, speeches or meetings.)

*Stage 2* Extract attributions from data. The Leeds System defines an attribution as, "any statement in which an outcome is indicated as having happened, or being present, because of some identified event or condition.” (Munton, et al., 1999)

*Stage 3* Separate cause and outcome elements of a particular attribution. In this stage the outcome is identified with an underline (i.e., failed a test) and causes are indicated with backwards arrows (← I didn’t study, ← it was too hard, etc.).
Stage 4) Code speaker, agent and target. The LACS identifies the speaker as the subject providing the attribution, the agent is the cause of the attribution and the target is the outcome. For example, in the statement, “I failed the test because my teacher made it too hard” – the speaker is “I”, the agent is “teacher, hard” and target is “failed”.

Stage 5) Coding attributions on causal dimensions. The LACS system identifies five causal dimensions and scores them with a three number scale (0, 1 or 2, 2 used for undecided). Those dimensions are:

A) stable (1), unstable (0): expresses the belief of the durability of the attribution, ex. “I am good looking so I get noticed” (1) vs. “I failed because I had the flu” (0)

B) Global (1), specific (0): expresses the impact of an attribution as a major life event or a more minor single occurrence, ex. “I got married to be happy” (1) vs. “I woke up sick, so I didn’t go to school.” (0)

C) Internal (1), external (0): expresses locus of control, ex. “I was hired because I knew how to type.” (1) vs. “I failed the test because I was given wrong information by the instructor.” (0)

D) Personal (1), universal (0): expresses an aspect of an attribution that makes it distinct to an individual or is applicable to all. Ex. “I was selected because I was leader of the pep squad.” (1) vs. “Freshmen are just silly.” (0)

E) Controllable (1), uncontrollable (0): expresses the belief that an outcome can be influenced with minimum effort or not influenced, ex. “I kept my job because I recruited
many students.” (1) vs. “I would have stayed a teacher but the district had to cut my job.”

Stage 6) Data Analysis: LACS recommends use of a statistical analysis program such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The LACS acknowledges that there is a subjectivity factor to all analysis of qualitative data but claims statistical reliability based on the application of Cohen’s kappa to their methodology (Munton, et al., 1999). It is also recommended that all data be coded by multiple researchers to increase reliability.

This study broke from the LACS method by not engaging in a statistical analysis of the coded data, using instead an interpretive narrative summarizing the attribution profile of each subject as individual and then as a summative comparison of all profiles. The LACS method provided a framework to organize the data for the qualitative narrative but a statistical analysis of these data was not part of this study design. The coded data revealed themes that were grouped into smaller units. The labeling of these themes and sub-themes was data driven and developed after the initial coding had taken place. The identification of these themes was also influenced by the quantitative data collected and analyzed in the first phase (the survey) of this study.

Identification and Reporting Findings

The findings from the above analysis in phase I and phase II were reported in Chapter 4 of this dissertation in answering each of the research questions using the embedded mixed method as such a method can increase the reliability and allowed for preliminary
generalizations to be made in regards to the reasons why music teachers remain in the profession.

1) What are the external factors leading to music teacher retention of the participants of this study?

2) What are the internal factors leading to music teacher retention of the participants of this study?

3) How do internal and external factors interact to influence the retention decisions of the participant music teachers?

However, in the report, the quantitative survey data, due to its limitations of scope and frequency, was given a subordinate role. The interview data were given the dominant role in answering the three research questions in this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in several ways. First, the sample of this study cannot be generalized to other settings that are not urban. For example, findings of a study of rural music teachers may have different results. The issues faced by urban and rural music teachers could be different. Second, the researcher bias as a music teacher from the school district could skew the study. However, the attempt was made to minimize researcher bias based on the researchers teaching experience by utilizing a data coding method designed to minimize such bias. Third was subject reliability. Subject honesty and candor may be influenced by tenure status. For example, a teacher at the end of his/her career has a set of experiences that allow them to express ideas and beliefs in a manner that a younger, less experienced teacher may not be comfortable with. The
younger teacher may feel intimidated and adjust responses based on the belief that they will suffer negative consequences from authority figures if they provide controversial information.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Findings from the Survey Data

Analysis of the Two Survey Quantitative Questions

Two survey questions provided data regarding retention attitudes of the music teaching staff as a whole. Those questions were:

1. Please rank the following in order of importance with 1 being the most important.
   
   Why did you become a music teacher?
   
   Family history (Parents, uncles, etc. were teachers), Steady work, Pay/Benefits, Wanting to do good for society, Other, Please briefly explain.

2. Please rank in order of importance with 1 being the most important.

   Why do you remain in teaching?
   
   I have a sense that I am effective at my job, I have control over my work environment, I want to help make society a better place, I am able to function with my pay and benefits, I am satisfied with my administration, I am satisfied with my peers, I enjoy engaging in professional development, Other, please briefly explain.

These questions were included in the initial survey given administered to the district music staff (N=200). The tables below represent the results of the frequency analysis. Each table features one possible response to the survey question. A value of zero was given to any response blank or unranked. Responses were ranked with one (1) being most important and as ranking numbers increased, importance of the response decreased.
Reponses to Survey Question 1

*Question 1: Why did you become a teacher?*

Table 5 shows the frequency analysis of the response “family history.” Family history is not a strong motivating factor in the participants’ decision to become a music teacher. This can be seen in the data of response 0, 61 respondents did not even rank the response and only 35 respondents ranked the choice as 1 or 2. Looked at another way, almost 50% of the total respondents did not feel family history was an important motivating factor in their decision to become a music teacher. The response ranking of 4 does show a significant percentage of respondents felt family history was of little importance. This, in conjunction with the 30.5% who did not even rank family history, suggests that family history was of little importance to these respondents when they made their decision to enter teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates the responses for the option labeled “steady work.” The low percentage of responses for option 5, 1.5%, indicates that a very small number of
respondents felt steady work was not important at all. The cluster of responses 2 and 3 indicates that respondents felt the concept of steady work was somewhat important in their decision to become a music teacher. This moderate response level suggests an awareness of steady work was in play when these respondents were making the decision to become a teacher but influence was minimal.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response “Pay/Benefits,” seen in Table 7, shows a gradually increasing response rate from option 2 through 4. One hundred and one (101) respondents, over 50%, indicated that the pay/benefits response was not very important in their decision to become a music teacher. An additional 37 respondents did not even rank pay and benefits as a consideration. This total of 138 respondents (69%) who felt pay and benefits were not important in their decision leads to the conclusion that pay and benefits were not a major motivator in the decision to become a music teacher. Responses of an outwardly observable nature (extrinsic motivators) share similar levels of moderate response which is not the case of the internally centered response choice (intrinsic motivator) examined.
Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of responses in the category “Wanting to do good for society” seen in Table 8, indicate a strong level of importance is present in these respondents. Sixty six respondents, 33%, reported this was the most important motivator for them becoming a music teacher and forty seven (23.5%) indicated it was the second most important motivator in their decision to become a music teacher.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The category “Other” did not contain responses that could be analyzed in a meaningful manner. These data were scattered in such a random fashion that statistical
the treatment was inappropriate. Of the two hundred participants (200) in this survey, ninety seven (97) selected the category other as one of their rankings. The “other” category was found to contain five subcategories that were distributed as follows:

1. Love of music: 41 responses
2. Working with kids/teaching: 27 responses
3. Experience with a mentor: 13 responses
4. Share music with others: 9 responses
5. Personal Heritage or other personal reasons: 7 responses
6. Sixty two (62) of these respondents ranked “Other” as their most important motivating factor in becoming a music teacher.

The responses to question one indicate that these respondents were more motivated by internal factors than external factors when they made the decision to become a teacher. The external factors pay/benefits and steady work were not significant motivators for the decision to enter teaching. The option “doing good for society,” which can also be expressed as an internal factor influencing an altruistic attribution, was ranked as the most important factor when the decision was made to become a teacher.

Responses to Question 2

Question 2: Why do you remain a teacher?

In Table 9 rankings 1 and 2 received 151 responses out of a possible 200. This means 75.5% of all respondents ranked “Sense of Effectiveness” as the most important response motivating their decision to remain in teaching. Other options were selected at a significantly lower rate. Clearly, “Sense of Effectiveness” is an extremely important motivator in these music teacher’s decisions to remain in teaching.
Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the “Control over Work Environment” response (Table 10) reveals a cluster of responses in ranking 2 through 6. Only 11.5% of respondents thought that “Control over Work Environment” was an important factor influencing their retention decision.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Opportunity to Help Society” response (Table 11) was viewed as important as a motivator to remain in teaching. More than half of the respondents (50.5%) ranked this response as most important or important. This strength of response, coupled with the percentage of responses ranking this choice as unimportant (2.5%), is evidence that music teachers find the opportunity to help society a powerful motivator governing their retention decision. This ranking of an altruistic response is consistent with the similar response offered in the first of the two survey questions. A similar consistency is seen when the subject of pay and benefits was ranked.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help Society</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adequate Pay/Benefits received the most statistically neutral set of responses of all the options offered in question two. As seen in Table 12, responses were distributed fairly evenly among the nine rankings. There is a slightly larger percentage gap between rankings 7 and 8. This response is the most even percentage of response rate in this survey indicating the music teacher population statistically has an even distribution of ranking as a group.
The music teacher respondents to survey question two are overall mildly concerned with administration as it pertains to motivating their retention decision (Table 13). Rankings 4 through 7 indicate a lack of importance of this idea. The 145 responses in those rankings encompass 72.5% of the total responses possible. The responses levels 0, 1, 2, 3, and 8 are at lower percentage rates indicating an even stronger gravity of responses towards a middle ranking.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Pay/Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied With Admin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses concerning a satisfaction with peers, seen in Table 14, reveal a set of responses similar to those seen in the previous category. Rankings of 4 through 6 contain the largest percentage of response levels. This ranking distribution is almost identical to the satisfied with administration distribution with the emphasis at the extremes only slightly stronger for the peer response. This would indicate that music teachers consider peers and administration as unimportant motivators concerning their retention decision. A similar phenomenon is present when these teachers report their beliefs about professional development.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 reflects that music teachers do not consider professional development opportunities an important motivator in their retention decision. These music teachers ranked professional development not important at a rate of 74%. Professional development was not defined by the survey: the construct was left open for interpretation.
and definition by the individual subject. The context of professional development is not a motivator in the retention decision for these music teachers.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey question two also contained a response entitled “other.” This option was selected by thirty five (35) of the two hundred (200) participants in this survey. The descriptive responses fell into five categories as follows:

1. Enjoy working with kids: 23 responses (66%)
2. Enjoy making music: 4 responses (11%)
3. Personal reasons (Money, time off): 4 responses (11%)
4. Nothing Else I could do: 3 responses (9%)
5. Music is necessary: 1 response (3%)

These responses share some characteristics with the pre-selected options (i.e. money with pay/benefits) and are present at a much lesser degree than the “other” responses included in survey question 1.
Survey Findings

The frequency analysis of the two survey questions revealed characteristics about this group of music teachers. First, the responses to Question 1 and Question 2 in the altruistic category (Doing good for society) were significantly important to the respondents and very strong motivators for both becoming and remaining a music teacher (See Table 16 and Table 17). Second, the categories that dealt with personal interactions (family history, administration, peers) and pay in Questions 1 and 2 were ranked as non-motivators to both the inception and retention decisions. Additionally, a sense of efficacy proved to be an important factor in the retention decision.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question 1 - Why did you become a teacher?</th>
<th>Frequency Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank Order</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay/Benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Good for Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend

Statistically Significant Responses

Fewer responses than the expected N →

More responses than the expected N →
It can be concluded from this analysis that this group of music teachers held consistent beliefs concerning the most important motivational factors that led them into the profession and factors that compel them to remain. This group is highly motivated to remain in teaching by their sense of effectiveness and ability to have the opportunity to do good for society.

Other less influential factors were present as these subjects formulated their retention attributions. These included the external factors of pay and benefits, satisfaction with administration, satisfaction with peers and professional development. The influence of these factors was moderate to nil, but must be considered when discussing the overall attributional formulation of these subjects.

The survey data provided a foundation for the case study interviews. It was important to refine the focus from a macro perspective to a smaller sample to further explore the attributions music teachers hold in relation to the retention decision. These survey data
were used to construct interview questions for the purpose of exposing deeper layers of motivational factors and interactions that are present in the six sample cases.

Six Case Studies

This section describes the six subjects interviewed for this study. These subjects were selected from a pool of 132 who indicated a willingness to participate in this phase of the study on the music teacher survey. All six of these teachers teach in a large, urban school district in the Southwestern part of the United States. Two string teachers, two band teachers and two choir teachers were selected to participate in the next phase of the study, phase II.

The six candidates were contacted via e-mail and interviews were scheduled. One of the initial six selected subjects opted out of the study before the initial interview due to a change in personal circumstances and was replaced by the seventh ranked candidate. Interviews were conducted at negotiated sites to maximize privacy, focus and comfort for the subjects. Interview questions were based on issues, concepts and ideas suggested in the literature, for example: teacher autonomy, teacher preparation, salary and working conditions. The initial subject interview questions were used as stimulus for conversation but subjects were allowed to explore areas not specifically mentioned in the interview document in an effort to enrich the data (Appendix C). The initial interviews were completed in from 140 to 160 minutes. Contact was made via email to clarify responses. A detailed explanation is in Table 18.

Table 18 expresses basic demographic information of the six cases selected for this study. The average age of the cases is 44.16 years. They have averaged 9.3 years at their
current teaching locations and have been employed in the same district for an average of 17.85 years. All of the subjects hold masters level degrees and have accumulated credit hours beyond those degrees.

Table 18
Interview Subject Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>How Long at Current Position</th>
<th>How long in current district</th>
<th>Total Years Teaching</th>
<th>Degrees Held</th>
<th>Other Coursework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shervin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>MS Orchestra</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>29 years</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Grad credits in Music Ed, professional development credits from various institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MS/HS Orchestra</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>BME</td>
<td>Advanced coursework in Classroom Management and Educational Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>HS Band</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5.6 years</td>
<td>BME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>HS Band</td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>29 years</td>
<td>32 years</td>
<td>BA MME</td>
<td>Post Graduate work in Ed Admin &amp; music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>MS/HS Choral</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>5.3 years</td>
<td>7.3 years</td>
<td>BME</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>HS Choral (Retired)</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Various continuing credits in music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MS = Middle School (Grades 6-8)  
BFA = Bachelor of Fine Arts  
BME = Bachelor of Music Education  
HS= High School  
BMU = Bachelor of Music  
Grades 9-12  
MME = Master of Music Education

The narrative diagram (Appendix F) was constructed to visually represent how data were organized in a sequential format following the chronological nature of the interview questions. When constructing the analysis model, three perspectives were considered: pre-service, training and induction, and current practice. Terms in the narrative diagram are aligned to explain the structure of the discussion that follows. Personal histories were considered important because they influenced the earliest attributions the subjects associated with music teaching and becoming a music teacher. Factors were further defined as those held in common by the subjects and those that were unique to each
individual. In conjunction with personal histories, the presence of or absence of a trigger event was deemed a logical place to examine early interactions of internal and external factors motivating the decision to become a music educator. The subjects entered into a formal training period once they made the decision to become a music teacher. Again, there were common experiences and unique experiences that came into play while subjects engaged in the process of teacher training. The induction experiences of these subjects served as a bridge between the expectations of the subjects and the reality of day to day classroom life. The attributions of these individuals were in dissonance as each subject sought to resolve this conflict of real and ideal. For these individuals, the ultimate decision to remain a teacher is a result of these transformed attributions constructed in response to internal and external factors and the interactions of those factors over a span of time. The following discussion examines that journey.

The Story of Six Music Teachers

The Decision to Become a Music Teacher

Six people from different backgrounds made the same decision: to become a music teacher, followed similar career paths and ended up staying in a profession that they all love for more than five years. That would not be remarkable except that they are a statistical aberration and; they should not have survived in the teaching profession this long and at this rate.

As would be expected, all but one of these teachers shared similar backgrounds. Most of them grew up in working class households whose parents they reported valued an education and imbedded that idea into their children. Only one of these future music
educators was raised in a family that was supported by a professional musician. Five of these teachers came from traditional two parent households and one was raised by a single mother. Music was common factor from an early age and the following is a discussion of their engagement with music while they were growing up.

**Early Experience with Music**

Lauren began piano lessons while still in grade school, receiving instruction in the mornings before literally running to her classes in an urban Chicago public school where she was allowed to arrive late. She worked at perfecting her performance skills to the point that her decision to become a music teacher caused disappointment for her parents. They had dreamed their daughter would be a concert pianist one day and felt teaching was a waste of her talent. Her decision to become a teacher instead still resonates within her family, even after more than twenty years as a nationally recognized music educator.

Andrea came to music teaching later in life and somewhat by default. She was raised by a musician father and stay at home mother in what she calls a typical Italian family: "very close, very emotional and very dramatic." They relocated to the west because her father followed the work. This created an environment where Andrea was constantly surrounded by music and musicians. Her recollections are of being a small girl sitting in a showroom watching Sinatra, Dean, Davis and Bishop on many occasions when they were at their performing peak. Andrea did work as a professional musician for a few years, singing and playing guitar, but never achieved the stability in her life she so longed for. The decision to become a music teacher was not easy. Her eventual decision to become formally trained as a music teacher was met with some disdain from her father but was supported by her mother and siblings.
Shervin, Natasha, Monique and Victor were first exposed to formal music instruction while in public school. Their interest in music was piqued by recruiting events held in their schools. Natasha and Victor thought brass instruments looked “cool” and made the choice to study those. Shervin was drawn to the cello and Monique loved singing. The unity of this initial experience is contrasted by their different family lives.

Shervin, like Lauren, was encouraged to pursue her cello studies with the idea of becoming a performer. Her family provided the logistical and financial support to make this happen. She felt trapped and pressured by this situation because she wanted to teach. “We’re both stubborn, I’m from a very German family,” she said. Her resulting pursuit of a music teaching career caused a permanent schism with her parents.

Natasha grew up in a household of medical professionals and remembers value being placed on acquiring knowledge. She was encouraged to read and she did so voraciously. Natasha recalls that her decision to become a teacher was celebrated by her family. The decision to become a music teacher was almost an afterthought. Music had been a large part of her middle school and high school career and she felt that it would be “fun to try.”

Monique had a career path similar to Andrea. Her love of singing led to a professional singing career but the realities of the working musician, economic instability, forced her to abandon that career and seek other work. She became a music teacher to provide for her family as a single mother. Monique worked menial jobs while a student and mother, became a music teacher for a short period of time leaving teaching for a promising career in the convention business. Her tenure in the business world was financially successful. She returned to teaching after several years in the business world because she felt unfulfilled and missed the classroom.
For Victor, teaching music was a way out. He was raised in a single parent household with very limited economic means. His family “moved whenever the rent was due.” His saxophone was his salvation. He did not want to end up like his peers working construction jobs in the summer and ski resorts in the winter while washing away the reality of their situation with liberal amounts of alcohol and drugs. Victor also wanted to have a traditional family and provide them with a stable, happy environment. He enjoyed playing his saxophone and guitar in local night spots but quickly realized that lifestyle would not get him those things he so desired. Teaching music was Victor’s path to achieve the life of his dreams.

Although their childhood experiences were geographically and socially disparate, each of the six reacted to the musical experience in a similar way. The act of making music resonated internally to the point that it became the central activity in their lives. Victor stated, “Music gave me the structure I needed.” And Lauren said, “I get to do what I love every day.” The common theme is that these people enjoy making music and are compelled to share that joy with others.

Each of these six teachers had an external motivator in the form of an adult who served as a role model and influenced their decision to become music teacher. Five of the six cases stated that their music teachers were strong influences, especially at the high school level, on their decision to become music teachers. Only Andrea stated that she was influenced most by her husband, not a musician, whom she looks upon as an exemplary educator. The experiencing of that person, the school music teacher, influenced the subjects’ formation of their self-images and significantly impacted the formation of attributions concerning teaching and specifically music teaching. This is an example of
an external motivator, the school music teacher, influencing the development of an internal factor, the desire to become a teacher and help others.

Motivators to Become a Music Teacher

External motivators were most often represented as people-centric. That is, parents, family members and other role models were most often listed as having the greatest influence on the decision to become a music teacher. These factors worked in concert with the internal factors that developed as a result of the early experiences making music. Those internal factors are reported as feelings of “freedom,” “wonder,” “fulfillment” and “joy.”

A strong sense of altruism also motivated these six to become music teachers. “Doing good for society” and “helping” were commonly reported reasons for entering the teaching profession. The sense that by teaching music they could make a difference in society was repeatedly emphasized in subject narratives.

The decision to enter the music teaching profession can ultimately be seen as an interaction of internal and external factors. Each subject was influenced by his or her experiences with adults; either music teachers or family members. That external influence manifested itself as a development of attributions concerning music teaching labeled with such phrases as “noble profession” (Lauren), “fun work” (Natasha) and “good” (Monique). The internal experience of making music fostered attributions contextualizing music making with such terms as “fulfilling” (Shervin), “enjoyable” (Victor) and “important” (Andrea). The interactions of these factors were strong and resonated deeply within these subjects. They chose to enter teaching highly motivated by the circumstances in which they found themselves.
University Preparation

The university experiences of these six teachers were very similar. As would be expected, they all completed coursework general and specific content knowledge as well as general education and specific education focused on pedagogical content. All of the subjects reported satisfaction with their undergraduate programs and felt that the university did a good job of providing them with the content knowledge necessary to become a successful teacher. This sentiment is summarized by Lauren who stated, “I had an amazing undergraduate experience. I was able to do a wide variety of things that helped make me the teacher I am today.”

The choice of which university to attend was made based on geographical location and convenience more so than reputation or rating of the particular institution. Only Lauren reported that her choice of college was influenced by the reputation of her university as an exemplary highly regarded music teacher school. All attended public colleges except Shervin who received her teacher education from a faith-based institution.

Teacher training for these subjects was reported as being centered around increasing content knowledge and increasing individual skill on their chosen instrument. They reported major portions of coursework revolved around perfecting their skills as performers. For example, Natasha said, “I was playing all the time, the professors in the performance school wanted me to stay around because I was the only harpist for miles.”

Pedagogical content knowledge coursework that focused on teacher training was a minimal part of the overall undergraduate curriculum. Each subject was required to take several credit hours of education coursework that surveyed current education theory and
each had at least one course involving the teaching of reading. This aspect of their undergraduate work was universal for these six teachers, who attended universities in Illinois, Michigan, Idaho, Ohio and Nevada. General education courses were seen as not useful and not applicable to the music education field. Andrea said, “I gleaned nothing from them, there was nothing offered to me that I used.” Monique echoed that sentiment saying, “Education classes for everybody were tremendously wasteful of my time and money.” She also felt a bias from the education college towards the theoretical aspects of pedagogy rather than ideas and concepts she felt were ‘Practical for the real classroom.”

The portion of their curriculum that was focused on music teacher training was also universal among these subjects. Coursework included music theory, music history, personal instruction on a major instrument and survey instruction on secondary instruments. Pedagogical training took place in the later part of the undergraduate cycle with music pedagogy courses that included instructional methods classes, individual technique courses for particular classes of instrument, i.e. woodwind methods, string methods, etc. and courses that dealt with the unique management issues that occur in music classroom. Field observations were completed in the junior year followed by student teaching in the senior year.

The student teacher experiences varied widely for these subjects. Victor was extremely satisfied by his student teaching experience due to a unique set of circumstances. He student taught with a high school teacher who became pregnant during his tenure as a student teacher. After completing one semester of formal student teaching in the fall, he was hired as a long term substitute teacher for his mentor teacher for the spring semester while she was on maternity leave. This situation created an induction
experience whereby he was teaching in the classroom full time, transitioning from student to teacher while still being overseen by the resident teacher. The consequences for failure and normal induction year pressures were minimized by this relationship and as a result Victor felt the time he spent student teaching was extended. As Victor stated, “I really had a full year of student teaching due to circumstance. It was amazing.”

Andrea, Lauren, and Monique benefited from the student teacher experience but did not have a strong opinion as to the value of the experience. They reported the experience with phrases such as “it was good overall” (Monique) and “I was allowed to teach” (Andrea). The student teaching experience for Natasha and Shervin had somewhat negative overtones. Natasha was forced into a time conflict due to her double major status as a performance-education major. The demands on her time for performances in her senior year left little time to, “process what I was getting out of student teaching.” Shervin also was a victim of circumstance. Her student teaching occurred during a time of the year when her mentor teacher was in preparation for the music festival season. Music festival performances are often used as an evaluation tool to gauge the effectiveness of a particular teacher. The mentor teacher was under pressure from her administration to do well at the music festivals and therefore did not allow Shervin to experience much teaching. Shervin’s role was limited to offering special help to students who needed one on one work. The bright spot in her student teaching experience came when Shervin was allowed to lead a small show choir. This was the only time Shervin was allowed to stand in front of a sizeable class and have an authentic large group teaching experience. Shervin was, “Happy for the opportunity because my professional experience as a singer was close to what I was doing in the classroom.”
This mixture of different student teaching experiences gave rise to a mixed set of attributions concerning the idea of teaching music. Both Lauren and Natasha, who had expressed positive feelings about their undergraduate preparation experiences, felt prepared to teach before entering their first classroom. Lauren stated, “It was a great program. We got to do all the things a music teacher does. We gave lessons, we conducted, we even had to grade papers.” Natasha expressed a similar opinion when she stated, “My undergrad program was filled with musical experiences. I was able to do stuff in many different situations. I was always playing. That made me a better musician which I bring to my classroom today.” This positive experience was not consistent in the other four subjects. Monique, an older undergraduate, had mixed feelings. Victor, Andrea and Shervin felt unprepared for their first teaching positions. Andrea in particular felt that the, “teacher preparation program helped me not one bit and I was angry.” Victor, “was not prepared for classroom management work environment issues such as parent complaints and site procedures. My teacher prep program was regional.” Shervin expressed her feelings, “As a teacher, I had no idea – they didn’t teach me anything.” This wide disparity in attributions about their teacher preparation program raises multiple issues. First, did the subjects who reported negative teacher preparation experiences have the maturity and dispositions, at the time they were in university, to fully take advantage of what was offered? Second, do those subjects, who reported negative experiences, hold these attributions as a reaction to the induction experiences? The six subjects reported a consistency in the design of their teacher experiences from institution to institution. It must be concluded from these data that the negative and positive attributions held by these subjects today are not a result of the experience itself but of an interaction of other
factors that have occurred over time. This perspective is reflected in Table 19 that summarizes the attributional profile of the subjects at the conclusion of their teacher preparation program before they began their first teaching assignments.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Coursework</th>
<th>Non-Music Education Coursework</th>
<th>Student Teaching</th>
<th>Prepared to teach?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shervin</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These six subjects continued on into the music teaching profession despite having a wide range of teacher preparation experiences, some that they considered completely ineffective and sorely lacking. The recurring theme in their narrative was that they felt extremely confident in their abilities and knowledge as musicians, they expressed adequate content knowledge, and their knowledge of how to be music teachers was more problematic and caused them concern: the pedagogical content knowledge aspect of teaching music in a classroom. The areas of most concern expressed by these teachers dealt with things that did not revolve around the teaching of music but rather management issues. This is evidenced in the statements of three of the subjects: Andrea stated, “I had no idea what to do when I got into my room the first time.” Victor stated, “I didn’t have a clue where to put anything.” Shervin stated, “I was never taught how to begin a real class.”
Those issues of classroom management and job site specific contexts need to be separated from the actual act of teaching music. Those issues more accurately can be expressed as “Classroom Logistics Knowledge” (CLK). Classroom Logistics Knowledge refers to those concepts and activities that are required to successfully manage a classroom to create an environment where learning can efficiently take place. Classroom Logistics Knowledge is the major component reported missing from the undergraduate/student teacher portion of the subjects’ training. In other words, these subjects lacked skills in classroom management, working in a bureaucracy, dealing with parents and issues of education not directly related to content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. When Shervin states, “They didn’t teach me anything,” she is referring to classroom logistics knowledge. Victor specifically pointed out similar issues with his feelings concerning parent complaints and site procedures. These teachers were subject to a unfamiliar context, the classroom, that contained an unanticipated set of external factors that influenced their attributions concerning both their undergraduate programs and their attributions about retention. This lack of skill will be evidenced in the induction year portion of this study.

The experience of the teacher preparation program, an external factor, led to the internal attributions of the teaching profession. These internal factors were feelings of competence, preparedness, and effectiveness. These factors were present in all the subjects to varying degrees. It is clear that any negative feelings concerning the pre-service experience were not sufficient to dissuade the subjects from continuing on into the teaching profession.
The Induction Experience

All six interview subjects found employment immediately after completing their undergraduate certification programs in schools geographically close to their universities except Victor who found employment as a high school band teacher in the district in which he student taught and remains today. Before becoming teachers in their current district Andrea and Monique were hired as middle school (grades 6-8) choral directors and Lauren, Shervin and Natasha were placed in positions requiring instruction at both middle and high schools. Shervin was the only instrumental music teacher in her small, western town school district. Lauren and Natasha served as co-teachers in different rural districts with established music teachers serving as their partners.

The induction year was difficult. It was during the initial weeks in the classroom that these subjects faced a time of “great uncertainty,” “overwhelming confusion” and a strong sense of being an “imposter.” The feelings of being prepared by their universities for the classroom quickly vanished as the realities of the classroom context became apparent. Shervin came to feel that her undergraduate preparation was, “not even close” and not “grounded in reality.” This sentiment is echoed by each of the subjects with similar expressions of frustration and disappointment for example, Andrea: “I wasn’t really prepared to go out and teach.” Monique: “I was overwhelmed, not prepared in classroom management.” Lauren: “I thought I was prepared but I learned on my first day that I was not.” and finally Natasha: “My program didn’t do a very good job of preparing us to teach.”

All six subjects stated that these frustrations were not associated with the depth of content knowledge received during the undergraduate training. They were not linked in
any significant way to pedagogical content knowledge issues. These frustrations stemmed from a lack of classroom logistics knowledge; that is, those contexts and issues not directly related to content instruction, were very problematic to this group of induction year teachers.

Additionally, all six stated that this frustration concerning lack of classroom logistics knowledge was compounded by the fact that each of these subjects entered a position without any formal mentor program available to them. Lauren, Shervin and Andrea each had twenty five or more years teaching experience at the time of this study. They report that during their induction year they had no district sanctioned mentor available to them and received no formal assistance during the transition from student to teacher.

Both Lauren and Andrea took it upon themselves to seek out a knowledgeable individual who was willing to serve as a mentor figure. Lauren was fortunate to have her co-teacher serve as a mentor and Andrea was assisted by a teacher who had known her during her high school years. Shervin was employed in a district that she reported as unsupportive, riddled with small town politics, and “not interested in taking the time to ensure her success.”

The less experienced teachers in this study, Victor, Natasha and Monique, also relied on their own ingenuity to find a knowledgeable individual to assist them during their induction year. Victor and Monique were employed in the same large urban school district. This district had a mentor program in existence when Monique and Victor began their service but it proved less than adequate. Both Victor and Monique sought out peers both in their discipline and outside of their discipline (in their particular buildings) to assist with issues as they came to the fore. This assistance included both issues of
pedagogical content knowledge and classroom logistics knowledge. Advice on pedagogical content issues was sought from peers within their discipline and classroom logistics issue advice was most often sought from sources within respective schools.

Natasha had a unique induction experience in that she was hired to teach at the middle school and high school she herself had attended. She felt she had a solid sense of what her job entailed and what was expected of her reporting that she actually had to instruct her immediate administrator of how and what things were done in the district as he was not from the area. Her transition was further eased due to her experience as a student tutor during her senior year of high school. She was trained, during this time, by her immediate predecessor in the management procedures that so troubled the other subjects of this study.

The end of the induction year was a time of reflection. Their initial optimism present when entering the classroom a year ago had been tempered with the harsh reality of everyday teaching. They stated frustration with their own lack of classroom logistics knowledge, developed a sense of disappointment with their undergraduate training and began to understand the complexities of their chosen profession. What remained at the end of that first year was a strong motivational force compelling them to continue. That motivational force was a set of attributions concerning the context of teaching that reflect a sense of altruism, importance and contentment with the music teaching context. The context of the classroom had changed with experience but the factors that caused a dissonance in their core attributions, the external forces of classroom contexts and the internal struggles to justify and evaluate internal motivation, was not influential enough to significantly alter their desire or will to teach. They all passed through the initial year
of teaching willing to continue. Typical sentiments were expressed by Lauren, who stated, “I didn’t even consider quitting,” and Victor, “I couldn’t wait to come back and do better. I knew I could teach.”

These teachers retained their retention attributions despite the trials and tribulations they experienced during their induction year. This indicates that for these music teachers the external factors they encountered did not exert a significant influence on their internal attributions concerning retention. This minimizing of external factors emerged during the university experience and continued during the induction experience. Clearly, music teachers are more motivated by internal factors when making retention decisions.

**Why Continue to Teach**

Research has shown that 50% of all teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2002b). The research also reflects that the retention statistic for music teachers is in excess of 90% (Hancock & Scherff, 2010) This five years is also the period of time that Berliner (2001) suggests is necessary to achieve mastery of the teaching process. These music teachers survived the five year service period to become successful, long term residents in a profession known for its transiency.

**Autonomy**

As these subjects gained more positive experiences in teaching, they gained a strong sense of autonomy. This sense of autonomy resulted from several reported factors. First, they believed their administrators do not understand the pedagogical contexts of the music classroom and rely on empirical evidence to conduct music teacher evaluations. These evaluations take the form of observations of public displays of the results of a music teacher’s classroom teaching, i.e. public concerts, band marching shows, etc.
Victor stated, “My administration likes trophies. They don’t know if the music is good but they assume it must be unless I bring home a trophy.” Second, the music classroom is a context in which the day to day management is largely un-monitored and un-regulated. These music teachers are allowed to conduct their classroom in a manner in which they see fit. This is attributed to the perception that there is a lack of knowledge on the part of administration. As Lauren states, “My administration knows that I am a good teacher, but they don’t know what about my teaching is good.” Third, there is no standardized benchmark or formal expectation currently enforced in the music classroom. Shervin states, “As long as the parents like my concerts, my administration thinks I’m doing a good job. I can do what I want when I close the door.” This lack of pressure to perform to a national standard and achieve some form of acceptable “score” reinforces the sense of autonomy felt by these subjects.

**Relationships**

The music teacher has a unique advantage when building relationships to students: they are often allowed to teach the same students for between four to six years. A music teacher teaching at both the middle school and high school level (a common teaching assignment) has the potential to see a student in both. This longevity creates a context in which the teacher and student are exposed to a greater set of shared circumstances.

There is an interaction between the sense of autonomy and the perception of the ability to develop deeper, more meaningful relationships. These teachers feel that they have the ability to take students farther because they can individualize their instruction to meet specific student personalities and circumstances. As Lauren stated, “I get to know my students because I have them longer than any other teacher on campus. I learn about
their family lives, their friends. I can better teach them because I understand all that stuff that is going on in their lives.” This belief is echoed by Victor who stated, “I know my kids” and Andrea who stated, “I really got to know my kids because we were together all the time.” Natasha, Monique and Shervin also reported that it is common for their students to be in their classrooms before and after school. This ability to reach students at a deeper more significant level perpetuates the attribution of doing well for society: an attribution that is at the core of the desire to teach music for these subjects.

It is significant that only one of the six subjects of this study, Lauren, felt it necessary to develop relationships with peers outside of music. Lauren stated that a positive, constructive relationship is important to these subjects with teachers within their discipline. These intra-discipline relationships are reported important for reasons of acquiring additional content and pedagogical knowledge as well as classroom logistics knowledge for the purpose of bettering teaching practice. She further stated that through better teaching practice the goal of bettering society is more efficiently met.

Less Influential Factors

Money

For many non-music teachers, money is an issue that ultimately drives them out of the profession. Lauren never thought she would ever make as much money as she does today. Victor is very happy he is able to support his young family in a comfortable lifestyle. Natasha has enough money such that, “money is not much of an issue in my life.” Monique and Andrea are now making less money teaching than they did as professionals outside of teaching but share a sense of satisfaction with their current salaries.
Shervin is somewhat conflicted about the issue of money. She chose to live in poverty to become a teacher, cutting herself off from family support, moving across country to follow her dream. Yet, her current attitude is that teachers are “severely under paid” and they “can’t make a decent living” with present salary levels. This also does not reconcile with her current belief that “I can’t leave teaching because there is nothing else I could do at this age to make this much money.” This attitude still does not exert enough influence to effect her retention decision. While the money attribution is conflicted it may be this conflict that diminishes its ability to influence behavior.

Professional Development

Professional development is reported in the literature as an important construct for teachers (Eggen, 2001; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990; Siebert, 2008). These music teachers share that opinion with their peers in other disciplines but there is a major difference in how they elect to engage in professional development. As stated by Andrea, “Our in service days are a waste of time” and Natasha said, “There’s never anything that I can use.” These examples summarize the views of the six case studies and were reflected in the survey results. Music teachers do engage in professional development but it is largely self-initiated. This professional development takes the form of advanced course work; all six cases interviewed for this study had credits beyond the masters’ level, and participate regularly in off work hours seminars, workshops and conferences. Victor reported, “I go to band camp every summer, just like when I was a kid!” Monique and Lauren were in the middle of an advanced teacher certification program when their interviews were conducted. Professional development is an external factor that interacts with these teachers’ internal need to be good at what they do. Being good at what they do
influences attributions of efficacy which has been shown to be an important factor to these teachers as they make retention decisions.

Facilities and Materials

There are external factors cited in the literature as having influence on teacher retention. Among these factors is the issue of adequate facilities and materials. These factors were not important to this group of music teachers. Andrea began her high school career in a room that was “totally unacceptable and dysfunctional” for her choir class. She endured constant interruption from teachers who shared her space and from students using the area as a passage. Yet she persevered and did not incorporate this factor into her retention attributions. Shervin reports having taught in facilities too small, too cold or too warm but never let them effect her long term decisions. Each of these teachers has at least one anecdote concerning inadequate facilities or lack of materials. Their reaction was to take what was given them and adapt as best they could. The persistence of these circumstances was not a significant motivator in the retention decision.

Administration Support

A supportive administration is cited by each of these subjects as an important factor influencing their retention decision. Andrea was in her third year of teaching when she moved from a middle school teaching position to a high school. There she began suffering severe feelings of incompetence and lack of ability. She became a special project for her administration and credits the intensive mentor experience as saving her career. This theme is present in the motivators cited by the other subjects as well. Monique briefly left teaching as a result of an administration she felt was unsupportive but returned to teaching because she missed her students and the classroom environment.
Natasha will “leave teaching if I am trapped in a situation with an unsupportive administration.”

Support for these subjects encompassed several ideas. Shervin spoke of support as having an administration that is present at those activities which are important to her students, a sentiment shared by Natasha and Victor as well. An administration that makes an effort to understand what music teachers do was important to Lauren. Administrative support also refers to providing the financial support necessary to make music programs function properly.

There is a subtext to the sense of autonomy that creates a feeling of isolation felt by these music teachers. They spend most of their time in their classrooms or associating with other music or performing arts faculty. This isolation is self imposed and done more as a matter of choice. Only Lauren makes an effort to interact on a regular basis with faculty outside of her discipline. She does this to keep herself in touch with the rest of the school for both personal and professional reasons. Her belief is that if she isolates herself too much she will lose perspective. That is, her focus will become so narrow that she will lose an understanding of the issues and contexts that exist outside of her discipline and the importance of those contexts and issues of her life as well as the lives of her students. She has cultivated and maintained relationships with teachers of other disciplines to alleviate this effect.

For these teachers, administrative support was most often valued when it took the form of affirmation. Administrators demonstrated their support by attending events, providing monetary support for programs and, to a somewhat lesser degree, serving as pedagogical mentors. This acted as an external factor that interacted with internal
attributions of efficacy and autonomy. It did not contribute to the effectiveness of the teacher directly, rather, this support influenced the sense of efficacy that resided in the individuals.

Summary

These internal and external factors represent the forces at work on this set of music teachers as they see them. The data collected for this study were consistent from phase one to phase two, in that, what was important and present in the large group sample (N=260) was confirmed by the smaller group (n=6). This consistency implies that the attributions and contexts these music teachers experienced are representative of the music teaching profession as a whole. There are instances when these music teachers hold attributions that are consistent with existing literature as it pertains to all teachers. For example, these music teachers have a strong sense of altruism, an attribution widely reported in the teaching profession. There are however, significant departures from what is currently understood and reported as characteristic of all teachers. As an example, the literature reports that teachers value the professional development opportunities offered during teacher in-service days. Music teachers place little value on these activities and prefer to engage in professional development that they select as individuals.

These six cases share a strong sense of altruism and enjoy the context of the music classroom. As an external factor, the music classroom context interacts with the music teachers internal attributions of altruism and joy in making music in such a manner to re-enforce their retention decisions. These teachers remain in teaching because positive internal and external factors outweigh the influence of negative internal and external
factors. The data from the survey phase and the case study phase of this study are consistent and supportive of one another; the music teachers of this study shared attributions concerning retention.

Chapter five concludes this study to discuss evidence from the researcher’s perspective that leads to conclusions and justifies suggestions for further research and policy change to reform teacher training and teaching practice. The value of this study is also reinforced through the discussion in chapter five.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors, classified by locus of control as either internal or external, informed the attributions held by retained music teachers. Attribution theory, as conceived by Weiner (1986), framed the study. This theory states that attributions are formed through a three stage process that states behaviors must be observed and/or perceived, intentional and assigned an internal or external cause. This results in attributions that are classified by locus of control, stability and controllability. Attribution theory is the lens to understand music teacher retention, and the discussion in this chapter provides evidence to support the efficacy of attribution theory.

Internal and External Factors

First, this study showed that the attributional external and internal factors that influenced music teacher decision making about retention can change and interact with each other in different ways. For example, exposure to and interaction with a knowledgeable person such as a high school music teacher can be an external factor that makes an individual love making music. This context can trigger an altruistic motivation for becoming and remaining a music teacher. Another example, administrative support, can be seen as external factor or an internal factor. Administrators in this study supplied objects, books, paper, etc., to the music teachers. This external stimulus motivated the teachers to consider their work environment a desirable place to remain. Administrative support can also be classified as an internal factor in attribution creation and persistence if attributions held by the administrators and teachers are shared. If the administrator values autonomy (an internal factor) and a teacher values autonomy, this sense of like-
mindedness can act as a motivator influencing the retention decision. That was the case for the music teachers and administrators in this study. The findings of this study concerning administrative support confirm the previous work of Carlson (2004), Colley (2002), and Weller (1982).

Equally important to this survey group was the feeling of effectiveness in the classroom. Being effective in the classroom is an attribution influenced by both internal and external forces. For example, for these music teachers, a successful performance acted as an agent that enhanced an already present internal sense of efficacy. In addition, the external experience of the concert added new dimensions to that effectiveness as a result of the unique contexts of the individual event. Those unique contexts included a positive reaction from the concert audience, praise from concert attendees and later positive affirmations from peers. This illustrates the complexities that can occur in the interactions of internal and external factors that fall under the context of effectiveness attributions. This finding is in line with the research of Weaver-Shearn (2007) and Weller (1982).

**Altruism**

Second, the study also shows that once the altruism, an internal factor, manifests itself in the interview and in the survey as the most important factor governing the music teacher’s retention decision. It existed before the decision to become a teacher and remains strong during teaching practice. It can dissuade many other factors that are assumed to influence teachers’ retention negatively in general teaching populations. These factors included working longer hours than required, creating and implementing multiple performance opportunities for students and the school community, and
expressions of interest in students’ lives outside of the music classroom context. This finding confirms the altruism research for teachers in other disciplines done by Chong and Low (2009), Liu and Meyer (2005) and Wiegand (2003).

**Reasons to Remain in Teaching**

Third, the study indicated that the external factors that were compatible with the altruistic attribution would reinforce their decision to staying in teaching. For example, the experiences of university (largely external factors) reinforced the attributions of altruism and the importance of the activity of music making itself. In this regard, the teacher preparation programs performed as an important reinforcement of these attributions; attributions that existed prior to the beginning of formal teacher training. The music coursework, performance experiences and student teaching experiences were positive motivators compelling these music teachers to continue on to a teaching practice. It can be concluded that these teacher preparation programs, as experienced by these subjects in terms of content knowledge, functioned in a positive, productive manner, providing a level of knowledge and motivation sufficient to enhance and support the attributions held by these subjects prior to their matriculation into the classroom.

There were external factors that did not exert enough influence to significantly alter these teachers, retention decisions. For example, as new teachers they reported the effects of these new contextual factors, i.e. the real classroom, were not powerful enough to reshape long held altruistic attributions and attributions concerning the satisfaction about music making. These subjects reported feelings of altruism began to develop very early in their lives, as well as the love of making music. Despite the dramas of the induction years, common to most teachers, these six subjects chose to remain in the profession.
Their internal desire and will to do good for society and their enjoyment and fulfillment felt while making music continue to outweigh the dissonance caused by the music classroom context.

It was found that elements of the undergraduate experience were felt as unnecessary and irrelevant. The subjects defined unnecessary components as classes that dealt with general education issues such as reading and educational psychology. The attribution held by these music teachers were lack of relevance and a sense of wasted time. That feeling persisted throughout the training period and exists in the subjects today. There are three possible conclusions that may be considered in regards to this situation: 1) students were unable to successfully synthesize the material in a useful manner, 2) The teacher preparation programs failed to supply adequate material to make the content relevant, or 3) A combination of both. The data collected by this study do not make it clear which of these possibilities most accurately expresses the formation of these attributions. These data only evidence the existence and persistence of the attributions that some of the undergraduate experience was deemed unnecessary. In the end, these factors of mixed feelings concerning the non-music portion of the undergraduate experience were not powerful enough to change the teachers, retention decisions.

What is unusual for this group of teachers is the persistence of attributions of negativity towards their preparation programs that developed during the induction years. These attributions of negativity are maintained to this day. These subjects, who pre-service were satisfied with their training, now hold those teacher preparation programs in contempt which they expressed with such phrases as “I was totally unprepared to teach” and “They taught me nothing.”
This inability to connect teacher training experiences to the realities of the classroom is not unique to music teachers. Dissatisfaction with teacher preparation programs is widely reported (Collier & Hebert, 2004; Cruickshank, Kennedy, & Myers, 1974; Goldhammer, 1981; Pigge, 1978; Rubenstein, 2007). This dissatisfaction with the teacher preparation program is a component of many teachers decision to leave the classroom. What is unique to music teachers is that, while their attributions of the ineffectiveness of their teacher training program are consistent with teachers as a whole, they are not strong enough to affect the retention decision. The fact is still: music teachers remain in the profession at a significantly higher rate than teachers in other disciplines.

Mentoring was not a factor influencing the formation of retention attributions for these music teachers. Lauren and Andrea entered the teaching force almost thirty years ago, which makes the fact that no official mentor was available or offered to them understandable; mentoring had not yet reached the level of popularity it has today. But as several of these subjects entered teaching as recent as five years before this study, the absence of a formal mentor becomes more interesting. These subjects were involved in a district sanctioned mentoring program but they reported that program virtually non-existent. This attitude is attributed several factors. First, as new teachers, their inexperience did not provide any way to gauge the amount and quality of the mentoring they received. Second, they received low quality mentoring (minimal contact, infrequent, etc.). Third, they received no mentoring. Fourth, they were unable to participate in mentoring for other reasons and failed to take that into consideration as they formulated their opinions about their mentoring. The positive attributions concerning music teaching persist in these subjects with no discernable effect due to the lack of a positive mentoring
experience. It can be concluded that mentoring was not an important factor for these subjects in regards to the retention decision.

Other issues such as administrative support, peer interaction, pay and benefits and facilities issues were seen as items of mild interest more than factors influencing the retention decision. The survey data provide statistical evidence that these music teachers place a consistently high value on altruistic and self efficacy attributions and little value on other factors. The interview subjects confirmed the survey data.

**Fulfillment by Doing Their Craft**

The six cases considered in this study reported a satisfaction and joy with the act of making music. Music teachers are engaged in an activity they find personally rewarding every day: they make music. These attributions of joy and satisfaction had their origins in the early childhood music making experiences and were reinforced during university.

These six cases reported that they received extensive content knowledge during their teacher training at university. This may seem at odds with the negative feelings these teachers reported concerning their teacher training programs but, upon closer examination, it is not. They reported the musical content knowledge they received was aimed at making them better technicians and performers not better teachers. The negative attributions concerning the university experiences were centered on pedagogical content knowledge and were always expressed as such. The positive attributions they hold are centered on musical content knowledge. But the joy of making music is not enough in itself to account for the high retention rate for music teachers.

The data collected suggest that the high rate of music teacher retention is the result of three main factors: 1) A strong set of attribution concerning altruism, the need to “do
good for society:” 2) A love of music making built on years of technical study and: 3) The interaction between these two factors that occurs on a daily basis in the music classroom. This context is unique to the area of teaching music.

The context of teaching music allows for a continuous affirmation of attributions concerning altruistic beliefs and self-satisfaction needs because of the structure of the music teaching paradigm. Teaching music involved close, interpersonal contact with students on a technical and emotional level. A large component of the music teaching experience involves the co-production of music by the teacher and students. This context is desirable for these subjects and for music teachers as a whole. For the subjects in this study, altruism and the fulfillment that comes from doing one’s craft were internal factors that minimized the effects of external factors.

Retention Factors

Fourth, the factors and their interactions that helped music teachers stay in teaching do not necessarily help these teachers to be effective teachers, for which they needed a different kind of support. For example, it was found that professional development, a path to efficacy, was not important in the retention decision of these music teachers. However, this is in conflict with other data collected via the survey. These data indicate that music teachers engage in professional development on a frequent and consistent basis and, in fact, are self-motivated to seek out professional development opportunities. This inconsistency was clarified by the interview subjects who reported that professional development presented during school in-service days for the entire faculty was generally not beneficial and was not transferable to their teaching contexts; therefore, they sought out professional development designed for their discipline.
Contrary to the belief that pay is a critical reason for remaining in the profession (Bond, 2001; Han, 1994; Rumberger, 1987; Snow, 2005), the music teachers in this study did not attribute pay as a major factor that influences their decision to remain music teachers. The conclusion is therefore, that music teachers are satisfied with their level of pay or their level of pay is sufficient to relegate the context as neutral in regards to the retention decision. For example, Victor stated, “I live in a nice house. I have a nice car. And, I can take my family on vacation every once in a while. Sure, I would like to make more money, who wouldn’t? I make enough money that I am comfortable.” Lauren also agreed by stating, “I live in a really nice house, a really nice house. To be honest, I never thought I would be making this much money. I get to go places and do things I never dreamed I would do.”

**Summary**

It can be concluded from these survey and interview data that this group of music teachers chose to enter and chooses to remain in the teaching profession because they are highly motivated by altruistic factors that emerged from their pre-teaching histories. Those attributions of altruism remain strong to this day. Music teachers became music teachers because they felt they could do some good for society. They remain music teachers because they feel they are “doing good for society” and are being allowed to do it the way they feel is the most effective for them. These music teachers also enjoy their work because it involves an activity for them to continue doing what they love: make music. They derive their retention attributions primarily from those internal and external factors that support those altruistic attributions and they marginalize those factors that do not.
The experience of making music as a child fostered attributions that contextualize music making with such terms as “fulfilling,” “enjoyable” and “important.” Making music in a successful manner demands long hours of hard work done as an individual and often as a member of a group (in or out of the school setting). The results of that work are empirical and immediate: the musician either produces a good sound or not. These subjects internalize attributions of satisfaction while making music constructed as a result of factors labeled as: the benefits of hard work, dedication and perseverance. Further, these subjects hold a disposition that making music is something that is “good for society” developed through experiences making music in public venues.

These two sets of experiences, adult interactions and learning to make music, reacted in concert to form the additional attribution that teaching music was both good for society and good for the individual. This interaction of factors and the resulting new attributions created one of the forces behind the decision to become a music teacher. This sequence of attribution formation is present in all six cases interviewed for this study.

Each case had a unique combination of factors that acted together to influence the decision to enter teaching: some economic, some environmental. But those unique factors were not at the core of the decision to become a teacher. This can explain why the retained music teacher is so strongly influenced by internal factors in regards to retention. For example, Victor was raised in a family context where money was never plentiful and education was devalued. In contrast, Lauren was raised in a stable, lower middle class family, where resources were often sparse but somehow she was encouraged to read and learn. These two contexts were different, yet they produced a similar set of attributions concerning teaching and teacher retention within these two individuals. The characteristic
of marginalizing certain factors and promoting others was present in these music teachers before they were teachers and their attributions concerning teaching are a result of the interactions of very different sets of internal and external factors.

The sense of confidence and preparedness that filled them as they began their first days in the classroom quickly evaporated as the reality of day to day teaching life took hold. They soon learned that the classroom was a much more complex context than they had previously thought. Most of the experiences of these six music teachers were not out of the ordinary. Moir (2005) explains the first year teaching experience as a set of five phases: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation and reflection. The new music teacher is faced with, not only the common stresses and problems of classroom management and learning bureaucracy, but they are subject to the additional stresses associated with the logistics of producing performances and ultimately, displaying their teaching in a very public venue.

The data collected concerning music teachers response to other factors were sometimes inconsistent with existing literature. For example, these music teachers minimized the role of pay in their retention attributions, yet pay is often reported as important to teachers as a whole (Bond, 2001; Han, 1994). Existing research indicates that working conditions are important for teacher retention, even more so than pay (Viadero, 2008). These working conditions contained a broad set of contexts including administrative support, facilities and peer support. Yet, these music teachers minimized the role that working conditions play in their development and persistence of retention attributions. Again it must be repeated, the retention statistic for music teachers is disproportionately high when compared to teachers as a whole. How can that be?
Music teachers, as a group, are consistent in their attributional distribution. The music teachers of this study think alike. This phenomenon is evidenced in both the survey data and the interview data.

The missing piece to this puzzle lies in the overall context of music teaching and music making and the inter-play that exist between the two in the classroom in comparison to other disciplines. Most certainly, the physics teacher has received a strong set of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge during the years leading up to the inception of her teaching practice. But when the physics teacher enters the classroom, she no longer does physics. The same can be said of those who teach in other areas – math teachers don’t do “math”, history teachers don’t do “history.” A chemistry teacher could very likely do the things a chemist does by finding summer work in a commercial venue or even as a research assistant. But this only confirms that those pursuits must exist outside the classroom: it is inherent in the design. Only the context of teaching music allows the teacher to remain a practitioner on a daily basis.

Recommendations

Four recommendations are proposed as a result of this study. First, this research must be replicated in other disciplines. It is important to know why teachers of all disciplines think and feel the way they do and studies based in attribution theory show promise as a way to understand all teachers’ motivations. These studies should be conducted at the discipline level and then at the subject level within that discipline. Replicating the study with teachers in other disciplines holds potential to add credence to the importance of altruism and fulfillment from practicing one’s craft. A comparison of factors across
disciplines could be used to discern areas where reform would increase retention rates to an acceptable level.

Second, further research needs to be conducted concerning the differences between music teaching contexts on an intra-disciplinary level. That is, how string teachers are different from band teachers are different from vocal teachers, etc. This research could further expose subtle differences in music teaching contexts that may have implications for music teachers as a whole and for teachers of other disciplines as well.

Third, the persistence of the negative feelings towards the music teacher preparation program is problematic: the resolution of this phenomenon is not possible with the data collected for this study. Further study is necessary to explain how these negative feelings developed, if they persist, why they persist and what can be done to eliminate the development of these feelings. If this research is done for music teachers it must be replicated in other disciplines to see if a similar phenomenon occurs in those contexts. This strong negative reaction suggests the need to research the student as a participant in the teacher preparation program asking such questions as: 1) Is this student capable of learning what is being offered? 2) Does the student possess the dispositions necessary to integrate the offered information in a positive manner? 3) If the teacher preparation program taught the student “nothing,” how did the teacher survive the induction experience?

Fourth, music teacher preparation must expand to include greater understanding of classroom logistics knowledge. Classroom logistics knowledge concerns those contexts and issues that do include content instruction, i.e. dealing in a bureaucracy, parent interaction, workflow, etc. If classroom logistics knowledge is acquired through
experience then that experience must be made part of the teacher training cycle. It is not
the recommendation here to extend the teacher training experience at the university but
rather establish an internship system whereby newly licensed teachers are phased into the
classroom much the same way physicians are phased into practicing medicine. This is a
major paradigm shift and would be expensive, both monetarily and politically, but if
education is to best serve its’ constituency, it is incumbent on having the best possible
practitioners in the classroom.

Music teachers remain in the classroom at a significantly higher rate than teachers in
other disciplines. The more understanding that can be gained about the context of
teaching music, the more chances there are to positively affect the contexts of other
classrooms. If the goal is to increase retention rates then the first step is to understand that
context where retention is not a problem. That context is the music classroom.

Coda

Remember those eight music students, mentioned in the introduction, who graduated
and began their teaching careers in 1997? They all continue to teach music in the public
sector and report great satisfaction with their career choice. Each has continued to refine
teaching skills through graduate course work and professional development workshops.
And now, one has just completed his doctorate in education.
APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Band teacher: instrumental music in a classroom setting using woodwind, brass and percussion instruments

Choir teacher: teaches vocal music. Also known as a voice teacher

Classroom Logistics Knowledge: those contexts and issues not directly related to content instruction

Content Knowledge: ideas and concepts unique to a specific subject

Guitar teacher: teaches guitar in a classroom setting

Mariachi teacher: teaches music in a classroom focusing on the Mariachi idiom. This can encompass instruction in voice, string, brass, guitar, percussion and ethnic folk instruments i.e. guitarrón, vihuela

Orchestra Teacher: teaches students instrumental music in a classroom using violins, violas, violin cellos and string basses, also known as a “strings” teacher.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge: “. . . the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations – in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to other.” (Shulman, 1986)
APPENDIX B

MUSIC TEACHER SURVEY

Music Teacher Survey

The Supervisor of Secondary Fine Arts in CCSD has asked me to conduct this survey regarding music teachers. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am conducting a mixed-methods study regarding music teachers, in particular, and their career commitment. This survey will provide important information about music teachers in CCSD and provide a pool of participants interested in participating in a follow up survey. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. All answers are confidential. Thank you. – Chuck Cushinery

Personal Profile:

Name ___________________________________________________________

Mailing Address ________________________________________________

Preferred E-mail ________________________________________________

Preferred Phone Number(s): _______________________________________

Employment Profile:

Current work status:

Primary area of Instruction: _____ Band _____ Choir _____ Orchestra _____ Guitar

_____ Dance _____ Theater _____ Other (please list) _______________________

Secondary Area of Instruction: (Check all that apply)

_____ Band _____ Choir _____ Orchestra _____ Guitar _____ Dance _____ Theater

_____ Other (Please list) ____________________________________________

Current school(s) in which you teach: ______________________________

Years employed in this district _____ Total Years Teaching _____

Please respond to the following:

1. Please rank the following in order of importance with 1 being the most important. Why you became a teacher.

_____ Family history (Parents, uncles, etc. were teachers)

_____ Steady work

_____ Pay/Benefits

_____ Wanting to do good for society

_____ Other, Please briefly explain .

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________
2. Please rank in order of importance with 1 being the most important.
   Why do you remain in teaching?
   ___ I have a sense that I am effective at my job.
   ___ I have control over my work environment
   ___ I want to help make society a better place
   ___ I am able to function with my pay and benefits
   ___ I am satisfied with my administration
   ___ I am satisfied with my peers
   ___ I enjoy engaging in professional development
   ___ Other, please briefly explain.

3. List several benefits you have experienced in being a music teacher.

4. What are reasons that you think teachers (including music teachers) remain in the teaching profession?

5. What are reasons that you think teachers (including music teachers) elect to leave the teaching profession after having taught for fewer than five years?

6. What characteristics best describe a music teacher?

7. Would you be willing to participate in the next phase of this research study – an interview concerning music teacher retention?

   Yes _____  No _____
APPENDIX C

MUSIC TEACHER SURVEY LETTER

Music Teacher Survey

Attached is a survey concerning music teacher retention.

Please read and sign the attached consent form attached to the survey.

When finished with the survey, after the meeting, please give both the consent form and the survey to the door monitors with boxes in the back of the hall.

This is phase one of a two phase study. You will not be contacted if you answer no to question 7 on the survey. You might be contacted if you answer yes to question seven.

All information is strictly confidential. These data will not be made available to anyone but the research team. All identifiers will be removed from the data before it is reported after final analysis. If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to call me at 493-6428 or e-mail: cwc@nevada.edu.

A copy of the final report will be made public.

Thank you for helping with this project. I sincerely appreciate your time and efforts.

Chuck Cushinery
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SUBJECT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Interview Subject Demographic Profile

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. All answers are confidential.

Personal Profile:

Name __________________________________________________________

Gender ___________ Age _________ Race ___________________________

Marital Status: Single __ Married ___

Children: Age and Gender

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Contact Information:

Mailing Address

________________________________________________________________

E-mail

________________________________________________________________

Phone: Home __________________________

Cell __________________________

Work __________________________

Employment Profile:

Current work status (include job title and location)

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Years employed in current work situation __________________________

Work History (Specific dates are not necessary, be as accurate and complete as reasonably possible, that pizza job at 16 really is important) Format – Dates employed, employer, position.

Example: June 2001-August 2001, Pizza Barn, Delivery

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
Education:

Please start with the most recent experience and move backwards.

Example Format:

Spring 2008 – Coursework in technology, CCSD CTE program
June 2007 – MME, Masters Degree in Music Education, UNLV
June 2005 – BFA, Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree – education emphasis, University of Kansas
June 2000 – High School Diploma, Roosevelt High School, Milwaukee, WI

What does your spouse do for a living?

What do (did) your parents do for a living?

Father

Mother

What do your siblings do for a living?

1) 

2) 

3) 

4) 
5) 

6) 

7) 

8) 

Use this area for any additional comments related to this survey
APPENDIX E
INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Initial Interview Questions:

Section 1

Historical perspective of participant’s life leading to the decision to become a teacher
1. How do your elementary and secondary education experiences affect your retention?
2. Briefly describe your family and how they influence your retention.
3. When did you decide to become a music teacher? How did it feel when you made that decision?
4. What factors compelled you to become a music teacher?
5. What was the reaction of those people around you to your decision?
6. Did any particular individual affect your decision to become a music teacher? If so, describe that individual and your relationship.
7. What about yourself made you think you would be a good music teacher?
8. If you could go back in time would you choose to be a music teacher again?

Section 2

Experiences during the teacher training process from University to first teaching job
1. Please describe your undergraduate experience.
2. What about the experience was good/bad?
3. When you left the University, before you entered the classroom, did you feel prepared to teach? Why or why not?
4. Do you maintain contact with anyone involved in your University experience?
5. What factors concerning your University experience influence your retention decision and can you describe how those factors are related for you?

Section 3

Induction year experiences
1. How would you explain your first few weeks teaching?
2. What assistances were given to you by your district? Did you have an on-site mentor? Who helped you transition from student to teacher?
3. What about your first year experience was as you expected?
4. What was unexpected about your first year?
5. Were you an effective teacher during this time?

6. At the conclusion of your induction year, did you feel the same about your teacher preparation program as you did before you started teaching?

7. What contributed most to your feelings about your teaching practice at the end of your induction year?

8. What are the factors that made you return to teaching after your induction year and can you describe how those factors are related for you?

Section 4

Current teaching circumstance

1. Describe your classroom as it exists today. Why does it look like it does? How does it affect your retention decision?

2. Describe your administration. Why do they do the things they do? How do these things relate to your retention decision?

3. Describe your students. Why do they do the things they do? How do they influence your retention decision?

4. Tell me what you think about your salary and benefits and the effect it has on your retention decision.

5. Do you participate in your school community? Why or why not? How does it influence your retention decision?

6. What are the other factors of your current position that compel you to remain in teaching?

Section 5

Philosophy of Education and future considerations

1. Why do you think you feel the way you do about teaching?

2. How do you compare to the other teachers in other subject areas? What do you base this on?

3. What is the current state of education in your building? Your district? The country? The world?

4. How do you formulate your opinions about education issues?

5. How do you think the other teachers in your building feel about education?

6. What do you think the other teachers in your building think about music education?

7. What would make you leave teaching?

8. What would you do if you left teaching?

9. Is there anything else you can think of that would explain why you are doing what you do, why you hold the opinions you hold, or why anything that happens to you, happens to you?
APPENDIX F

NARRATIVE DIAGRAM

Narrative Diagram

Current Practice

Induction
1-3 yrs. in classroom

Formal Teacher Training

Common Attributions

Unique Attributions

Trigger event or person (External Motivators)

Absence of Trigger Event (Internal Motivators)

Common Personal Histories

Unique Personal Histories
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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada – Las Vegas

Charles W. Cushinery

Degrees:
Bachelor of Fine Arts, 1997
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Master of Music, 1999
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Affiliations:
Music Educators National Council
Nevada Music Educators Association
American String Teachers Association
Conductors Guild

Dissertation Title: Factors Influencing Music Teacher Retention: A Mixed Methods Study

Dissertation Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Jian Wang, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Martha Young, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Emily Lin, Ph.D.
Graduate College Representative, Lori Olafson, Ph.D.