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Abstract

The concept of community significantly impacts the lives of human beings. Communities, through their local traditions, social constructs, and values, shape the musical nature of each community member. These community influences are present in the lives of children and play a significant role in the ways in which children interact with music and interact musically within the classroom. In order for music educators to teach effectively they must take into consideration the nature of the students in their classrooms including the several community-based constructs in which their students are immersed.

The purpose of this study was to determine if music educators are influenced by issues of community and how they approach instruction to reflect the urban, suburban, and rural communities in which they teach. Several guiding questions were established which addressed possible community influences on music teaching including, music teachers' approach to instruction to accurately reflect community, differences in these possible influences among urban, suburban, and rural communities, and teacher/student cultural synchronization.

Music educators from urban, suburban, and rural areas of Pennsylvania were invited to participate in an online questionnaire. This questionnaire gathered information depicting a broad picture of the concept of community and its influences in music education. It was, additionally, used as a recruiting tool for the second phase of the study. Interested questionnaire participants volunteered to participate in the next phase of the study that included a qualitative based telephone interview. The data from the online survey and telephone interviews were coded and analyzed for common themes.

The questionnaire participants (N=20) represented urban, suburban, and rural communities. The majority of teachers reported that the surrounding community does, in fact, influence their music teaching in various ways. Narrative responses indicated that socio-economic factors and community interests often impact their music programs. Additionally, several music educators explained that their repertoire selection is frequently influenced by community interests.

The interview participants (n=3) also represented urban, suburban, and rural communities. These three teachers revealed that community interests/support and socio-economic factors were highly influential in their teaching situations. Additionally, the interviewees described ways in which they adapt their teaching to fit in with their school's community, ways in which incorporate students' extra-curricular musical opportunities, and advantages to teaching in different types of communities.

In summary, it was discovered that it is difficult to classify communities into the categories of urban, suburban, and rural. Each community and school situation has its own unique characteristics that set it apart from others. It is hoped that through this investigation music educators will have a better understanding of the influence of community in music education classrooms. Understanding how community affects teaching may lead to new and inventive ways in which educators can create opportunities for learning that are reflective of the communities in which children live.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Communities impact the lives of the people who live within them. They shape the careers, recreation, communication, education, and cultural opportunities of their citizens (Jorgensen, 1995). Music educators should have an awareness of the influences of the community in which their school resides as those influences may impact how they approach their students and their teaching. The old story of the country mouse and the town mouse demonstrates that individuals' lives are shaped by communities. Throughout the fable, each mouse visits the other in her different location and experiences a different way of living. By the end of the visits, each mouse longs for her own home and lifestyle. Clark (1990) retold the tale as follows:

There was once a country mouse who lived in a field and a town mouse who lived behind the baseboard of a large kitchen. The town mouse went to spend a holiday with the country mouse, and on the first evening they sat down together for a supper of grains of barley and ears of corn. The town mouse did not like this food at all and said to her friend, "My poor dear, this is no life for you! At my house there are much better things to eat, and if you come and stay you can share them with me." So they set off at once, without even finishing their meal.

When they reached the town, they went into the house, and the town mouse showed the country mouse all around the kitchen, which was filled with cheese and chutney, jam and honey, cake and jelly, and lots of other good things. The country mouse had never seen anything like it before, and she and her friend were just about
to start on this feast when the cook came in through the door. "Quick!" said the town mouse. "Into that hole in the baseboard!"

…When all was quiet, the two mice came out again. Again, the door opened, in came the cook, and again they had to rush for the safety of their hole. This time the country mouse decided she had had enough. "I'm going home, my friend," she said. "You can keep your cheese, your honey, your cake, and your jelly. I'd rather enjoy my barley and corn in peace…"

And off she went…back to her comfortable home in the country (p.42).

A sense of place, or a sense of community, is important to the well-being of individuals, as the experiences communities provide help persons define themselves. Casey (1996) stated that, "to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (p. 18). Local traditions, patterns of speech, social constructs, values, and art forms all contribute to one's sense of knowing himself and his surroundings. "There is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be in a position to perceive it…human-beings - along with other entities on earth - are ineluctably place-bound," (Casey, 1996, p.18).

As people are "place-bound," it is possible to speculate that persons living in different places will have different life experiences. It is well-known that urban, suburban, and rural environments provide different experiences for those who live there. It is reasonable to assume, then, that children's lives are comprised of different experiences, many of which are contingent upon the type of community culture in which they live. No child is without a culture or a "place." No child is a blank slate, free of the
numerous, varied, and complicated influences of his community. Teachers must have an awareness of the "place," or the community, from which their students emerge.

Music is embedded within these various community settings. According to Campbell (2004), "people make music meaningful and useful in their lives…music is meaningful and useful to people across the globe in myriad ways…” (p. xv). Music fulfills different roles for different people. Communities may find music "useful" in many diverse ways. For some it is a creative outlet; for others, a delight to be consumed. Regardless of how an individual engages in musical pursuits, it can be posited that those musical pursuits represent the influences of one's "place." The children that arrive in music classrooms are vessels of the musical nature and knowledge transmitted through their families and communities.

If students are bringing different life experiences and musical experiences into the classroom, it is possible that the surrounding community may impact music instruction. When presented with community and cultural differences, music teachers may not instruct students in each of these three communities (urban, suburban, and rural) in the same way. Both students and teachers look at life through their own community lens. Teachers who come from communities that are different from their students' often find their different lens to be a barrier to effective teaching and communicating. Abi-Nader (1993) sets forth the communication principle of homophily which simply indicates that the more that persons have in common with regard to background, beliefs, and values, the more effectively they will communicate, thereby becoming more similar. Teachers who differ in background from their students must consider the idea of cultural synchronization (Irvine, 1990). To culturally synchronize one's self with another person
means to become familiar with and accepting of the other person's beliefs, values, social constructs, and other differing life influences. When cultural synchronization does not occur, students and teachers may grow to dislike and distrust each other, leading to many negative outcomes, such as ineffective communication.

Music teachers are faced with the challenge of effectively teaching students which seems to mean they must account for community differences. Ross (1994) discussed the ways children respond to music in modern society and presented the point that the recognition of "…quality in music creation and performance must now be tied to their children's lives in the varied communities that stretch from cities to suburbs and to the towns and rural areas across the whole of our nation" (p. 124). A quality and comprehensive music education must be provided, but also one that is relevant to students.

MENC: The National Association for Music Education has taken steps to direct attention to how different types of communities influence music education. A recent example, the forty-ninth MENC Eastern Division Biennial In-Service Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, featured a three-hour special focus session as well as many shorter sessions which addressed issues in urban music education (MENC, 2005). Additionally, The Music Educators Journal, a music practitioner journal published by MENC, has featured many articles highlighting issues of music education in relation to rural and urban community types (Briggs, 1970; Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995; Hanshumaker, 1989; Hood, 1935; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Mittleman, 1969; Mixon, 2005; Wilson, 1977). MENC has also asserted its commitment to the reflection of community in music education in its document entitled, The Child's Bill of Rights in Music (1992). This
document of commitment to quality in music education states that "...the quality and quantity of children's music instruction must not depend upon their geographical location, social status, racial or ethnic status, urban/suburban/rural residence, or parental or community wealth" (MENC, 1992, p.1). Clearly, The profession recognizes that community influences are an important aspect of music education. A study of the ways in which communities are reflected in music education is both timely and relevant to the field.

Purpose

Music education research has addressed many issues that may be encountered in urban, suburban, and rural music teaching including teaching techniques and historical contexts (Kim, 2000; Shields, 2001). However, little information is available regarding the comparison of urban, suburban, and rural community types insofar as how teachers approach instruction to reflect possible community differences. The purpose of this study is to illuminate the phenomenon of how music teachers are influenced by community and how they, in turn, approach instruction to reflect urban, suburban, and rural music classrooms. This information may provide practitioners with an awareness of the impact of community upon music teaching and how instruction can be approached to accurately reflect community.

Guiding Questions

The following guiding questions will lead the exploration of the differing communities in which music educators teach.

1. What, if any, influence does the surrounding community have on what happens in the music classroom?
2. Do teachers offer instruction to reflect the unique cultural and sociological aspects of their communities?

3. If present, how do these influences and instructional approaches differ among music teachers in urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments?

4. How do teachers from backgrounds different from their students' culturally synchronize themselves in order to provide effective, relevant instruction?

Definitions

In order to facilitate the exploration of urban, suburban and rural communities reflected in music education, several terms must be defined. While many different definitions for these terms may exist, the following definitions will guide this study.

_Urban Area._ The U.S. Census Bureau defines an urbanized area as, "an area consisting of a central place and adjacent territory with a general population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile of land area…" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Glossary section, p, 21). For more practical purposes, urban communities will be referred to as those within a city environment.

_Suburban Area._ The U.S. Census bureau uses the term "metropolitan" to communicate what is generally accepted to mean "suburban." Metropolitan areas, according to the Census Bureau, refer to "those areas surrounding large and densely populated cities or towns." Again, a more practical definition of suburban communities would be the primarily residential areas just outside of a large city.

_Rural Area._ The Census Bureau refers to rural areas simply as "…not classified as urban"; this study will define rural communities will be defined as sparsely settled
areas that are a considerable distance from a large city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Glossary section, p, 18).

Community and Culture. Communities come in many forms and can be defined in various ways. Practically, community can be viewed as a group of people, all of whom live in the same location and are governed by the same body. However, more importantly, community can be defined as an entity in which to participate, where sharing, fellowship, and common bonds exist. The terms community and culture will be used interchangeably throughout the study. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005) defined culture as, "the pattern of traditions, symbols, rituals, and artifacts that characterize a particular group of individuals and that are transmitted from current members to newly admitted members" (p. 273). This definition has applications in the way we view communities. The words culture and community may both allude to a geographical location. Both terms may also indicate groups of people united by certain traditions, knowledge bases, and patterns of behavior.

Limitations

A comprehensive understanding of urban, suburban, and rural music teaching situations would best be achieved through extensive observation of each community type spanning many weeks or months. Unfortunately, observations were beyond the scope of this study. Brief observations might have been feasible; however, a short observation period could possibly hinder the investigation results by providing an incomplete picture of how the music teacher functions in his or her school or community environment. Therefore, no observations were conducted.
Chapter Two: Review of Literature

A sense of place significantly influences persons in many ways. The country mouse and the city mouse each felt that her own community was where she belonged. Familiarity and comfort with the culture of her own place drew each mouse back to her home. The current study sought to explore the concept of community, how community influences persons, and how or if those community influences filter into the music classroom setting. As urban, suburban, and rural communities offer different life experiences, comparisons between these communities' influences in the music classroom were also explored. In order to gain a more thorough understanding of the current topic, related literature was examined. The following review of literature addresses the topics of community, urban music teaching, suburban music teaching, and rural music teaching.

Community

Communities are influential entities that shape the lives of those who live in them. The current study investigated how communities influence persons and how these factors contributed to the music classroom. The following examined communities as entities, philosophical conceptions of communities, and ethnic and cultural values reflected within communities.

Barresi, 1998. Communities have and will continue to shape how instruction is approached in schools. This idea was highlighted by Barresi who examined the various ways communities have influenced schools. Research was cited explaining that the norms and beliefs of communities are expected to be reproduced in their schools.

Barresi described the influence of community on education starting in the early 20th century. An influx of immigrants to the United States resulted in ethnically diverse
neighborhoods and schools. However, during this time, many immigrants sought to stifle their heritage and blend in with a more American society. Teachers, likewise, did not account for these cultural differences, but, rather, continued teaching in a cultureless manner. It was not until later in the century that many different cultures began to be integrated into curricula.

Barresi continued his discussion of community influence in education with several vignettes describing consolidation of schools, community values reflected in education, unionization of teachers, and the efforts of community members to guide the educational paths of their children's schools. He highlighted music teachers as good candidates to communicate between members of the community and school professionals since they are familiar with public exposure and are adept at working with various types of people.

Different types of communities provide different life experiences. Barresi's article described the intimate relationship between community and education, supporting the present assertion that music education should be connected to community characteristics.

*Campbell, 1993.* Demographic data show the United States' population is becoming more diverse. Campbell explained that, as a result, music classrooms in this country are increasing in diversity, as students represent many different nations and cultural backgrounds. Campbell highlighted the influx of students from Asian backgrounds. These Asian families who have made their homes in the United States deal with many obstacles, such as employment, education, and adapting to everyday life in America. A case study of Cleveland High School in Seattle, Washington was conducted
to examine the rate of school music participation of Asian students, with Indochinese students as the focus. The researcher explored music participation among these Indochinese students and how their cultural values might influence their musical choices.

Campbell compiled statistics concerning the musical preferences and rate of involvement of Indochinese students in school music programs. By examining school enrollment lists, it was found that Indochinese students had a low rate of participation in school music course offerings. Based on these statistics, the researcher speculated that perhaps the Indochinese students' culture did not place much value on the types of music taught at school, thereby inhibiting their participation. Lack of leisure time needed to study music comprehensively was also proposed as a limiting factor. She also administered a questionnaire to the Indochinese student population that addressed their musical interests outside of formal school experiences. It was found that listening to American popular music as well as Asian popular music was of interest to the students. Campbell suggested studies similar to hers with Indochinese students be conducted with other groups of minority students. She recommended that music teachers intentionally learn about what is musically important to students of all ethnicities and design programs that will appeal to all students. Additionally, she related that teachers must become familiar with a variety of cultures and must be able to communicate with many different types of people.

Henderson, 1993. Henderson directed attention to the necessity for future music educators to be able to appropriately communicate with minority students, and the fact that minority students comprise a larger percent of students in music classrooms than ever before. Teachers need to be prepared to meet the musical needs of these students in
terms of effective communication, curricular adjustments, and appropriate materials to which the students will relate. The preparation of pre-service teachers was suggested as a way in which to address the issue of serving students of all cultural backgrounds. She explained that music organizations and societies can impact the future of teacher preparedness by implementing professional workshops and developing teaching materials that would accurately reflect the variety of cultures found in many schools. The author recommended that research be conducted in the area of teacher preparedness, including the study of minority practitioners and teacher preparedness.

*Jorgensen, 1995.* The concept of community influences music education in various ways. Jorgensen highlighted some of the ways to understand community as a concept in relation to music education. She described communities in terms of place, time, process, and end. The community as place refers to a literal location that has the power to shape the careers, education and cultural exposure of those who live there simply by what resources exist in the community. Communities can be thought of as social places in addition to physical places. Economic, spiritual, and ethnic attributes can ascribe social standing to people within a community. Place serves as a way to create boundaries around a community, thereby establishing who participates in that community and who does not.

Community in time describes the ways in which the advancement of time causes a community to change. Adaptations must be made to ensure the survival of the community. The passing of time yields historical events and regulates traditions and rituals.
Community as a process explains that communities are never static entities. They continually evolve. Education is part of this process of evolution and must also continually adapt to meet the needs of students. Community as an end emphasizes a common drive toward universal goals and ideals.

Community provides a vehicle through which students can embark on the path of a musical life. Jorgensen explained that music curricula must provide a broad view of life and music which allow students to find their places within a community. She stated that connectedness, diversity, and musical traditions should be taught in order to allow future generations to continue to develop their communities.

Jorgensen's in-depth description of the concept of community supports the assumption that communities provide different life experiences for their citizens. Additionally, she eluded to the fact that community is an integral part of the education process, so naturally, music teachers must account for it in their curriculum and instruction.

McCrary, 2000. The exploration of ethnic majority or minority status in relation to musical preference and response to music are issues receiving attention in research. McCrary conducted a study that addressed the influence of ethnicity and grade level on musical preference. Additionally, she examined the influence of ethnic majority or minority status on the ways in which students interacted during discussions of musical examples. Students of varying ethnicities in grades three, five, and seven were participants. A seven point Likert-type rating scale was used to measure students' preference for a European American, African American, or Latin American musical example. Most students showed a preference for the African American excerpt.
Observations of class discussions were conducted to explore the role of ethnic majority or minority status in peer interactions. Minority students were less likely to relate opinions about the musical examples or show how much they liked them. Minority status affected the interactions of female students more than male students. In particular, female minority students interacted the least among the entire group of students. This study revealed that the variable ethnic make-up of classes can affect how students interact with peers.

**Summary.** Communities shape lives in different ways. Urban, suburban, and rural communities all offer different life experiences to those who live in them. Various conceptions of communities have been presented which view them as entities, in philosophical terms, and as venues for the reflection of cultural and ethnic values (Barresi, 1998; Henderson, 1993; Jorgensen, 1995; McCrary, 2000). Cultural differences in communities have also been addressed in music education research (Campbell, 1993). When faced with teaching in a very diverse environment, according to Campbell, teachers must adapt their instructional materials and methods in order to create a learning environment where all students feel comfortable. It would seem, then, that music educators must become familiar with the community surrounding their schools and the cultural values of their students in order to reflect these concepts in their teaching. Adequate preparation and professional development opportunities can empower music teachers to move beyond their own life experiences, relate to students of varying backgrounds and implement instructional materials that reflect those backgrounds. A music education which reflects students’ community will be more meaningful and enriching.
Urban Music Teaching

The current study addressed ways in which music teachers approach instruction in order to reflect the surrounding community culture. Urban, suburban, and rural communities all possess unique characteristics. The following articles and research studies highlight some of the issues inherent in urban music teaching, such as large at-risk student populations, teacher preparation, teaching techniques, poor publicity, and communication.

Carter, 1983. Carter addressed important points regarding teachers who work with students in urban settings with the intent of improving teaching practice. He highlighted several studies that described qualities and attitudes of successful urban teachers such as familiarity with a variety of teaching styles, knowledge of students' use of everyday language and willingness to vary instructional approaches even at the risk of failure. Appreciation and understanding of disadvantaged students' life situations were also mentioned as an attribute of successful urban teachers. The creation of learning experiences which reflect the social and educational circumstances of the student was also suggested as a useful approach to instruction for music teachers to employ. Other research was cited which demonstrated that teacher techniques that were successful with students of a low socioeconomic status were not successful with students of higher socioeconomic status.

Carter then described how music teaching factors into the discussion of professionals working with culturally different students. Often, teachers who work in urban environments are confronted with a community that is a vast departure from their own personal backgrounds. It is not always easy to work in a different environment.
Therefore, the author stressed that music teacher training programs must include ways to equip future educators to teach effectively in urban settings. Examples of several teacher training programs which emphasize the unique skills necessary to teach in an urban environment were described.

*Goldberg, 1967.* Adapting styles of teaching to accommodate student differences was the focus of Goldberg's article. Particular attention was paid to meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged children in urban school settings. Goldberg presented many reviews of studies which highlighted various aspects of teaching style and student learning. These studies were then used to develop a potential model of instructional approaches for teachers to follow in order to be effective in teaching disadvantaged children. Important points from this model included respect for differences, understanding of student background and language, and knowledge of a variety of teaching techniques. The author suggested that this model of the ideal teacher should be implemented through the preparation of future teachers.

According to Goldberg, coursework, practicum experiences, and student teaching placements should include opportunities to learn how to work with disadvantaged children. Once a teacher fosters many of the important qualities described in the model, it is, at times, difficult to encourage these teachers to remain in challenging urban environments, due to disciplinary problems and financial strain. The author presented a six point plan for recruiting and retaining quality teachers for distressed areas that included acknowledging teachers need to be uniquely prepared to teach in these settings.

This article, written 40 years ago, directed attention to the need for teacher adaptation to student culture and needs. One can observe that, interestingly, many of the
same problems still exist. The author's insight into the unique skills and assets needed to survive and teach successfully in urban environments is applicable to educational practices.

Kindall-Smith, 2004. Kindall-Smith expressed concern that school music programs are often pushed aside in response to administrative and policy-oriented issues. According to the author, music education in urban schools often experiences the worst setbacks. Urban schools are challenged by large at-risk populations and poor publicity, among other problems.

Kindall-Smith's involvement with the Milwaukee Public School system reflected her interest in urban music education. Many issues challenged this district such as poor equipment, lack of music personnel, little connection with the local university and the absence of music educators from this district at state music conferences. In order to improve these conditions, a partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Public School system was forged.

The partnership began with steps to affirm and empower urban music educators. Music educators were encouraged to balance process and product in their teaching while still working toward musical outcomes such as participation in student music festivals. Urban music teachers were also encouraged to explore the uniqueness of their careers by giving presentations and demonstrations about urban music concerns at state-wide conferences.

The next phase of the partnership addressed teacher training and placement of student teachers from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Through coursework, the student teachers were asked to confront their fears about teaching in an urban
environment. Students were taught by professors who have experience in the urban setting, an important point set forth by the author. After many observations, Kindall-Smith determined where the quality urban programs were and recruited student teachers to request these placements. By exposing student teachers to quality urban music teaching, Kindall-Smith's hope was that more of these graduates would choose to work in urban settings.

The third segment of the partnership involved the mentoring of beginning teachers. Inexperienced teachers were given the opportunity to participate in small group mentoring sessions to discuss challenges and receive support from others. The network of support allowed teachers to be more effective in their respective schools.

Kindall-Smith described a university/school music education partnership which seeks to understand and improve urban music teaching. Additionally, she identified ways in which urban environments present different challenges to teachers and ways in which teachers can improve their outlook as urban music educators. Music teachers should be aware of these challenges and enrichment opportunities when designing and implementing instruction for urban music teaching settings.

Reid, 1972. Reid quantitatively explored whether active, concrete or more abstract teaching approaches helped students of varying cultural exposure to learn basic musical skills more effectively. General music students and their teachers from 24 San Francisco area junior high schools participated. Once the researcher classified all the students as either culturally deprived or non-deprived, he conducted observations of their teachers' style of teaching. After determining each teacher's approach, active or abstract, the Elementary Music Achievement Test was administered to all students. Culturally
deprived or non-deprived status served as a basis of comparison for the testing outcomes, as did teaching styles, either active or abstract. Teacher background factored into the study, as teachers with fewer than five years of experience employed a more concrete style of teaching. These teachers' students, deprived and non-deprived, performed with greater success on the posttest. However, Reid stated that not enough evidence existed to suggest whether these improvements were direct results of teaching style.

_Shields, 2001._ Shields investigated the effect of music ensemble participation and intentional mentoring on the self-perceived musical ability of at-risk students in an urban setting. Thirty-four sixth grade students and 32 of their parents were involved in this mixed methods study. A treatment session of 16 weeks included at-risk students' participation in music performing ensembles and mentoring from the music teacher. Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children was administered to the students as a pretest and posttest to determine the effects of the treatment on students' feelings regarding their own abilities in music. Data revealed a significant increase in self-perceived musical competence. Additionally, subjects and their parents were interviewed following the treatment. Parents were involved only in the interview portion and were asked to reflect on their child's experiences throughout the experiment. Other interview questions concerned the role and importance of music in students' lives, the teacher's role as mentor and other related topics. Both students and parents reflected positively on the influences of participation in the ensembles and felt the study of music was of great importance.

Implications for music education were discussed by Shields which included the idea of incorporating increased musical participation and mentoring from the music teacher as effective ways of encouraging the self-perceived musical competency of at-
risk adolescents. Teachers may find that adapting instruction to include the techniques of participation and mentoring may be necessary in order to appropriately reflect community needs.

**Summary.** Many challenges confront music teachers in urban settings. Teachers must be adequately prepared to meet these challenges by identifying tools to teach effectively and opportunities for professional support (Carter, 1983; Goldberg, 1967; Kindall-Smith, 2004). At-risk populations, negative publicity, poor teacher retention rates, and budget constraints all contribute to the unique vocation that is urban music teaching (Reid, 1972; Shields, 2001). Urban communities offer unique life experiences to the diverse populations that call them home. In order to truly make an impact on students, music teachers need to understand and appreciate these environments while incorporating community into their teaching.

**Suburban Music Teaching**

Suburban music teaching does not receive much attention in the music education research realm. One could speculate that suburban schools have more financial resources which might translate into fewer issues to address in music teaching. One might also assume that newly certified music teachers are best prepared to teach in the suburban setting, as many teachers come from suburban backgrounds. The following studies do not address music directly, but they do highlight differences between urban and suburban children's leisure activities and issues related to suburban children's daily lives, such as anxiety, substance use, depression, and family interactions.

*Damore, 2002.* Damore explored the differences between the activities of urban and suburban preschool and school age children. Subjects included 66 urban preschool
In order to discover how children's activities vary between urban and suburban settings, a questionnaire was designed and implemented. Subjects' primary care-givers completed the questionnaire during visits to their pediatricians. The questionnaire included 34 questions and addressed the children's frequency of participating in activities such as sports, outdoor activities, reading, library use, television watching, computer use, and summer camp attendance. The researcher found that suburban preschool children spent more time outdoors, were read to more often, used the library more frequently, and attended summer camps more often than urban preschool children. School age suburban children were found to spend more time outdoors, participate in community sports leagues, and attend more summer camps than their urban counterparts. Urban school age children were found to watch more television than suburban children. Damore suggested that perhaps suburban children have easier access to areas that are conducive to outdoor and sports activities than urban children, accounting for the differences in the amount of time each group spent engaged in these types of activities.

*Luthar & Becker, 2002.* Luthar and Becker stated that many research studies have been devoted to the study of disadvantaged children while relatively few have focused on children in affluent suburban settings. Their study not only sought to replicate their own previous study, but also explored many topics in the lives of affluent youth including anxiety, substance use, parent relationships, perfectionism, after-school supervision, school grades, peer relationships, and others.
The subjects included 302 sixth and seventh grade students in an affluent suburban school district. The primary data collection tools were a variety of self-report measures which spanned many topics. The teachers of these students were also asked to participate in data collection by completing a rating scale for individual students. These assessments were completed over the course of two 45 minute class periods on two separate days.

The researchers collected and analyzed a vast amount of data. Among their many findings was that symptoms of clinical depression are very high among suburban teenage female students. A high rate of substance use was found among all subjects. Substance use among boys was particularly high. The self report measures revealed that substance use was encouraged and approved by peers. Suburban youths were found to experience anxiety, particularly when they set extremely high achievement standards for themselves.

In the study of different communities, it might be easy to assume that suburban schools and students have no problems. However, Luthar and Becker’s study revealed that suburban youths are not immune from pressures and anxieties associated with school, substance use, and family. Although music education was not specifically addressed, Luthar and Becker did identify aspects of suburban life that might often go overlooked, but that still need to be considered by teachers working with these students.

**Summary.** Suburban children may enjoy affluence and greater access to various opportunities and activities. However, many hidden problems may be present in the lives of children who experience economic advantage. The differences between urban and suburban children's access to various activities was explored. Damore (2002) revealed that suburban children spend more time engaged in outdoor activities, while urban
children spent more time watching television. Easier access to outdoor activities was posited as a reason why suburban children spend more time engaged in these pursuits. Additionally, pertinent issues confronting suburban children were discussed including: perfectionism, substance use, depression, and familial problems (Luthar & Becker, 2002). Music teachers should be aware of these issues that influence the lives of their students in order to more effectively teach suburban children.

*Rural Music Teaching*

Rural music teaching must also be addressed in a study of how music teachers consider community in their instruction. Rural communities present their own professional and cultural challenges to music teachers. The following articles address many issues confronted in rural music teaching such as staffing configurations and small student populations.

*Wilcox, 2005.* Wilcox highlighted the life and career of a rural music educator, Stan Johnson. He is a band director working in a public school system in rural Nebraska. The article included some information about his musical upbringing, which also took place in rural Nebraska. He was inspired by a college counselor to pursue a career in music education.

Wilcox described the context in which Johnson teaches. In his small rural community, most of his students' families make a living in agricultural careers. Johnson's school district is quite small with about 150 students enrolled in grades Kindergarten through twelve. A very high percentage of students participate in band, choir, and general music.
A typical day in the life of this rural music educator was described. Because his district is quite small, Johnson is responsible for a wide variety of music courses spanning grades five through twelve. His school day begins well before the official start of school when he teaches private lessons. His school day ends well into the evening after more lessons, planning, and extra rehearsals have taken place. Johnson's program is small, but quite successful. He attributes its success to making his classes enjoyable for students, administrative support, community support, and having relationships with students throughout many of their school years.

Wilcox described the life and experience of one rural music educator. Johnson's story contributes to an understanding of the context of rural music education and how rural music teachers approach instruction.

Isbell, 2005. Isbell provided insight into how rural music teachers can cultivate successful programs and how rural community characteristics can influence what happens in the music classroom. Several challenges confront rural music educators including: an absence of music literature resources, isolation, low enrollment, teacher turnover, inadequate facilities, poorly functioning instruments, and insufficient funding. Isbell also explained that rural music teachers often must teach in various musical settings (choral, general, and instrumental), in several buildings, and at many different grade levels. Rural music educators have the unique opportunity to get to know students over the course of many years.

Isbell described some challenges of rural music teaching in more detail. Low enrollment can create some obstacles for rural music teachers. A solution to this issue included combining groups of different ages and ability levels, facilitating mentoring
relationships between older and younger students. Low enrollment can also produce instrumentation challenges. Teaching students to play more than one instrument can offer flexibility within ensembles. Rural areas may not have many resources in regard to private teachers. In this case, the rural music educator should try to stay up to date on secondary instruments in order to teach as effectively as possible. Additionally, re-writing music to suit the instrumentation may be necessary to help compositions sound fuller and provide a more satisfying musical experience for students. Small ensembles are also an option for providing students with opportunities to make music.

Rural music educators must find vehicles through which to support their programs. Administrators in rural schools tend to be more accessible and may provide support in many ways. Support from students and teachers may be accessed through music assemblies which appeal to a variety of audiences. Parents and community members are also vital to the survival of a rural music program. They can provide support by arranging fundraisers, setting up for performances, chaperoning trips, and welcoming school music performers into community activities.

Another challenge facing rural music educators is scheduling issues. Often, rural schools are able to offer certain classes during one time slot per day. When other required classes conflict with music classes, some students must step away from musical opportunities. A rural music educator can help to prevent this situation by getting involved with the creation of the school’s master schedule, or at least by cultivating an understanding of how the master schedule is assembled.

Isbell concluded by explaining that it is important to have an understanding of rural communities in order to be a successful rural music teacher. Teachers entering a
rural community from differing backgrounds should be sensitive to the community’s culture and traditions. Changes can be made, but only gradually. It is important to get a sense of a community's musical culture and expand musical horizons from there.

Summary. Music teachers who work in rural communities have a unique set of characteristics to consider when designing instruction. Logistical challenges confront music teachers who are the only music professional in their entire district. Additionally, rural schools often have small student populations (Wilcox, 2005). As a result of these small populations, many students are involved in numerous activities at one time, resulting in possible scheduling conflicts (Isbell, 2005). Effective rural music educators approach their instruction in a way that accommodates these community issues.

Summary of Literature Review

Various community-based facets, such as economic, cultural, and, geographical, impact both students and teachers in a music education setting (Barresi, 1998; Campbell, 1993; Henderson, 1993; Jorgensen, 1995; McCrary, 2000). Issues confronting urban music educators, such as at-risk populations, financial constraints, negative publicity, poor teacher retention, and inadequate teacher preparation all influence urban music programs (Carter, 1983; Goldberg, 1967; Kindall-Smith, 2004; Reid, 1972; Shields, 2001). Several studies addressed issues that impact suburban students, including access to various activities, anxiety, substance use, and depression (Damore, 2002; Luthar & Becker, 2002). Rural music teaching situations present unique challenges as well. Wilcox (2005) and Isbell (2005) highlighted some of the influences in the work of rural music educators, such as, scheduling conflicts, small student populations, geographic isolation, financial constraints, lack of materials, and inadequate facilities.
The current study explored the ways in which community affects music teaching, specifically. Having an awareness of these different community types and their unique influences will help practitioners approach their teaching in a way that is more sensitive and relevant to students.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which surrounding communities may possibly influence music education. If these influences are present, this study also sought to discover if they differ among urban, suburban, and rural environments.

Design

This study featured both quantitative and qualitative elements and consisted of two phases of data collection. The first phase involved an on-line questionnaire designed for Kindergarten through twelfth-grade music teachers. The second phase featured a telephone interview process. A two-phase design allowed broad information to be gathered from the on-line questionnaire, while a telephone interview process was used to draw more specific information and deeper meanings from topics similar to those presented on the questionnaire.

Data Collection Tools

Two data collection tools were designed and implemented in this study. The first tool, an on-line questionnaire, was used to gather general information regarding community influences in music teaching and also to recruit participants for the second phase of the study. The second tool, a telephone interview, was used to more deeply explore the impact of community on music teaching.

On-line questionnaire. An on-line questionnaire was developed using pertinent themes found in relevant literature. This format was chosen for its easy accessibility. Many music teachers use on-line resources, such as e-mail, as their primary means of
communication. Considering the popularity of on-line communication, it was hypothesized that an on-line questionnaire would have a more successful rate of return than one conducted on paper through mail. The PsychData website (www.psychdata.com) was used to post the questionnaire. PsychData is an on-line service which allows researchers to post questionnaires and compile data quickly and easily. The PsychData questionnaire allowed participants to log on to the website, type in the questionnaire number, and complete the questions.

Questions featured on the questionnaire were developed through a review of relevant literature and addressed topics such as: community classification, community influences, and preparedness to teach in various community types. The questions were presented in a variety of formats. Many questions required an answer of yes or no, while others provided multiple answer choices. Additionally, a brief open-ended question was included in order to allow participants an opportunity to provide any narrative input they felt necessary or helpful. The questionnaire concluded with an invitation for teachers to participate in the telephone interview portion of the study. Interested volunteers were able to click on a link to the researcher's e-mail address and express their willingness to participate. In this way, the questionnaire not only served in a data collection capacity, but also as a recruitment tool for the second phase of the study. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Telephone interview. The telephone interview process was intended to delve deeper into participants' thoughts regarding community influences in their teaching. As the interviewees taught in various locations across the state of Pennsylvania, a telephone interview was determined to be the most cost-effective option. While the interview
addressed similar topics as the questionnaire, the interview was able to provide a richer description than was possible through the questionnaire alone. Interview questions were developed through a review of relevant literature and are listed in Appendix B. The interviews were recorded using a hand-held Sony cassette tape recorder and the content was transcribed and coded for data analysis purposes.

Participants

Questionnaire participants for this study included Kindergarten through twelfth grade music educators who were members of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA). All areas of music education were represented in the target population including general, instrumental, and choral music teaching. PMEA members were targeted as participants due to accessibility.

Procedures

Recruitment of participants. The recruitment of participants took place in several stages. After designing a recruitment letter (Appendix C) and materials (Appendix D), the information was distributed electronically to the 12 District Secretaries of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association. District Secretaries were then asked to distribute the link to the questionnaire and project information to music educators within their districts. Additionally, various University professors teaching in urban areas were contacted and asked to distribute study information to prospective participants.

Once potential participants received information regarding the study, they were able to log on to www.psychdata.com and complete questionnaire number 10025. They were asked to provide consent prior to completing the questions. (See Appendix E). Upon completion, participants were presented with information regarding the interview
phase of the study. This process took participants approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

As the second stage of the project was optional, many participants chose not to continue in the second phase. Those who indicated an interest in participating in the second stage of the project were asked to contact the researcher via e-mail. Participants who continued into phase two of the study were contacted via e-mail to provide consent in order to be interviewed. (See Appendix F). Upon receiving consent, the researcher contacted these participants via telephone at a time of their convenience and conducted the interview. Interviews were recorded and the content was then transcribed.

Data analysis. The current descriptive study has both quantitative and qualitative aspects, which are reflected in the data analysis. Questionnaire responses provided nominal data and narrative data indicative of the influence of community on music teaching. The telephone interview process yielded descriptive, narrative data. Through the interview, music teachers' thoughts and opinions regarding community influences in their teaching were brought to light.

The data from the questionnaire and the data from the interviews were coded for various important constructs which emerged from the responses elicited from both tools. These constructs were then compared to the information accumulated through the review of literature for the purpose of triangulation. Figure 1 illustrates the data analysis procedure.
The questionnaire yielded descriptive data which were evaluated in different categories such as urban, suburban, or rural status, or teaching area/grade level. The brief narrative excerpts from the questionnaire and the more comprehensive interview responses were coded for constructs which may reveal possible influences of community on music teaching. The guiding questions focused on various aspects of possible community influences including instructional approaches, cultural synchronization, and differences among urban, suburban, and rural environments. Therefore, the analysis sought to extract these and other constructs from the narrative data.
Chapter Four: Results

The aim of this study was to explore the impact of community influences on the music classroom. An on-line questionnaire and individual interviews were used to bring to light a deeper understanding of these issues. The following guiding questions were established to direct the investigation of community influences in music education. 1. What, if any, influence does the surrounding community have on what happens in the music classroom? 2. Do teachers approach instruction to reflect the unique cultural and sociological aspects of their communities? 3. If present, how do these influences and instructional approaches differ among music teachers in urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments? 4. How do teachers from backgrounds different from their students' culturally synchronize themselves in order to provide effective, relevant instruction?

On-line Questionnaire

Participants in the on-line questionnaire were asked to answer several questions related to the guiding questions of this study. The majority of questions sought an answer of "yes" or "no," or another short multiple choice answer. The questionnaire concluded with an open ended portion which allowed participants the freedom to reflect upon community influences in their teaching in a narrative format.

All music educators involved in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association were invited to complete the questionnaire. The number of completed questionnaires was 20. Although this number is a small portion of the total population, measures of central tendency, the inclusion of percentages and means were used to describe the sample. Fifty-five percent of participants teach in a rural environment, 30% teach in a suburban
environment, and 15% of participants work in urban areas. Participants are involved with grades Kindergarten through twelve and represent typical music teaching settings (general, instrumental, and choral). The majority of participants were elementary general music teachers (45%). The input from these music educators helped to bring meaning to the guiding questions. Questionnaire results for each guiding question were reported, followed by detailed findings from the individual interviews. Table 1 shows the community types and areas of music teaching represented by the participants. Many participants teach in more than one setting in Elementary schools (ES), Middle schools (MS), and High schools (HS).

Table 1. Music teaching settings of on-line questionnaire participants.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Choral</th>
<th>General</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>X</td>
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Following the analysis of the data, each guiding question was answered using data from the on-line questionnaire.

1. **What, if any, influence does the surrounding community have on what happens in the music classroom?**

   The majority of participants (85%) agreed that various characteristics of their school’s community influenced their classroom environment. These environmental
influences may include attitudes towards music, socio-economic statuses of students and families, or behavioral issues. A rural high school instrumental music teacher reflected the impact that community economics has on his program when he stated, "The surrounding area also determines funding through tax base...fundraising is also affected."

2. Do teachers approach instruction to reflect the unique cultural and sociological aspects of their communities?

Nearly all of the participants (95%) stated that various characteristics of their school's community influence their music teaching. A rural general music teacher described her willingness to musically enrich her students despite isolation and financial constraints, "I try to give the kids access to music, composers, and activities (ballet, symphony concerts, etc.) that many of them will not or do not access due to economics or location." This teacher is clearly considering her students' community culture when planning activities for her classes. Another rural general music teacher stated, "I teach in a community where musical theater is greatly supported. Thus, it has been made clear that it is important that I am teaching about musical theater". Undoubtedly, this community interest could shape many of this teacher's lessons.

While many music educators would embrace a theatre-conscious community, not all teachers work in arts supportive communities. A suburban general and instrumental teacher explained that, "the community in which I teach is concerned with mostly athletics, a little academics, and almost no arts. This continually influences my teaching in both general and instrumental [music]. I feel like a car salesman, always trying to sell band." Clearly, community attitudes and influences can often appear to be an obstacle in the recruiting and teaching agenda of a music educator.
Community interests may also guide music teachers' choices in repertoire. A suburban choral teacher shared that, "I am still able to sing some religious music in my choruses. This is a small community with a church presence." Another suburban chorus teacher indicated that, "the community is supportive of sacred music, and I am therefore relatively free to select a variety of music which contributes to the growth and development of the students in the choral groups." Community support of sacred music texts has allowed these music teachers to make the pedagogical choices they deemed appropriate, knowing that their performances would be received by an appreciative audience.

An important aspect of teaching in a culturally sensitive manner is the district music curriculum. Ninety percent of participants felt that it is important for a music curriculum to reflect the community in which it resides, while 80% of participants felt that their curriculum actually did account for community differences. The culture of the students must be considered when designing an appropriate music curriculum. The community that shapes the outlook of students is a fitting place to start planning an appropriate sequence of music learning.

While the majority of teachers surveyed agreed that the community impacts their teaching, not all were in agreement. A rural general music teacher offered the following perspective:

I teach music. Period. ...I do not worry about community culture in the things that I teach. Just because they are farm kids does not mean I teach them the basics of how to play an instrument any differently. And just because they are from the country does not mean that that is what they are interested in. I
would much rather have, and feel my students benefit more from, a
diversified curriculum than from a community culture specific program.

While the current study does seek to explore various community influences, it
does not suggest that instructional activities should be approached in a way that is
derogatory to students. While some music teachers may incorporate community factors
into their teaching, the questionnaire sought to discover if music teachers in Pennsylvania
do so on a regular basis. Eighty percent of participants reported that they regularly
approach their instruction in a way that accounts for surrounding community
characteristics and values. Nineteen percent of that 80% of participants indicated that
they always consider community culture in their instruction, while the remaining 81%
felt that they respond to community influences some of the time.

3. If present, how do these influences and instructional approaches differ among music
teachers in urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments?

Based strictly on the questionnaire data collected, it is difficult to decipher any
specific differences in community influences among urban, suburban, and rural
communities. Participants in all three areas indicated that various issues, such as
economic factors and community interests, filter into their teaching situations.

4. How do teachers from backgrounds different from their students' culturally
synchronize themselves in order to provide effective, relevant instruction?

Cultural synchronization allows teachers to have an in-depth understanding of and
appreciation for the cultural differences in their students. Knowledge of their students'
community culture provides the opportunity for teachers to relate to students and,
therefore, teach more effectively. The issue of cultural synchronization may become
problematic when educators begin teaching in an environment that is different from where they were raised or what they were used to. Sixty percent of participants indicated that they teach in an environment that is similar to the one in which they were raised. The remaining 40% of participants, then, are teaching in environments different than what they were accustomed.

In order to culturally synchronize one's self with another group of people, it is often necessary to adapt aspects of one's personality or ways of thinking. Only 30% of participants, however, reported that they adapt aspects of their personality to fit in better with their school's community. Perhaps the need to adapt personality is not necessary when functioning in a familiar type of community. Or perhaps quality music teaching effectively transcends any cultural differences the questionnaire participants may have encountered.

Music teacher preparation is instrumental in the ways in which teachers will be prepared to navigate various teaching situations, including those which are culturally different from their own experiences. Eighty percent of participants shared that their professional undergraduate training sufficiently prepared them to teach effectively in their community culture.

Telephone Interviews

The on-line questionnaire served as a recruiting tool for the interview process. The interviews were intended to provide an in-depth exploration of differing communities and the unique characteristics of those communities that play a role in formal music education. Due to geographical and time constraints, these interviews were conducted over the telephone and recorded for transcription and analysis.
Three interview participants were selected through the on-line questionnaire on the basis of their likelihood to be information rich subjects. The three interviewees were all female music teachers in the state of Pennsylvania who represented urban, suburban, and rural communities. Additionally, these three teachers were involved with varying grade levels and music teaching settings including, elementary general music, middle level general music, high school piano class, elementary choral music, high school choral music, and elementary instrumental music.

The following are the results of the interview process. According to the qualitative research method, results are reported through a combination of rich description, transcription, and summary.

Teacher A. As I dialed the telephone, I eagerly anticipated the impending conversation, curious as to the new insights this teacher would reveal to me. When Teacher A answered my call, we enjoyed a few moments of getting acquainted and then launched into the interview questions. She teaches elementary band and general music in a large school district outside of a large city in Pennsylvania. I asked her to describe the community and the school in which she teaches. She responded with some hesitation, explaining that her community did not fit neatly into the urban or suburban category. Her official description was "suburban leaning towards urban," as her school is very close in proximity to a city. The surrounding community is very large and crowded; each graduating class in her district has approximately 400 students.

When asked to describe her student population, Teacher A reported that it is a fairly affluent community, composed of families of varying ethnic backgrounds. I found her insights into student behavior to be interesting when she stated that her students
"seem older" than students of the same grade level with whom she worked in another area.

With regard to community interests, Teacher A explained that people in her area are very interested in the arts, specifically musical theatre. The community is also rooted in various faiths with the presence of many churches and synagogues. Additionally, many of her students are fortunate enough to travel to Europe and other destinations. Overall, she reported that her students are very nice and she enjoys working with them. Paradoxically, this relatively affluent community is not quite as generous with the music budget.

In order to explore the concept of cultural synchronization, I asked Teacher A to describe differences between her current teaching situation and the area in which she was raised. She explained that she grew up in a rural Pennsylvania town with more of a blue collar culture. The school district was small, as the community was quite spread out. Even growing up she was able to sense that, "The arts were still supported but I don’t know that the community exactly knew what to do to support music and the arts."

As Teacher A is currently working in an environment that is different from her upbringing, I was curious to find out if she felt that she had to adapt any aspects of her personality to fit in with this new community. While she felt that, largely, she does not, she does acknowledge that she must be stricter with her students. She reported that discipline was more of an issue in this particular job, which she attributed to the vastness of the school and large numbers of students.

Teacher A has been teaching for five years. I asked if she would be willing to discuss any other types of communities in which she had worked during her career. She
began her career teaching elementary instrumental music in a rural school district. Similar to the community where she was raised, she indicated that this community acknowledged the importance of music, but did not exactly know how to show support for it. She touched on the ways in which this rural community's attitudes infiltrated music programs when she revealed that, "There was definitely a sense of ‘mediocrity is ok.’ Self-motivation was not very apparent in many students." While she commented that many students did work very hard and went on to accomplish great things in music, for the most part, she felt she had to really push students to keep them on track.

A fascinating aspect of Teacher A's former teaching situation was the focus of community interests. Various community commitments revolving around agriculture impacted her music program. For example, she explained that, "With my former position, I had to be really aware of fairs and community events that took place that were very important to these people." She also stated that, "...it's interesting, one of my students actually missed a concert because he was showing livestock. His mom wrote him a note and that was ok with him."

We then went on to discuss how influences of community were and are reflected in her instructional approaches. She indicated that communication is extremely important in any situation, and that speaking with parents and colleagues is necessary to get to know one's community better. In her current teaching situation, she shared that, "I have students who are involved with the Philadelphia Boys' Choir...so you have to be aware of that kind of influence in your classroom. And you have to [give students an opportunity to display their talents.] Also, I've found with this community now, you really need to make opportunities for really, truly doing music [versus learning about music.]"
explained that in this urban/suburban area, she has found that more students are involved in artistic activities outside of school than in her former community. In order to provide enrichment for these committed students she shared that, "I'll choose activities where those students can be leaders...I don't push them, but let them know the opportunity is there."

Teacher A and I then enjoyed a few unstructured moments of sharing experiences and discussing the different types of communities and experiences. She mentioned that "kids are still kids and music is still music," but one cannot ignore how community shapes our students. Teacher A has a unique outlook on community influences, having been exposed to several different community cultures. I posed a question to her, addressing the possibility that perhaps one can spend a lifetime immersed in one community and not even realize that it has its own culture and special influences. She answered, "Oh, absolutely, I saw that many times in my previous district. There were many teachers who were teaching there but also grew up there and I don’t think they had any clue what was going on because they were so used to it."

Teacher A and concluded our talk with a collegial exchange of thanks and a feeling of satisfaction, with her having shared stories and opinions that, perhaps, she was not able to discuss with much frequency. I hung up the phone feeling that her story likely reflects the stories of many other young music teachers who live and work in a time in society where it is common to change jobs several times throughout one's career. It is this frequent change of teaching situation and community that makes it all the more important to be aware of the culture of the students with whom we make music.
Teacher B. When Teacher B answered my call, her soft voice and gentle nature put me immediately at ease. A 30 year veteran of the teaching profession, I could sense that there was much wisdom to be gleaned from her extensive experience in the classroom. Teacher B teaches high school choral music and piano classes. She explained that her school district is quite large and has buildings in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Largely, the general area is considered to be rural in nature.

Teacher B described some of the characteristics of her community. She mentioned that her town was formerly an industrial area in which several businesses closed, causing many people to lose jobs. She explained that, "this community is not what you'd call a very affluent community. There are some very high and some very low ends of the spectrum as far as economic background." Teacher B continued to mention that approximately 50% of her students' parents have some education beyond high school.

After Teacher B painted this picture of her current community for me, I asked her if she was raised in a different type of community. She grew up in a suburb of a large Pennsylvania city, which she described as a very privileged, affluent community where almost all of students' parents had college or post-graduate degrees. Given this discrepancy between her hometown and her new community, I was curious as to whether she made any adaptations in her personality or teaching style in order to fit in better with this different community. She answered that since she had been teaching in her current community for so many years, any changes she has made have been very gradual. Additionally, she revealed that, "I'm much less formal than I would be in another area...I think I speak to the students differently than I would in a higher economic level..."
With regard to adaptations in teaching style, Teacher B reported that:

I guess a lot of times what I'm able to do as far as music [must be adapted.] I have to water it down, I have to make it a little bit less, [but] I don't do that with all of their music. I have some groups that are select choirs and those students have a little bit more background, [but] for the general population, I want to get them exposed to different types of music. For example, we did excerpts of Handel's Messiah and I had to almost re-write the whole thing so that they could experience it.

Clearly, Teacher B is committed to considering the nature of her student population when implementing instruction.

Our conversation wandered to the topic of the ways in which the community has influenced her teaching. She indicated that the community members, generally, do not have an extensive musical background, and she stated with confidence that, "what I've done [in the community is to influence] the direction of the tastes in choral music." Teacher B, additionally, pointed out that there is a strong spiritual presence in the community. This church presence has allowed her to make choices in repertoire that, perhaps, would not be permitted in other school districts. "I'm not trying to instill specific ideologies in students, but...if I want to do something from the Requiem or if I just want to do traditional Christmas music, I'm able to do that because it's good literature...I don't have to worry about having administrators [complain]. I have the backing of the parents."

I then asked Teacher B if she had ever taught in any other types of communities. I was interested to learn that, at the beginning of her career, she had taught in the affluent,
privileged suburban area in which she had grown up. She reflected upon this situation and shared that, "...it was exactly like the way people were when I grew up. I always had to worry about making sure that I pleased everyone and they pretty much called the shots...and, granted that was [due to] me being a new teacher..." When I asked Teacher B the specific town in which she grew up, I felt an immediate connection to her when I learned that her hometown was only a few miles north of my own. Immediately, everything she described about that community's attitudes and values made sense, as I was able picture in my mind the exact area about which she was talking. Teacher B's work in this affluent community posed even more challenges. She shared that, "a lot of my students' parents played in the Pittsburgh Symphony. That was pretty scary! I don't think any of them ever had anything negative to say, but I was worried, that nagging thought that I had to be better, I had to do more." Clearly, the community not only influenced her teaching, but her psychological well-being, as well.

Teacher B contrasted this first teaching experience with her current one. "This situation I'm in is really pleasant. I've really gotten the things that I need in my job as far as the facilities. It's a really nice facility where I'm teaching. We have practice rooms; I have a nice choir room, good equipment to work with. I really like what I'm doing." She went on to share that, "It has been much easier and much more pleasant to work with people who maybe don't have as much background as I do or as I did growing up, because I think that there is so much I can offer, that I can give to them. Whereas, if I was working with privileged people, I think I'd be paranoid all the time and be wondering if I was saying the right thing and if they approved of [my teaching]."

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She has an extremely positive outlook on her teaching and her students' progress. Her approach to teaching shows a commitment to meeting students where they are as individuals and bringing them further along the music learning continuum. "It's almost as though the actual performance standard is secondary to the goal of enrichment. That's where I'm at now."

By this time, I was becoming enveloped in Teacher B's story. She spoke with the calm, nurturing confidence of a teacher who knows who she is as a person, a musician, and a community leader. I asked her if she would like to share anything else regarding how her community influences her music teaching and she shared the following jewel of wisdom with me:

I do think that one thing to keep in mind is, when you first start teaching, a lot of times your goal is to show that you are a quality teacher, you know your material, that you're an exceptional teacher...all of those things are so important...as you get older, what's really important is what you give to your students and the kind of model you are within that community. So, it's important to stay in a certain area for a good period of time so you can kind of grow roots and get to know your people, and they get to know and appreciate you.

I hung up the phone that evening nourished by Teacher B's positive outlook on how a music teacher influences and is influenced by the surrounding community. She sparked many ideas and thoughts that I had not considered earlier.

Teacher C. I had the pleasure of speaking with Teacher C during her 17th week in the music teaching profession. She spoke with great clarity and confidence, with maturity that extended far beyond her relatively few weeks in the elementary general and
choral classroom. I began the interview by exploring the unique characteristics of the community in which she teaches. She explained that her school is approximately 45 minutes south of a large Pennsylvania city, and falls somewhere between the categories of suburban and rural. An old steel town that hit its peak in the 1970s, she reported that, "there's a decline in the economics in the area." Additionally, she shared that, "there are a lot of families that work on an hourly wage. Some kids don't live with both parents, have broken homes."

Since Teacher C is so new to the profession, I hypothesized that she might be very in tune with cultural differences between her current teaching situation and the community in which she grew up. She explained that, "I grew up in a community that I would say is probably upper middle class, almost completely Caucasian. Whereas, this community is probably, I would say, middle to lower class." In contrast, she mentioned that in her current situation, "there's not a huge minority population, but it's definitely more than I was accustomed to growing up."

Having an awareness of the two different types of communities to which Teacher C had been exposed, my thoughts turned to the concept of cultural synchronization. I asked Teacher C if she felt that she had to make any adaptations in her personality or teaching style to fit in better with this new community. Resolutely, she replied, "Definitely. I think I had to develop more of a tough personality. That might not even be the right word. I'm naturally a very easy-going person, but these kids, I think, are really used to a lot of instability, so they push the limits more than I was used to from being [in college] and teaching kids from relatively nice homes. I just found that I need to take a
harder line with them, kind of get a little edgy sometimes." It is apparent that Teacher C needed to make some adjustments to experience success in this different community.

We continued to explore how the community influences what happens in her music classroom. She indicated that there are some obstacles standing in the way of what could be good opportunities for students. "Things that you take for granted, like having an after-school rehearsal, I really have to worry about because, you know, parents are working." The economics of the region also influence what she is able to implement in her teaching. "Stuff like dress for a concert where, in a lot of schools, you wouldn't have to think twice about saying, 'ok, you need a white dress shirt and black pants,' I need to be really careful about what I send home as far as that kind of stuff, because sometimes there isn't money to be had for black shoes or a white shirt." With regard to community financial constraints, she revealed that, "we experienced that problem when we purchased recorders for third grade. Parents were asked to contribute $4.55 for the recorder and they have it forever. I got, like, hate notes saying they don't have the money. Some parents flat out refused to pay the money, so there are situations where you need to be really careful about money issues."

Other community factors influenced her music-making, as well. She mentioned that her repertoire choices are affected, and she has had more success with choosing pieces that are recognizable by the students. Regarding performances, Teacher C explained that audience etiquette is not well understood by the community, in general. Many community members are not aware that speaking during a performance is not appropriate.
I thanked Teacher C for her time and we concluded our talk. I stepped away from the experience with a renewed appreciation for the many challenges facing the committed music teachers out in the schools each and every day.

Summary. Each of the interviewees offered different perspectives on the multifaceted influences of community in their teaching careers. The three teachers all represented differing community types and experience levels. Although the interviewees were reflecting on different teaching experiences, they all mentioned several common community influences, such as, socioeconomic status and musical literature and activities. They also mentioned the varying degrees with which they have had to adapt their personalities and teaching styles in order to be effective in their current teaching situations. The interview process was extremely enlightening, as it highlighted the complex impact of community as a whole, but also the unique, intricate perception of how music educators function within these diverse settings.
Chapter Five: Discussion

Communities have their own cultures, traditions, values, belief systems, and art forms. All of these unique characteristics of communities combine to influence the people who live in them. The purpose of this study was to examine how or if community impacts music education, and if community influences differ among urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments. This was accomplished through soliciting feedback from Pennsylvania music educators via an on-line questionnaire and by conducting in-depth interviews. Following data collection, results were transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

The results indicated that community does, in fact, influence music education in various ways. The guiding questions were established in order to explore the nature of these influences.

1. What, if any, influence does the surrounding community have on what happens in the music classroom?

This question explored the specific ways in which community characteristics could impact music teaching, while accounting for the possibility that some teachers may feel that no community influence exists in his or her situation. It is important to note that 85% of the questionnaire participants did report that the surrounding community does, in fact, filter into their work in the music classroom in various ways. Through an open-ended narrative prompt, questionnaire participants were able to describe some of the specific ways in which community impacts their teaching. Interview participants, also, provided feedback regarding these influences. The following areas were addressed by participants in both phases of the study. Data revealed that socio-economic factors,
community interests, or lack of community influence all impact music teachers' role in the classroom.

Socio-economic Factors. Socio-economic factors may encompass a broad range of topics, but for the purposes of this study, these factors include financial, industry-related, and social constructs.

Questionnaire participants reported that the economic status of the surrounding community often contributes to what is happening in a school's music program. For example, funding determined through tax base can impact music budgets, availability of personnel, and available resources. Additionally, financially constrained families may not have the time, money, or resources to access music performances or private lessons. In these capacities, school music programs may be able to provide musical experiences that would not otherwise be enjoyed by some students.

Many music teachers function in communities where students are economically disadvantaged. As music performing groups often carry requirements in regard to concert dress and other important materials, teachers can often be challenged by these economic issues. For example, Teacher C described her difficulties with requesting that students dress in a certain way for a performance. Many families are burdened with financial constraints, and concert attire must become less of a priority than more pressing financial matters. Teacher C also mentioned receiving hate mail when she requested that third graders contribute monetarily to the purchase of recorders. Undoubtedly, these situations can be frustrating for a music teacher who simply wants to facilitate the best musical experiences possible. But, financial matters are quite sensitive in nature. Teachers must approach these situations with professionalism, care, and respect.
Teacher B discussed her involvement with students in a community that is, in her words, "not what you'd call a very affluent community." Generally, community members do not have very extensive musical backgrounds. Often, students are disadvantaged in that they do not have the financial means or the immediate access to various types of musical experiences that extend beyond the school day (Isbell, 2005). Teacher B suggested that she enjoys her work with students and families who "maybe don't have as much background as I do or as I did growing up, because I think that there is so much I can offer, that...I can give to them." She also mentioned that the nature of her community has allowed her to influence "the direction of the tastes in choral music." Music education is for everyone, not just the financially elite. Teacher B has chosen to invest her time and energy into a community where she is truly needed.

As Teacher C experienced, the personal financial situation of students' families has a great deal of influence on what happens in the music classroom. Music is a unique subject area which often includes public performances and the purchase of uniforms, instruments, sheet music, and other supplies. When faced with teaching in an economically disadvantaged community, music teachers may not always be able to request that their students procure necessary supplies. Carter (1983) suggested that teachers of disadvantaged students have the responsibility to create educational experiences that reflect the social circumstances of students. This statement can be interpreted to include the financial resources of students and families and the ways in which music teachers ask families to tap into those resources. Without the funding to obtain necessary supplies, a music teacher must find ways to musically engage students without many of the luxuries that other school districts take for granted.
On the opposite end of the spectrum, Teacher A described her experiences in an affluent suburban school. While not all of her students were economically advantaged, many were. These privileged students were able to seek out experiences in music and other arts beyond what was offered in the school setting. Teacher A responded to this influence by allowing these arts-enriched students to take on leadership roles in the classroom and to display their various talents for their peers. She also indicated that her students' involvement in the arts challenged her to really "do music" with her students. These excerpts illustrate that all ends of the economic spectrum can exert some type of influence upon a school music program.

Damore (2002) conducted a study comparing the activities of urban and suburban pre-school and school age children. Results indicated that suburban children were engaged in a larger variety of activities, likely due to greater access to these activities. An abundance of available activities can possibly cause students to become too busy for musical activities, detracting from their music participation. However, neither questionnaire nor interview data supported this statement. Perhaps participants are not noticing this trend in their situations, or perhaps they are and simply chose not to report it.

It is not new information that the "almighty dollar" impacts nearly every aspect of life. Education, and, more specifically, music education, is no exception. Music teachers must face the reality of diminishing budgets (Goldberg, 1967) and the ramifications of living in areas in the midst of economic and financial decline. The uphill battle for music budget money is being constantly waged, as music teachers campaign for status as an academic subject in the school-wide curriculum. Naturally, when the economics of the
surrounding area prohibit appropriate funds, music teachers are impacted, and must make choices about what to include or exclude in their teaching.

Community interests. Communities have personalities of their own. Just as individuals have interests, likes, and dislikes, so do communities. Some communities have interests in agriculture, while others are committed to athletics. Still other communities highly regard artistic, aesthetic experiences. The data for this study showed that the interests of a community can impact music teaching.

Several teachers reported that various community interests impact the instruction offered in their music programs. For example, a rural general and choral music teacher explained that musical theatre is strongly supported by her school's surrounding community and that she is expected to incorporate this interest into her curriculum. An urban teacher painted a picture of her community as a haven for the arts. She stated that there is a great deal of collaboration between her school district and the artistic community surrounding her school. These ideal positive artistic and musical community influences allow students the opportunity to be creative both in, and out, of the formal school setting.

Teacher A, who currently teaches in an affluent suburban area, explained that community interests have a positive impact on her music program. Her community is one that is very supportive of the arts. Many students go above and beyond the aesthetic opportunities afforded by the school district and become involved in high level choral ensembles, theatre companies, and dance troupes. The atmosphere of artistic achievement cultivated by this community has, according to Teacher A, raised the standards of the instruction provided in the school setting.
Unfortunately, community interests may not always benefit music programs as described in the musical theatre-conscious community and Teacher A's arts-focused area. A suburban general and instrumental music teacher revealed that his community is preoccupied with athletics and does not hold the arts in very high esteem. As a result, he feels as though he is, "...a car salesman, always trying to sell band." This lack of community interest, undoubtedly, makes it difficult for this teacher to commit all of his efforts to providing his students with a quality music education. With little support from the community, it is likely that he must spend a great deal of time recruiting new students, fighting music budget cuts, and defending the presence of his program. This teacher cannot take full responsibility for the survival of his music program. Without the time, resources, and support that can be provided by community members, this teacher may continue to experience frustration.

In some cases, community interests may direct students' focus elsewhere. Teacher A discussed her first teaching position in a predominantly agricultural area. Due to the nature of the community, many families operated farms, or were committed to showing livestock in various fairs and functions. In some cases, these interests and lifestyles caused music to take a backseat to other activities in students' schedules. Teacher A described an instance where a student missed an important performance due to involvement in a livestock show. She responded to this and other situations like it by learning more about the community, and being conscious of the dates and times of important community events. Having an awareness of community influences in vital in any community situation; this may be challenging, though, to teachers who take positions in communities that differ greatly from their own experiences.
Community interests help to shape the musical culture of a school district. Whether music is highly valued or considered to be a low priority, music teachers must be sensitive to community interests. Many music teachers face the challenge of increasing the value a community places upon music. This paradigm shift may take years to accomplish. It is important to realize that a music teacher's influence does not stop at the door of her classroom; her students are significant members of the community. Jorgensen (1995) suggested that the community is vehicle through which students can embark on the path of a musical life. She explained that music education must provide a broad view of music and give students the tools to find their musical niches in their communities. Additionally, Jorgensen stated that diversity and tradition in music education allows students the opportunity to contribute to the continued growth and development of their communities. Perhaps, then, if students are taught to value music in the classroom, that influence will spread to the community at large.

**Lack of community influence.** Some teachers feel that there is no obvious community influence in their teaching, or they feel that an awareness of community culture is neither important nor relevant to their teaching. A questionnaire participant explained that:

I teach music. Period. ...I do not worry about community culture in the things that I teach. Just because they are farm kids does not mean I teach them the basics of how to play an instrument any differently. And just because they are from the country does not mean that that is what they are interested in. I would much rather have, and feel my students benefit more from, a diversified curriculum than from a community culture specific program.
It is possible that this participant has misunderstood the focus of the current study. While it is important to have an awareness of the culture of a school's surrounding community, good music teaching is still good music teaching. The influence of community filters into a music program in a subtle manner; it does not overpower the minute tasks of basic musical skills, such as fingering an F sharp or singing in tune.

Conceivably, this teacher is being defensive about his own teaching and student body. Possibly, he feels that his students are at a disadvantage, living in a rural community and the isolation that a rural lifestyle often involves (Isbell, 2005). This teacher is communicating that his students are "farm kids" and seemed to take offense at the assumption that it would be appropriate to offer these students different instruction than others. He is also concerned with the fact that the students' community environment is not necessarily a reflection of their interests. Or, perhaps, his community is not a reflection of his own interests. Perhaps some teachers are so ingrained in their own community culture that they are no longer aware that there is any uniqueness to it.

Community is very much a part of a sense of place. Casey (1996) stated, "to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (p. 18). Many music educators are very in tune with "their" place. They are familiar with the customs and traditions of "their" place, or, in Casey's (1996) terms, they are "place-bound." However, it should be considered that it could be difficult to be aware of the sense of place if one never leaves his place. It might not be possible to be fully aware of or in touch with the unique, defining qualities of one's communities without experiencing a different sense of place.
Clearly, the unique characteristics and interests of a community can impact music teaching in very real ways. Each community has its own culture about which music teachers must be aware. Socio-economic factors of communities can have a profound impact on music teachers' access to materials. Some music teachers must function in areas that are struggling economically, which may influence the amounts or types of supplies teachers can expect their students to obtain (i.e. uniforms, instruments, print materials, etc.) Having an awareness of these issues will help music teachers teach with an increased sensitivity to families' financial situations.

Community interests have also been shown to guide music teachers' instruction. Many music teachers work within communities that are extremely supportive of students' artistic experiences. This type of situation can help school music programs flourish. However, many music teachers work within communities that have interests other than music, or other artistic endeavors. These music teachers must have an awareness of the general perception of music in their community and view their work as an opportunity to musically educate not only their students, but the community at large as well. If nothing else, knowledge of community interests helps music teachers to better know their clientele, thus increasing the likelihood of effective communication with students and families.

2. Do teachers offer instruction to reflect the unique cultural and sociological aspects of their communities?

Several teachers indicated on the questionnaire that their repertoire selection is tied to community influences. Teachers from rural and suburban areas explained that their communities have a commitment to spirituality which allows them to choose music
with religious texts. This freedom to use sacred texts allows teachers to choose literature that will enrich their students without being concerned with offending audience members.

Teacher B also reported that she is free to choose music with sacred texts due to the church presence in her community. She is able to focus solely on what is musically best for her students without any negative feedback from her administrators or community members. This flexibility in repertoire selection and her many years of service to the school have allowed Teacher B to guide the musical tastes of the community. A circular relationship occurs where the community influences Teacher B's repertoire selection, but she, in turn, uses that repertoire to offer the community an opportunity for musical growth.

The aforementioned participants indicated that the spiritual interests of their communities guide their selection of curricular materials. Ninety percent of questionnaire participants stated that they feel it is important for a district music curriculum to be reflective of the surrounding community, while 80% of questionnaire participants reported that their district music curriculum does actually reflect the community in which the school resides. One cannot help but wonder why any teacher would claim that it is not important to reflect the culture of the students in a curricular document. What was not reported, however, was repertoire selection in response to other musics valued by the community. Many community groups are committed to Gospel, rap, African drumming, reggae, or other musics of varying cultural groups. It would be interesting to learn if music teachers tap into these community music resources to more effectively teach their students.
This second research question was open to not only information about choices in instructional materials, but also the ways in which teachers actually communicate or deliver instruction. While the interview participants somewhat referred to these ideas, no participants suggested that their communication with students is directly influenced by the culture of the community. Carter (1983) explained that teacher training programs must be instituted which equip teachers with the skills to effectively communicate with students in inner-city environments. Goldberg (1967) also suggested that teachers need special tools to effectively work with disadvantaged children. Additionally, Campbell (1993) recommended that music teachers design programs in response to the musical values of students of all ethnicities. It is important to consider the nature of students when preparing to deliver instruction, however, the participants involved did not report that their communication or teaching is notably impacted by the culture of the community.

A goal of music educators is to provide students with the tools to continue to be musically independent in various ways in their adult lives and contribute to the artistic fabric of their communities. Perhaps incorporating community-relevant aspects to instruction would allow students to have more ownership in community music making as adults. While there are undoubtedly many quality teaching techniques that are relevant in all types of communities, music teachers should not overlook opportunities to offer instruction in community-applicable ways. There is a great amount of flexibility in musical repertoire and activities that can be used to enhance students' experiences in music. While music teachers may not, of course, approach all instruction in a community
related way, the times when they choose to do so shows students that their teachers are interested in students as whole persons.

3. If present, how do these influences and instructional approaches differ among music teachers in urban, suburban, and rural teaching environments?

As suggested by Carter (1983), Luthar & Becker (2002), and Isbell (2005), urban, suburban, and rural communities have distinctive qualities that distinguish them from one another. Given this knowledge, it was hypothesized that the information reported by music teachers in these three community environments would differ greatly. However, it was difficult to pinpoint any specific differences in these three community types given the data collected. Interestingly, teachers in all three environments reported many of the same types of experiences. This suggests that there are various factors that can and will influence teaching regardless of community classification.

Urban, suburban, and rural are extremely broad terms. It was common for teachers to describe their communities as combinations of these three terms: suburban with an urban feel, rural with suburban aspects, etc. Much variability exists within each of the three community types. It is difficult to posit that all urban communities will be alike. An important finding of this study has been that every community is unique in and of itself. The classification of urban, suburban, or rural does not define a community, but, rather, it is the residents, interests, traditions, and goals of a community that set it apart from other communities.

Upon being confronted with the difficulties of classifying communities into urban, suburban, or rural, one might consider the usefulness of these terms. Although the U.S. Census Bureau uses similar terms to classify an entire nation full of communities, it
is possible that these three terms are obsolete. The interview teachers were not able to neatly classify their own communities into one of the three categories. Surely, as citizens of these communities and persons who work with the community’s youth, they are experts in defining and classifying their own experiences. As communities are organisms, constantly growing and evolving, it is difficult to place one label upon them which would provide useful information about them. Perhaps a new classification system for communities would be appropriate, one which better accounts for the unique characteristics that sets communities apart from one another.

4. How do teachers from backgrounds different from their students’ culturally synchronize themselves in order to provide effective, relevant instruction?

As discussed earlier, to culturally synchronize one's self with another person means to become familiar with and accepting of the other person's beliefs, values, social constructs, and other differing life influences (Irvine, 1990). Cultural synchronization does not require a person to be entirely assimilated by a different culture, but to simply be aware of the unique characteristics of another culture and the people who are shaped by it. This cultural awareness allows persons from differing backgrounds to build trust and appreciate the distinctiveness of one another. Clearly, this would have valuable applications in the classroom setting. With the mobility afforded by current society, many teachers find positions working with students who are extremely different from themselves. Cultural synchronization is a vehicle through which these differing teachers and students can relate.

Sixty percent of questionnaire participants reported that their current teaching position is located in a community that is similar to the one in which they were raised.
Teachers in this situation may feel that they do not need to consciously adapt themselves to understand the unique cultural aspects of these communities, as they may be familiar with the community already. Interestingly, 70% of questionnaire participants reported that they do not, or have not, changed aspects of their personality or teaching style to fit in better with the community in which they teach. Again, this is likely due to the fact that these teachers are functioning within communities that are already familiar to them.

Teachers A, B, and C all reported that they teach in communities that are different from the type of community in which they were raised. When asked about the ways in which she culturally synchronizes herself with her students, Teacher A responded that she has not needed to go to great lengths to adapt herself in this community. She did mention that she needed to be a bit stricter with her students, as discipline is more problematic in her current situation than in her previous position.

Teacher B explained that she has made some adaptations, but they have evolved very gradually over her nearly 30 year tenure in her school. She stated that she speaks to her students differently than she would to students from another type of area. Teacher B described her approach as "much less formal."

Teacher C reported that she did need to make adaptations in her personality in order to be successful in her current teaching situation. She explained that many of her students, due to various reasons, are accustomed to instability in the home. This instability carries over to the classroom, where students feel comfortable "pushing the limits" regarding discipline. Teacher C discussed the "tough personality" she needed to develop in order to provide the structure needed by her students. The development of this
disciplinarian aspect of her personality was somewhat counter-intuitive since she classifies herself as "naturally a very easy-going person."

All three interviewees reported making subtle changes in their personalities or teaching styles in order to more effectively communicate with their students. Different areas may be prone to different types of discipline problems, or require a certain style of speaking in order to exchange ideas with students. Perhaps many teachers engage in this type of behavior daily, but are not conscious of it.

It is inevitable in the teaching profession that teachers will need to adapt aspects of their personalities in order to effectively communicate with students. This can be challenging, but all the more important, when teachers and students represent different background experiences. In a society that is moving away from mono-culturalism and becoming more and more diverse, teachers must be equipped with the skills to work successfully with students of any background. This reality must be taken into account by teachers as they progress through their professional training programs and also by those who design these programs. An important part of the relationship between teacher and student is trust. When teachers show an understanding of a student's unique life circumstances, they embark on the path of a trusting, fulfilling relationship with that student. Music teachers ask students to explore many areas not addressed in other school subjects, such as movement, singing, and other forms of creativity and self-expression. Students need to feel understood and cared for in order to feel comfortable engaging in these musical experiences. This bond of trust opens the doors to successful communication, and therefore, successful music teaching and learning experiences.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study of community influences in music education has presented a variety of avenues to be pursued in future research. An obvious research route would be to conduct in-depth observations of music teachers at work in their school and community environments. Firsthand observations would permit the researcher to draw conclusions about the music teacher's response to community influences that the music teacher herself might not be aware of. Additionally, it would be interesting to replicate this study using larger samples, more in-depth data collection tools, or a different state location. Perhaps music teachers in different regions of the country view the concept of community differently or incorporate community influences into their teaching in different ways. Data could then be compared to discover how or if community impacts music teaching throughout the nation.

This study has also indicated that the terms urban, suburban, and rural are rapidly becoming outdated and could possibly be replaced by more specific terms that reflect more of the uniqueness of communities as entities. Research could be conducted to identify the characteristics of community that are important to communicate in a single term.

Conclusions

This study has revealed some of the ways in which music educators are influenced by community characteristics and interests. It is important for music educators to be aware of the surrounding community, and how that community shapes the students whom they teach. No child is a blank slate; all students are influenced by their communities, and they bring those influences with them into the music classroom. It is
the teacher's responsibility to learn about these influences and use them to deliver the
most effective and relevant instruction possible. The town mouse and the country mouse
each had his own well-defined sense of place, which he did not truly appreciate until he
left that place. The customs and patterns of life to which each was accustomed were
embedded within each mouse's definition of himself. We, as teachers, must wrestle with
the definition of our own senses of place while developing an understanding for that of
our students. The lesson illuminated to us through the old tale of the town mouse and the
country mouse shows that our place, or community, is a very real part of who we are. It
is through this knowledge of self and appreciation of the unique life circumstances of
communities that we can truly use music to make a profound and lasting connection with
our students.
References


APPENDIX A

On-line Questionnaire Questions
On-line Questionnaire Questions

1. Please describe the community in which you teach.
   a. urban
   b. suburban
   c. rural
   d. small city

2. Is this community similar to where you were raised?
   a. yes
   b. no

3. Please indicate the grade level(s) you currently teach.
   (fill in blank)

4. Please indicate the area(s) of music you currently teach.
   a. general music
   b. choral music
   c. instrumental music
   d. a combination of general, choral, and instrumental

5. In your opinion, did your professional training prepare you to teach effectively in your current community situation?
   a. yes
   b. no

6. Do various characteristics of your school's community (i.e. socio-economic status, values, demographics, ethnic composition) influence your teaching or classroom environment?
   a. yes
   b. no

7. Does your district curriculum reflect unique aspects of the surrounding community?
   a. yes
   b. no

8. Do you think it is important for a music curriculum to reflect the surrounding community?
   a. yes
   b. no

9. Do you think it is important to adapt your instruction to reflect the needs, characteristics, and/or values of the surrounding community?
   a. yes
   b. no
10. Do you adapt your instruction based on surrounding community values?
   a. yes
   b. no

11. To what degree?
   a. always
   b. sometimes
   c. never

12. Do you adapt materials to make them more suitable for the students in your school?
   a. yes
   b. no

13. (Optional) Please use this space to briefly clarify any answers as you see fit.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

Telephone Interview Questions
Telephone Interview Questions

1. Please describe the community in which you teach. Is it rural, urban, or suburban? Please describe your school. What are some unique aspects of your school/community?

2. Is this community different from where you were raised? If so, how?

3. Do you feel that you have adapted your personality, teaching style, and/or delivery of instruction to better fit into this community?

4. Did your professional training equip you to teach in your current situation? If not, what could have been better?

5. How long have you been teaching?

6. In what other types of communities have you worked? How do your teaching experiences in these different communities compare?

7. How do you or do you plan/implement instruction to reflect community influences?

8. How do you choose materials (songs, recordings, etc.)?
APPENDIX C

Recruitment Letter
Dear District Secretary,

My name is Sarah Watts and I am a graduate student in the Masters in Music Education program at The Pennsylvania State University. I am writing to request your assistance with a research study I am currently conducting in partial fulfillment of my Masters degree requirements. The study-in-progress is entitled Community Culture and Music Education: Music Teacher's Approach to Instruction in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities. My work addresses the various ways the surrounding community influences our work as music educators and how those community influences may differ among urban, suburban, and rural environments. Penn State’s Office for Research Protections have reviewed and approved this research.

Please distribute the attached information to all of the music educators in your respective Districts. General, instrumental, and choral music educators of all grade levels are encouraged to participate. This brief on-line questionnaire will initiate the study. Music educators are asked to log onto www.PsychData.com and complete questionnaire number 10025. The questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

The next step of the study involves a telephone interview completed at the convenience of the volunteer. Interested volunteers may contact me in order to participate in the next phase of the study.

Your cooperation in this research study is highly valued and appreciated. I thank you in advance for your participation. It is my hope that through this research, music educators will be able to teach more effectively and sensitively in their communities. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sarah H. Watts
shs133@psu.edu
(814) 272-0689
APPENDIX D

Research Study Information
The purpose of this research project is to investigate how or if music educators approach instruction differently in urban, suburban, and rural environments.

How to participate:

Please log onto www.PsychData.com

Request survey number 10025

Complete a simple questionnaire regarding how the surrounding community influences on your teaching; this should require approximately 15 minutes of your time.

The next phase of the study involves an interview process. If you are interested in participating in this process, you will be able to contact the researcher via e-mail at the conclusion of the questionnaire. The interview process will require approximately 20 minutes of your time. It will be completed by telephone at the time of your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your participation. Your contributions are highly valued and appreciated.
APPENDIX E

Web-based Implied Informed Consent Form
Title of Project: Community Culture and Music Education: Music Teachers' Approach To Instruction in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities

Principal Investigator: Sarah H. Watts, Graduate Student
EMAIL: shs133@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Ann Clements
Department of Music Education
204 Music Building, I
Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802
TELEPHONE: 814-863-4416
EMAIL: acc13@psu.edu

1. Purpose of the study: The purpose of this research is to investigate how music teachers approach instruction differently in urban, suburban, and rural environments.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to answer several questions on an on-line questionnaire.

3. Discomforts and Risks: Although minimal, there is a risk that you might experience slight discomfort, embarrassment, or stress while answering questions about your teaching environment or techniques. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point should this discomfort occur.

4. Benefits: The benefits to you include the opportunity to contemplate how the community surrounding your school influences how and what you teach. The benefits to society include the development of a more informed framework for teaching students who are products of varying community types.

5. Duration/Time: The on-line questionnaire will require approximately 15 minutes of your time.

6. Statement of Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. The principal investigator will make every effort to guard the confidentiality of all data. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally
identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your response. The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project.

7. **Right to Ask Questions**: You can ask questions about this research. Contact Sarah Watts at the email listed above with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

8. **Voluntary Participation**: Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion and submission of this questionnaire implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research.

Please use your browser to print a copy of this consent form for your records.

This informed consent form was reviewed and approved by the Office for Research Protections (IRB# 21367 Doc. # 2) at The Pennsylvania State University on 08/29/2005. It will expire on 06/27/2006. (DWM)
APPENDIX F

Telephone Interview Signed Informed Consent Form
Title of Project: Community Culture and Music Education: Music Teachers' Approach to Instruction in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities

Principal Investigator: Sarah H. Watts
251 Music Building I
University Park, PA 16802
TELEPHONE: 814-865-6089
EMAIL: shs133@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Ann Clements
Department of Music Education
204 Music Building, I
Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802
TELEPHONE: 814-863-4416
EMAIL: acc13@psu.edu

1. Purpose of the study: The purpose of this research is to investigate how music teachers approach instruction differently in urban, suburban, and rural environments.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to perform several simple tasks, which are summarized below:
A. Contact the researcher via e-mail to express interest in being an interview participant.

B. Once you are contacted by the investigator, please verify your consent to participate by following four steps: (i) save this document electronically, (ii) choose one option regarding your preference for recording the interview by marking an X next to the option you prefer, (iii) type your name at the bottom of the page to indicate your signed informed consent to participate, and (iv), return the electronic consent form to the principal investigator via-e-mail or email attachment.

C. You will participate in a telephone interview that is scheduled at your convenience. The interview will cover topics relating to community influence on your music teaching and will be audio recorded with your permission.
D. When completed, a written transcript of the interview will be emailed to you, and you will be asked to review the records so that your answers were interpreted truthfully.

3. **Discomforts and risks:** Although minimal, there is a risk that you might experience slight discomfort, embarrassment, or stress while answering questions about your teaching environment or techniques. These feelings should not be beyond normal daily living. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point should this discomfort be bothersome.

4. **Benefits:** The benefits to you include the opportunity to contemplate the role that community plays in your teaching. The benefits to society include the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which community influences the work of music educators.

5. **Duration/Time:** Your participation in this study will include two sessions. The Interview session will require approximately 20 minutes. With your permission, the interview will take place over the telephone and will be recorded. The feedback session will require approximately 15 minutes.

6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project. Your name will not be associated with the recorded interviews, nor will your real name be used in the final written study. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years prior to being destroyed. Only the principal investigator will have access to the participants' identities.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Sarah Watts at (814) 272-0689 with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study.

If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please save an electronic copy of this document, choose one option for audio-recording preferences, and type your name and indicate the date below. Please send this form back to the principal investigator at EMAIL: shs133@psu.edu. Please print a copy of this consent form for your records.
Please insert an “X” next to your preference for being audio-recorded:

_____ Yes, I agree to be audio/digitally-recorded during the interview

_____ No, I do not wish to be audio/digitally-recorded during the interview

Please insert your cursor above the line shown below and type your name and date to indicate your signed consent to participate:

Name (TYPE NAME ABOVE LINE)          Date (TYPE DATE ABOVE LINE)

This informed consent form was reviewed and approved by the Office for Research Protections (IRB# 21367 Doc. # 1) at The Pennsylvania State University on August 29, 2005. It will expire on June 27, 2006. (DWM)