Staying in the Profession:
A Study of Five Public School Orchestra Directors

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify reasons why five Texas public school orchestra directors have decided to stay in the teaching profession. Extant research indicates that approximately half of all orchestra teachers nationwide leave the profession within five years. Furthermore, research has primarily focused on why teachers leave, rather than why others stay. This study is designed to be a proactive approach in finding out why certain orchestra teachers not only remain in the field, but seem to thrive. Using a qualitative approach of data gathering and analysis, participants with seven to fifteen years of experience were both interviewed and observed in class. Interview questions were developed based on historic issues in teacher retention, including administrative support, compensation, student behavior, school facilities and resources, and pre-service teacher training. Participant responses were examined for positive factors that aided in their decisions to remain in the profession. While there were responses that shed light on the challenges orchestra teachers face, participants also shared multiple factors that motivate them to continue in their chosen profession. These include setting and achieving goals, experiencing the intrinsic rewards of music, rich connections with students, and enjoying solid community and administrative support. In addition, certain teacher characteristics emerged among the participants, such as individual determination and perseverance, optimism, creativity, and a desire to improve as educators. This less common look at reasons why orchestra teachers stay in the field may serve to aid teachers as they decide whether or not to continue in the profession, as well as helping teacher educators and administrators retain public school orchestra teachers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It's two o'clock on a lovely Sunday afternoon as I pull in to the parking lot of Jackson Middle School. Mine is not the only car in the parking lot, the others belong to the community of soccer players and their families who spend every sunny Sunday afternoon in friendly competition enjoying the spring weather. I, however, I am about to walk in to my windowless classroom that my students and I have aptly named "the cave".

I enter my classroom in a rather dismal mood. Everyone else is enjoying their afternoon while I work. I keep asking myself, "How many more years can I spend six to seven days of the week, often ten to twelve hours at a time working at this job?" "Is this what my life is going to look like for the next thirty years?""There has to be a better way to do this."Then, I see a note a student has left for me on the white board, "Hey, Ms. Neal, Did you know you are the best teacher in the world?!"and I think, "Maybe I can do this for the rest of my life…"

"I'm afraid, at this point, to go out there and fail one more time. I really can't handle that at all." – Ranya (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)

"Maybe if I were a better teacher, more experienced, just a different kind of teacher, maybe I could [have succeeded]." – Esther (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)

"The love I had for my work is gone." (Tye & O'Brien, 2002)

"I am passionate about this…and so yes, it's a job and I need the money, but it really is something that I love. It's a vocation." – Lida (Williams, 2003)

Teacher attrition and retention has long been and continues to be a source of serious concern for schools and researchers (Hancock, 2009; Killian & Baker, 2006; Madsen & Hancock, 2002) Surveys find that approximately 20-50% of new teachers leave within their first five years of teaching (Latham & Vogt, 2007; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). School districts report that the supply of teachers is not enough to meet the demand that requires filling almost 500,000 positions nationwide each year (Hancock, 2009). This can be attributed to factors such as higher birth rates and immigration, as well as policies regarding class size. Retirement also affects teacher

shortages. Between 2004-2008, 300,000 teachers left the field for retirement

(National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), 2012); 27.8 %

of the teaching force retired at the end of the 2008-2009 school year (National Center

for Education Statistics (NCES)), 2009. These retirement rates, combined with the

high rate of new teacher attrition, often lead to severe teacher shortages. These

shortages result in school districts trying tactics to recruit teachers into the profession,

including incentives such as loan forgiveness, signing bonuses, and alternative

certification (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001;

Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Continued changes in educational policy, however, such

as standardized testing and increasing class sizes, are negatively affecting these

recruiting efforts (Tye & O'Brien, 2002)

Attrition and retention is no less an issue in music education. A 2002 study by

Madsen and Hancock found that 34% of surveyed music teachers left the teaching

field after six years. Schools report losing between six and eight percent of their

music teachers each year. Most of these teachers are in the first 10 years of their career

(Hancock, 2009; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). In 2000, the state of Montana reported

music as its number-one subject area for teacher shortage and the state of Florida

reported that 12% of their newly placed music teachers were not trained to teach

music (Scheib, 2004). These trends continue today. The state of Iowa reported K-8

and 5-12 Music as a top teacher shortage between 2004-2011 (Iowa Department of

Education, 2012) and 20 of the 50 states have reported shortages in music for at least

one school year since 2007 (US Department of Education, Office of Post Secondary Education, April 2012).

There are several reasons that have been cited as factors for music teacher attrition. Among the most common are: lack of administrative and parental support (Madsen & Hancock, 2002), time management difficulties, financial concerns (McLain, 2005), classroom management issues and negative student behavior, school culture (Russell, 2008), and teacher isolation (Scheib, 2004). Music teachers commonly face one or more of these problems during their career, and while a significant percentage of teachers leave the field due to these concerns, many stay.

I am now part of the statistic, and, for the time being, have left the active teaching field. The sheer volume of work that I feel necessary to be prepared to properly and effectively instruct my students has become too much for me. I have reached my limit on the amount of disrespect I can withstand from students and lack of support from parents for what I am trying to do in the orchestra program. I'm conflicted over this decision, remembering that in spite of the hard work, long hours and unpleasant occurrences, I still had students who were learning and who I felt I was helping. But I am leaving anyway. So what do I do now? Where do I go from here? What does my future as a music educator look like? Will I ever return to teaching? Surely, there are good teachers who stay in the profession, living exceptionally fulfilling professional lives. What is their "work world" like? What have they found and done that eludes others, including me?

Because of these feelings, as well as the overall national problem, I proposed a study to investigate why selected orchestra teachers stay in the profession. It would be all too easy to find and enumerate the causes of why teachers leave, as the reader will find in the literature review; but, if I am ever to teach again, to experience the real joy of changing lives positively through music, I needed to study why teachers stay: why, specifically, orchestra directors chose to make a career in this profession. The study examined how school- level and individual- level factors combine to aid retention among orchestra teachers. To seek answers to this question, I examined data compiled through interviews and observations of the professional lives of five orchestra directors and their career paths related to questions of attrition and retention.

Acknowledgement of Bias

As a music teacher who has recently left the field to pursue a Master's degree, and who may or may not return to teaching in the schools, the researcher is aware that she enters the study with her own experiences and biases. Throughout the course of this study, she has made every attempt to conduct a study that is open and neutral in its presentation of research and findings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

> **Leaving Teaching.**

There are many reasons teachers may leave the profession: Examples include: poor work culture, student behavior, insufficient pay, and lack of administrative and community support.

> *"What surprised me was probably having no support: being put in there with nothing…they basically throw you 33 kids and that was it. If there was something going on in your classroom, there was no one for you to go to." – Naomi* (Yost, 2006)

But, there are important, compelling reasons educators stay in the teaching profession: a sense of purpose, students, intellectual stimulation, challenges, and love of subject matter.

> *"What else would I do? This is what I was meant to do. It's all I want to do…It's an unbelievably hard job. But I love it, I still do." – Natalie* (Freedman & Appleman, 2008)

The researcher will now take a more in depth look at previous research regarding why educators leave, and why they stay, first in teaching, and then in music.

For purposes of clarity, the writer will organize the reasons teachers leave and stay into two broad categories, school – level factors and individual- level factors. Throughout the review of literature, the writer encountered several frequently used terms that describe how teachers view their work, such as external and internal professional factors, working conditions and personal satisfaction with teaching. In a

2004 study, Kelly categorized reasons for teacher attrition using the terms school-level affects and individual – level characteristics. Note: for the purposes of this study, the researcher will use the term factor (as it relates, in definition, to the term variable), in describing both school-level and individual-level teacher causes for retention and attrition.

School- level factors often seem out of a single teacher's control, leaving them with a stark choice: to stay or to leave (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). The choice to leave, consequently, necessitates another decision: to move to another school or to leave teaching for another career. School settings – urban, suburban, and rural offer differing challenges and a teacher often feels as though they have some control over these challenges through their ability to choose what type of school in which they wish to teach (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2004; Kelly, 2004). Often, not finding the right fit causes migration rather than, or before attrition (Kelly, 2004). It is also unlikely that a teacher will find a school offering everything they want, from environment to administration to student characteristics. In the literature review, I will explore both school-level factors and individual-level factors and their relation to teacher attrition and retention.

Tye and O'Brien (2002) stated that it is very common for teachers to "locate the problem within themselves." This was corroborated by music teachers who stated that they are to blame for much of the stress and tension they felt within their jobs (Scheib, 2003). However, new teachers also commonly cited their passion for teaching young people or a sense of having a "mission" to "make a difference."

Further, music teachers often cited the aesthetic aspects of music, or an artistic commitment, as an additional reason for being engaged and committed to students.

The term "burnout" was also used as a cause of teacher attrition. Symptoms of burnout were observable in teachers at risk of leaving (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008; Brouwers & Tomic, 1999). For this reason, burnout will be discussed as a somewhat separate, more all-encompassing category in the literature review.

Teacher Attrition.

The high rate of teacher turnover has become an increasing concern for schools and researchers (Hancock, 2009; Killian & Baker, 2006; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). Between 1988 and 2005, attrition rates in the United States increased from 5.6% to 8.4% (Russell, 2008). In 2003, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future announced that teacher retention was in a "national" crisis. Only a year later, the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) for the Schools and Staffing Survey reported that 8% of teachers left the profession. This trend of "leavers" continues; at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the TFS reported 9% of all teachers left the profession, with 13.6% leaving after their first year (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2010). Though this number may seem small, Ingersoll (2004) points out that due to the sheer size of the teaching force, an annual turnover rate of 14% means that more than one million teachers, "move into, out of, or between schools in any given year."

Research indicates that those most likely to leave the teaching field are "disillusioned beginners with just two or three years in the classroom" (Tye &

O'Brien, 2002 p. 25). A 1999 survey in *Education Week* found that 20% of all new teachers leave the classroom after just three years. The number increases to 50% after five years (Merrow, 1999). In a study of first year teachers, Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that 17% of their participants left teaching after just one year. A three year study of 50 teachers found that 11 of the original participants left the field –- six left after the first year, four after two years, and one after three (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). In a longitudinal study begun in 1996, Tye and O'Brien reported that at the end of seven years, 49% of the original 551 teachers involved were no longer working as teachers (2002).

Music Teacher Attrition.

High rates of attrition are also present in the field of music education. The National Center for Education Statistics found that arts and music teachers were most likely to leave a current position for another post and ranked a very close 4th place behind math, social studies, and special education teachers as those most likely to leave the profession entirely (Scheib, 2006). Hancock (2009) reported that 16% of the music teacher population leaves the field each year. As a result, there are severe music teacher shortages. In 2005, the National Association for Music Education (formerly MENC) estimated an annual national deficit of 5,000 music teachers (Byo & Cassidy). This estimate is corroborated by the United States Office of Post Secondary Education, who released data in 2008 indicating that some 24 state departments of education had a "critical demand" for music teachers (Hancock, 2009).

A shortage of teachers for school orchestra programs has been an area of concern for several decades. Gillespie and Hamann (1999) reported this concern as a major discussion topic at the Tanglewood String Symposia as early as 1963. National surveys completed in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years found that 24 to 43% of string teacher vacancies were not filled (Byo & Cassidy, 2005). A 2009 study, conducted by the National String Project Consortium (NSPC), found that while 90% of string teaching positions were filled, 18% of those teachers did not list a stringed instrument as their primary instrument. These statistics also indicate that 10% of open string teaching positions were not filled. Finding a solution to this shortage has clearly been a problem. A 1997 study surveying undergraduate string education majors found that 96% of the students were aware of a shortage of string teachers, yet only 36% of them had any interest in teaching in public schools (Gillespie & Hamann, 1999). Research would indicate that there is little encouragement given to young students who could be potential string educators. In a 1992 study on string education majors, two –thirds of the participants reported receiving negative remarks from their music teachers about becoming a professional music educator (Gillespie & Hamann, 1999).

This continued trend of attrition rates for both general and music teachers has led researchers to explore its causes. Common areas of study are work environment, student characteristics, administrative support and salaries (Chapman & Lowther, 1982; Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Kain, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Researchers have also considered the effect of teacher characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, and teacher personalities as

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they apply to retention and attrition (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008; Brouwers & Tomic, 1999; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Neito, 2003; Scheib, 2006; Williams, 2003). The following will take a closer look at the two broad categories previously mentioned: school-level factors and individual – level factors.

School- Level Factors for Teacher Attrition

    Work Environment.

Work culture was defined in different ways by researchers. Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) and Stockard and Lehman (2004) considered work culture to be largely comprised of the socio-economic and ethnic demographics of a school's students. In a study of teacher recruitment and retention, Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) found that the size, location, wealth, student composition, and grade level of schools and districts all played a role in the success of recruiting and retaining teachers. These researchers concluded that low attrition schools are typically suburban, have a low population of minority students, and are perceived to have sufficient funding. Teachers generally left schools in which the population of non-white, low- income students was about 75% to 100% greater than the schools to which they transferred. This presents a challenge to recruiters as minority student enrollment is increasing. In 2000, the United States Department of Education reported that 39% of public elementary and secondary school students were members of a minority group. 17% were classified as Hispanic, 17% as Black, and 5% fell in to an "other" category (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). More

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recently, "in 2006–07, approximately 24 percent of all public school students attended schools where the combined enrollment of Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native students was at least 75 percent, compared with 16 percent of public school students in 1990–91" (NCES, 2009 p. 66).

In other studies, work culture was described as the working relationship between teachers and staff (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Fredrickson & Neill, 2004; Scheib, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Williams, 2003). New teachers often reported feelings of alienation that can lead to job dissatisfaction and thus, attrition (Scheib, 2006). Research suggested that a collegial and supportive environment allowed new teachers the opportunities to overcome feelings of alienation and work through uncertainties they may have about the practice of teaching. New teachers in this supportive type of setting found greater job satisfaction and a sense that they were effective instructors (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Veteran teachers also reported the need for good relationships with colleagues, reporting that they were "inextricably intertwined with good teaching and job satisfaction (Williams, 2003 p. 73).

While teachers reported the need for support and collegiality, they also wanted autonomy within their classrooms (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Williams, 2003). Hackman and Old (1980) defined autonomy as "a worker's freedom to schedule work and determine the procedures used to carry it out," (as cited in Firestone & Pennell, 1993, p. 498). Veteran teachers expressed the need for autonomy in their classrooms as it allowed them to express their individual creativity. These teachers also

recognized that with autonomy came a total responsibility for the "fate of their students" (Williams, 2003). Teachers were generally perceived to have considerable autonomy in their classrooms; however, current trends in policy have begun to erode the teacher's control in the classroom (Corwin & Borman, 1988 as cited in Firestone and Pennell, 1993).

Another way work culture was described was professional culture. Several studies found that teachers often did not feel they were viewed as professionals (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997). Marlow et al, (1997) found this manifested in that "teachers must schedule all breaks, sign in and out, do not have access to the school building unless children are present…few have private offices, access to phones for private calls, or time to confer with colleagues," (p. 213). Johnson and Birkeland (2003) defined three types of professional cultures: veteran oriented, novice oriented, and integrated (p. 605). A veteran oriented professional culture was one in which the operations of the school were determined by and designed for veteran faculty members while a novice oriented culture featured "youth, idealism, and inexperience" and had little veteran guidance. Johnson and Birkeland described an integrated culture as one that promoted collaboration among all levels of teachers. In their 2003 qualitative study of first year teachers, the researchers reported that participants working in integrated professional cultures reported greater satisfaction with their jobs and were more likely to remain in teaching than those participants working in veteran

or novice oriented professional cultures. Of the 11 leavers from their study, only two had worked in integrated professional cultures.

Administrative and Community Support.

The tone of the work environment appeared to be influenced to a great degree by school administration (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Day & Gu, 2008; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997; Scheib, 2004; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Beginning teachers reported greater job satisfaction when they were working in an environment where they felt supported by administration and where their administration worked to create a collegial environment (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997). Veteran teachers also reported the need for administrative support. In Day and Gu's (2008) study of veteran teachers, teachers reported that the "provision of appropriate and responsive leadership support in the work contexts is key to ensuring and promoting the quality and effectiveness of their professional lives in teaching" (p. 452). Responses from leavers in the 1997 Schools and Staffing Survey cited "inadequate support from administration as [one of] the main reasons for feeling dissatisfied with teaching as a career" (Scheib, 2004, p. 54). In Tye and O'Brien's 2002 survey of experienced teachers who had left the profession or were considering leaving, respondents ranked lack of administrative support 5th. In commenting on administrative support, they said:

> "The administration doesn't really back you up when you
> have problems." (p. 30)

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"About 10% of the parents lack respect for teachers, are angry and hostile, and are usually backed by the district. Why is the administration so ready to listen to such a small proportion of the parents instead of the 90% who think the teachers are doing okay?" (p. 30)

"All the administrators want is a lack of waves." (p. 30)

Administrators identified as supportive by teachers appeared to be those who granted autonomy in the classroom, who valued teachers' individuality and creativity, encouraged teachers to try new ideas, and trusted them to do their jobs (Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997; Williams, 2003). Stockard and Lehman (2004) reported that for first year teachers, administrators influenced job satisfaction by "promoting a safe and orderly school…providing teachers a sense of control and influence over their work, and by providing a context in which teachers can feel supported by their colleagues and students' parents" (p. 763). On the other hand, young teachers leaving the profession described principals who were "arbitrary, abusive, or neglectful…" (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Parental support was another critical issue in teacher attrition and retention and was often linked to administrative support (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; McLain, 2005; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Many teachers felt that parents often took an adversarial position towards them (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). In a study on music teacher burnout, McLain (2005) reported higher depersonalization levels in teachers who felt they lacked community and parental support. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) suggested that principals and parents should work together to create a supportive school atmosphere that allows teachers to be more effective.

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Student Characteristics.

Student characteristics and behaviors played a role in the attrition of teachers as well. In a study of experienced teachers who had left the field, Tye and O'Brien (2002) found that changing student characteristics ranked at the top of the list of reasons for leaving. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2001) found four student characteristics related to teachers' attrition, moving, or retention: low income, black, Hispanic, and average student achievement score. Teachers who moved from one school to another appeared to seek out schools with fewer economically and academically disadvantaged students. There was a 2.5-5 % decrease in number of black and Hispanic students and 6.6% decrease in number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch in the schools to which teachers moved (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001).

Average student achievement rates ranked high among reasons teachers left schools. Over 25% of teachers working in schools at the bottom of the achievement quartile leave each year. Less than 20% of teachers in the top quartile schools leave. Research also found that average achievement score per district rises by approximately 3% between the schools teachers leave and the new schools they enter (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001).

Teachers also reported the decline in student behavior as a consideration for leaving the field (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Day & Gu, 2008; Frederickson & Neill, 2004). Both new teachers and veteran teachers considered poor student behavior a

problem. 43% of new teachers' comments regarding the worst aspects of their day related to students' social behavior (Frederickson & Neill, 2004). Veteran teachers noted the change in pupil behavior over the length of their career and the struggle they had to manage behavior in the classroom (Day & Gu, 2008). Tye and O'Brien (2002) found that teachers who had already left the field ranked changes in student behavior as a close third in a list of reasons for leaving. The researchers found that many students were averse to putting in the work required for study and were uninterested in learning. They attributed this to today's culture of instant gratification and stated that "in a classroom containing even just a handful of such young people, teachers often find themselves having to devote more time and energy to classroom management than to actual teaching" (p. 30).

Resources and Facilities.

In their 2003 study, Firestone and Pennell stated that "resources are directly tied to the successful accomplishment of work. Teachers experienced them as a characteristic or condition of the work itself." Among a list of factors related to the job satisfaction of teachers, adequate physical conditions and availability of curriculums and instructional resources were listed at the top (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that among teachers who moved schools, the schools they left had poor curricular guidelines and limited resources, while the schools they entered offered more resources and well laid out curriculums. One new teacher, reflecting on her first (and last) year stated,

"Nothing is there. Nothing is set up for anything, lab wise – nothing- not text books

for a month and a half…it was hard." (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003, p. 595).

The physical conditions of a classroom are necessary resources. Facilities that

are well maintained and provide appropriate space facilitate effective teaching.

Firestone and Pennell (1993) stated that poorly maintained and supplied facilities

"symbolically…suggest that the teachers (and students) in them are not valued by

others." (p. 509). A sad finding is that most teachers in public schools have come to

recognize and settle for the limited resources they believe to be a fact of working for a

publicly financed system (Scheib, 2003). As one researcher put it, "part of learning to

teach is learning to do without" (Johnson, 1990 as cited in Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

Salary and Career Opportunity.

Research has shown that higher salaries are associated with lower teacher

attrition (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Hanusheck, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001;

Jonson & Birkeland, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Money and status are

prominent factors in teachers' career decisions. As one new teacher stated, "If this

profession offered more money, I'd stay here forever, but it doesn't" (Johnson &

Birkeland, 2003, p. 597). The American Federation of Teacher's reported that the

average teacher salary in 1999-2000 was only $46 above what it was in 1993 and just

$2087 more than in 1972, a total increase of just $75 per year (Johnson & Birkeland,

2003). Flyer and Rosen (1997) stated that between 1960 and 1990 the "true" real

wages of teachers declined in comparison with the wages of other college graduates

(p. S119). The decline in teacher wages has continued through the first decade of the

millennium. In a state-by-state comparison of teacher salary changes between the 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 school years, the National Center for Education Statistics reported changes in the negative direction for fifteen states. While the remaining thirty-five states showed an increase in teacher salaries, nine of those states reported the increase as 2% or less. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) reported that for the 2006-2007 school year teachers saw a greater salary increase than the past fifteen years combined. Despite this increase, teachers still make only 70 cents to the dollar of other comparable professions (AFT, 2008).

Teacher salaries vary within a district and across districts. The variations are typically linked to experience, graduate education, and stipends for extracurricular activities (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001). Hanushek et al. (2001) found that salary is a greater predictor of switching districts than of leaving altogether. The average gain of movers with less than ten years of experience was only .4% of the annual salary at the time of the move.

Teaching is often characterized by the intrinsic rewards it offers. However, this does not always outweigh the low salary and low view of the professionalism given by others (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kelly, 2004). Teachers reported that low pay often undermines the satisfaction derived from teaching (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). They also frequently felt that they were not accorded the same professional stature as other relative professions. Kelly (2004) stated that "salary…is an important symbolic measure of the importance a society places on the work one does" (p. 197).

Another factor related to the professionalism accorded the teaching field is what is known as "opportunity costs." Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) stated that opportunity costs are the loss of rewards related to compensation and career path available in other occupations. The researchers found that teachers whose opportunity costs outweigh the rewards they gain from teaching were more likely to leave the profession. In their survey of new teachers, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that the absence of a career path, low pay, as well as the lack of public respect given to teachers caused dissatisfaction with their profession and consideration for leaving.

While there is much research dedicated to Fine Arts and Music teacher attrition, the research tends to be broad in nature and focuses less on one specific cause of attrition than can be found in research on teacher attrition in general education. However, when examining the school-level factors related to Fine Arts and Music teacher attrition, the writer was still able to find several helpful studies.

School -Level Factors for Fine Arts/Music Teacher Attrition

Work Environment.

Fine arts teachers more often reported feelings of isolation than did other teachers. This was because there were few teachers on campus who shared their experience and interests as well the heavy workload of fine arts teachers, who frequently taught students before and after school and whose schedules were often far different than those of other classroom teachers (Fredrickson & Neill, 2004; Scheib, 2006). School geography was also attributed to fine arts teacher isolation. Music

classrooms, especially, were often located in an area removed from the center of the school, sometimes even outside of the building (Scheib, 2006). Another factor attributed to fine arts teachers' sense of isolation was the amount of importance placed on the fine arts at their school. In a study of first year string teachers, Russell (2008) found that the school district's "perceived importance of music" was second only to work culture in the teachers' future career decisions. Veteran teachers reported similar feelings and stated that much of their stress came from the constant need to be a lobbyist for their program (Scheib, 2003).

Administrative and Community Support.

Support from administrators and parent communities appeared to be an important factor in music teacher attrition and retention (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; McLain, 2005; Scheib, 2004). Madsen and Hancock (2002) reported that music teachers' specific concerns about administrative support related to understanding of the importance of music education, perception of music as an extracurricular activity, apathy for music education, and music classes used as a "respite for academic teachers". Music teachers reportedly felt that administrators held more control over their classes than over other subjects due to the lack of other controlling forces such as state requirements found in other classes. Often enrollment figures were used to justify the existence of the program and this could affect the quality and value of instruction music teachers were able to provide. As one former band director stated, "teaching music is always playing the numbers game. When a kid would quit, it

always was a little knife in the side and you asked yourself – what did I do wrong?"

(Scheib, 2004, p. 55).

Individual-Level Factors for Teacher Attrition

       Teacher Demographics.

       While extensive research was found on predominately school-level factors and

their relation to teacher attrition or retention, there was also research conducted on the

type of teacher that leaves the field or stays (Browers & Tomic, 2000; Chapman &

Lowther, 1982; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; McKinney, 1910; Nieto, 2003;

Williams, 2003). It is commonly thought that women are more likely than men to

enter the teaching profession and research appeared to support this belief (Chapman &

Lowther, 1982; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Women were also reported to

have a greater commitment to the teaching profession as well as find greater

satisfaction in their work as teachers (1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey;

Chapman & Lowther, 1982).

      The 1991-1992 Schools and Staffing Survey reported that minority teachers

were less likely to leave the profession than white teachers. However, research

showed that it was often harder to recruit minority teachers (Cochran–Smith, 2004;

Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). In their research on characteristics of those

entering teaching, Guarino, et. al. found that females formed a greater proportion of

new teachers than males and whites formed a greater proportion than minorities

(2006).

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Teacher Personal Characteristics.

In a 1982 study of teachers, Chapman and Lowther found that one of four factors influencing career satisfaction was a teacher's personal characteristics. Nieto (2003) stated that "teachers' identities are deeply implicated in their teaching" (p. 16). As early as 1910, the influence of personality on teaching was being studied. McKinney (1910) stated that one measures their education by the "number of stimulating, suggestive, and inspiring teachers it has been our good fortune to have known" (p. 37). Successful, veteran teachers were described as being social, artistic, enterprising, determined, courageous, and resilient (Chapman & Lowther, 1982; Williams, 2003).

Teachers must be leaders and discerners as they are constantly dealing with human nature and the uniqueness of each student (McKinney, 1910; Williams, 2003). Studies of veteran teachers reported that they thrive off of the connections made with students (McKinney, 1910; Nieto, 2003; Williams, 2003). This leads to another common trait among teachers, that of hope. Successful teachers have hope in their students and the promise of public education (Nieto, 2003). Hope has also been described as love – "a combination of trust¸ confidence, and faith in students, and a deep admiration for their strengths (Nieto, 2003 p. 16).

Williams' (2003) study of veteran teachers found that intellectual stimulation was a key personality trait in successful teachers. They thrived on the challenge of meeting students' needs and opportunities to make lessons creative and varied.

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McKinney (1910) supported this finding using the term "knowledge" instead of "intellectual" stimulation. He stated that a love of knowledge may lead one to the teaching profession, but that the teacher must then be the "agent for bringing knowledge and the child together" (p. 103).

Because of the strong connection successful teachers had to their students and to their subject matter, they often located any problems within themselves. This can be a leading cause of burnout and attrition (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Schieb, 2003; Williams, 2003).

Intrinsic Rewards.

Teachers frequently cited a sense of purpose or calling as a reason for entering the field (Nieto, 2003; Williams, 2003). The rewards they received for teaching were a sense of effectiveness and seeing the progress and success of their students. These are known as intrinsic rewards (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Teachers were more likely to stay in the field, often despite other negative factors, if they continued to receive these intrinsic rewards (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Nieto, 2003; Williams, 2003).

The desire to make a difference and motivate young people was a strong motivator to enter the teaching field but it is also played a large part in the retention of veteran teachers (Day & Gu, 2008; Williams, 2003). These teachers cited the importance of positive teacher-pupil relationships and the bond formed with some students as a reinforcement of their decision to teach and something that continued to

recharge them in their later years of teaching (Day & Gu, 2008). Day and Gu (2008) reported that pupils' progress and positive teacher-pupil relationships were at the heart of veteran teachers' job satisfaction and ongoing commitment to the profession.

As stated earlier, there is much more specific research linked to individual-level causes for attrition in general education than there is to be found related to fine arts and music teacher attrition. Given the nature of the subject matter, individual-level factors are often reasons fine arts and music teachers are able to stay in the profession, though they may still be the source of attrition in some cases.

Individual -Level Factors for Fine Arts/Music Teacher Attrition

Teacher Personal Characteristics.

Music teachers were often cited as having dual personalities or identities (Scheib, 2006). Bouij (2004) identified four role dimensions of the music educator – all-around musician, performer, pupil-centered teacher, and content-centered teacher. The identity of performer was considered to be more influential than either of the teacher identities. Music teacher training programs often focus on the musician aspect of the student and students more often identify themselves as a musician before an educator. The identity transition that takes place upon entering the teaching field is a potential cause for attrition (Scheib, 2006).

Artistic Commitment.

For music teachers, the nature of music itself served as a type of intrinsic reward (Byo & Cassidy, 2005; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; McLain, 2005). Pre-service

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and in-service teachers cited the enriching and reinforcing nature of music and the

musical environment as a reason for both entering and staying in the teaching field

(Byo & Cassidy, 2005; Madsen & Hancock, 2002). A 2002 study by Ayres found that

music teachers ranked second only to elementary teachers in the sense of personal

accomplishment they received from their job (as cited in McLain, 2005). McLain

(2005) stated that this may be due to "music's nature as a performance medium" and a

better "personalization" of the teaching role "not felt by teachers of other subjects" (p.

82).

We have now examined specific causes, both school-level and individual-level,

for why many teachers leave the profession, while others stay. In the arena of

teaching, however, it seems rare that only one of the factors discussed above is the

cause for a teacher to leave the classroom (Day & Gu, 2008; McLain, 2005). It

appears to be possible that when multiple factors intermingle and combine, teachers

may face a most debilitating circumstance: teacher burnout.

Burnout

Definition and Symptoms.

Burnout has been defined as a combination of the effects of overwork, physical

and emotional exhaustion, and professional frustration over a prolonged period of time

with insufficient recovery (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008; Maslach, 1981 as

cited in McLain, 2005). It is often characterized by a loss of idealism or enthusiasm

for work, depression, and depersonalization. The causes have often been cited to work-related stressors (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; McLain, 2005).

Physical symptoms of burnout include: insomnia, fatigue, high blood pressure, and headaches. Emotional symptoms include: anger, nervousness, depression, cynicism, and panic (McLain, 2005). The stressors causing burnout prohibit the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, a stress-response system, from functioning correctly and thus the symptoms of burnout manifest themselves. The negative function of the HPA in teacher burnout has also been linked to patients suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or chronic fatigue syndrome (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008). The Finnish Health 2000 Study found that over 50% of severe burnout cases meet criteria for depressive disorders (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008).

Causes.

Burnout has been linked to the social environment at work and work stress (Bellingrath, Weigl, & Kudielka, 2008). Litt and Turk (1985) reported that 79% of public school teachers feel their job is a major source of stress (as cited in LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). Work stressors were given as school conditions, support staff, poor leadership, resources, and student behavior problems (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; McLain, 2005). McLain (2005) found that teachers who felt negatively about their administrative, parent, colleague, and community support fell into a high burnout category.

New teachers were found to be especially at risk for burnout in relation to work environment (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006). Goddard, et. al (2006) found that new teachers were often overwhelmed by the pressures of the school environment, confusion about roles, and lack of support which can lead to the early onset of burnout. The same new teachers also reported an imbalance between the effort they put in to their work and the rewards they received from it.

The personality of the teacher can also play a part in burnout. Burnout that manifests itself early in the teaching career could be caused by an inability to cope with stress or the reality that the idealism and enthusiasm that drew a teacher to their career will not be enough to sustain them (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). Hedden (2005) found a decline in stress among teachers with more time in the profession, leading to the conclusion that given time, some teachers may be able to develop coping strategies to deal with the stress they encounter early in their careers.

Teachers with low self-efficacy are also more prone to burnout (Browers & Tomic, 1999; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991). LeCompte & Dworkin (1991) found that teachers who have a sense that what they are doing is meaningless and that they have no power to make changes are most likely to leave the field. On the opposite end of the spectrum, teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy and deep investment in their job are likely to take the blame upon themselves for any stress they have and cite themselves as the cause of any problems. This too could lead to high burnout levels (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Scheib, 2003; Williams, 2003).

Conclusion

It is evident that there is a continuing need for research regarding the causes of teacher retention or attrition. However, there is a larger body of research regarding teacher attrition than there is for retention. Most of retention research focuses on new teachers rather than veteran teachers. Several studies (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Day & Gu, 2008; Fredrickson & Neill, 2004; Hancock, 2009; Nieto, 2003; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Williams, 2003) make the case that perhaps more should be done to consider what keeps teachers in the field and apply that information to strategies for encouraging teachers who may be trying to make the decision to stay or leave. Personal characteristics appear to play a significant role in one's decision to enter the teaching field and achieve subsequent success. Many studies (Cochran-Smith, 2004: Nieto, 2003; Scheib, 2003; Williams, 2003) refer to the more abstract reasons of a "calling" or "purpose" in a teacher's decision to enter and remain in the field.

While there is a substantial body of research regarding music teacher attrition, there is less that focuses solely on orchestra teacher attrition and retention. It is the goal of this research to add to the literature by considering all of the factors listed above and how they relate to orchestra teachers as well as being open to the discovery of any other potential causes of attrition and retention that apply specifically to orchestra teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

It is the researcher's goal to understand the professional lives of experienced orchestra directors and possibly uncover factors and experiences that have helped sustain them as their careers evolved. My research questions arise from a problem, namely, the low retention rates of orchestra teachers. Patton (1990) states that "the purpose of applied research, then, is to generate potential solutions to human and societal problems," (p. 154). As the researcher seeks to find solutions to reinforce orchestra teachers in their career purpose, a qualitative study seems fitting. It is the researcher's belief that one of the most effective ways to uncover factors leading to orchestra teacher retention is to listen to and observe in action orchestra teachers who have continued past those crucial first five years.

What is Qualitative Research?

Qualitative research is designed to help the researcher "understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible," (Merriam, 1998, p. 5).

Creswell (1998) lists eight reasons to undertake a qualitative study: 1) the nature of the research question, 2) the topic needs to be explored, 3) the need to present a detailed view of the topic, 4) to study individuals in their natural setting, 5) interest in writing in a literary style, 6) sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed data analysis of "text" information,

7) audiences are receptive to qualitative research and, 8) to emphasize the researcher's role as an active learner. In order to help us better understand the nature of qualitative research, what follows is a closer look at each of these eight reasons as well as definitions of qualitative research by other scholars.

The first reason Creswell lists is "the nature of the research question." Instead of starting with and testing a hypothesis, qualitative researchers typically start with a problem and "build toward a theory" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). According to Merriam (1998), a qualitative study would be "undertaken because there is a lack of theory, or existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon" (p. 7). This leads to Creswell's second reason; "the topic needs to be explored."

As was observed in the review of literature, there are large amounts of data concerning why teachers leave the profession, but much less about why they stay. Thus, the goal of this research is to understand why some orchestra teachers remain and potentially build a theory regarding their retention. Patton (1990) describes this as applied research. He states that "the purpose of the research is to contribute knowledge that will help people understand the nature of a problem so that human beings can more effectively control their environment" (p. 153).

Creswell's third reason for undertaking a qualitative study is the "need to present a detailed view of the topic." According to Patton (1990), the method of approaching the study without the constraints of a specific hypothesis allow for more "depth, openness, and detail" in the inquiry (p. 13). Usually the sample size is small to allow for a more detailed study (Merriam, 1998). In order to understand the nature of

an experienced orchestra director's professional life, the writer believes it will be most useful to study a small sample size of directors (in this study, five) in order to observe the facets of their daily job. This also fits Creswell's fourth reason for conducting a qualitative study.

"Choose a qualitative approach in order to study individuals in their natural setting," (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). Merriam supports this reason by stating that, "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed…how they make sense of their world…" (Merriam, 1998 pg. 6). The best way to do this is through field work, observing participants in their professional environment. In this particular case, the researcher feels she is best able to understand the intricacies of a veteran orchestra director's professional life, by observing them in their classroom, watching directors interact with students, and handle situations that may arise during a class period. The researcher also believes the participants will feel most free to talk about their experiences as a teacher if they complete the interview while in the familiar setting of their classroom or office.

The data collected from this type of research is extensive and detailed. The organization and analysis of the data leads to Creswell's fifth reason for undertaking a qualitative study, "an interest in writing in a literary style" (Creswell, 1998, p. 18). When relating the product of the research, words, more than numbers, are used to describe what has been learned. Often, there will be large amounts of direct quotes from the participants and detailed description of the situation from the researcher. In short, the document will be "richly descriptive" (Merriam, 1998, p. 8).

As stated above, this "richly descriptive" data is found and collected in the field. In Creswell's sixth reason, he states that one must have "sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed analysis of "text" information," (Creswell, 1998, p. 18). There are three kinds of data collection in qualitative research; interviews, observations, and written documents (Patton, 1990). In this study, the researcher used interviews and observations to collect data. The field work consisted of travelling to participants schools, observing their work environment, and daily interactions. Interviews were open-ended, allowing participants to talk freely about their experiences as public school orchestra teachers.

That "audiences are receptive to qualitative research" is Creswell's seventh reason for undertaking a qualitative study. While Creswell has an audience of academic committees or publications open to publishing qualitative studies in mind, in conducting this research, I have another. Just as above, I acknowledged the fact that I had been in the public school field, had left, and am undecided as to my return; therefore, my research seeks to aid those young teachers in a similar position or those yet to enter the field. The literary style of the qualitative study allows the reader to gain a nearly firsthand account of the successful, experienced teacher studied in this research. I also believe the information is more accessible to that audience in a qualitative format.

Creswell's eighth and final reason for a qualitative study is "to emphasize the researcher's role as an active learner." This study is as much for me as it is for the audience discussed above. The study is not completed merely to fulfill a degree

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requirement, but also provide the researcher with information and a closer look at the practices, mindset, personality, and other characteristics yet to be discovered of the veteran teachers who have agreed to be participants in the study. I hope to learn as much as my intended audience and I hope our new found knowledge will be useful in guiding us down career paths as seem appropriate to each reader.

Participants

Participants in the study are five orchestra directors in the state of Texas with 7-15 years of teaching experience. This experience range was selected with the mindset that teachers will have crossed the crucial five year mark of teacher attrition. While still several years in to their career, the participants will yet be close enough to their early years of teaching as to remember their experiences clearly.

Given the voluminous amounts of data often collected in a qualitative study, the sample size was set at five to allow for a somewhat broad amount of information and experiences, but remain small enough that the data is manageable. Participant selection was limited to the state of Texas for three reasons: 1) that is the state in which the researcher resides, 2) the standardization of expectations for quality of music programs is controlled throughout the state by the University Interscholastic League (UIL), and 3) proximity allowed for somewhat easier access regarding field work.

Participants all had middle school teaching experience. One participant still teaches at a middle school while the other four are now based at high schools. They

are spread out across the state of Texas, allowing for variety of experiences given location, local culture, size and demographics of schools, management of school districts and fine arts departments. Four of the five participants completed their teacher training at the same Texas state institution, while the fifth completed his at another Texas institution.

A list of potential research participants was obtained through a database of graduates from the researcher's university, the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) member database, and the researcher's own knowledge of teachers in UIL regions where she had previously taught. The lists were culled down to orchestra teachers with seven to fifteen years of experience. The teachers on the final list of possible participants were contacted through email. The nature of the research and the amount of time the participant would need to devote to it was explained in the email. Candidates were then asked to respond to the email if they would be willing to participate.

Five candidates responded positively to the request to participate in the research. All responders fit the teaching experience criteria as well as providing a diverse geographical spread throughout the state of Texas. Two participants were teaching in the West Texas area, two in the North Texas area, and one in the Southeastern part of the state. Dates and times were arranged for the researcher to visit the teachers' schools, observe their classes, and conduct an interview.

Introduction of Participants.

Beth – Beth is a high school orchestra director in North Texas. She has been teaching for eight years and has worked in three different school districts in different parts of the state. Beth attended a state university in Texas.

Fernando – Fernando is a high school orchestra director in West Texas. He has been teaching for nine years and has worked in two different school districts in various parts of the state. Fernando attended a state university in Texas.

James- James is a high school orchestra director in North Texas. He has been teaching for fifteen years and has worked in two different school districts in various parts of the state. James attended a state university in Texas.

Luke – Luke is a middle school orchestra director in Southeast Texas. He has been teaching for nine years and has worked in the same school district for the length of his career, but in two different schools. Luke attended a state university in Texas.

Rhonda – Rhonda is a high school orchestra director in West Texas. She has been teaching for eight years and has worked in three different school districts. Rhonda attended a state university in Texas.

It is important to note that Beth, Fernando, Luke, and Rhonda all attended the same state university in Texas, at varying times, and David completed his teacher training at another state university, also in Texas.

Human Subjects Statement

The researcher referred to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) website for guidelines in conducting research with human subjects. As the research was a case study, an oral history, and did not include "identifiers", it was found that documentation through the IRB was not necessary.

Participants were informed by email and again in person of the nature of the study, the type of information that would be gathered, and that their names would be changed for privacy purposes in the final document of the study.

Data Gathering

Research data was gathered through two formats: interviews and observations. As discussed above, these are two of the three main forms of data collection in qualitative research. Let us look more closely at the process of conducting an interview.

"The purpose of interviewing…is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective," (Patton, 1990, p. 278). In order to uncover the reasons why the participants in this study have been able to continue in the teaching field, the researcher used a semi-structured interview format. A semi-structured interview is less rigid in format than a typical questionnaire. Questions were open-ended, worded in such a way as to allow the respondent to elaborate on answers rather than just stating a yes or no. The respondents' answers often lead the researcher to ask further questions about the subject or open the way for questions on a new, but similarly related topic

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(Merriam, 1998). There was also a more rigid section to the interview structure if specific information was needed from the participants. For the purposes of this research, structured questions were used to gather background information about the participants regarding topics such as family and education. Patton (1990) refers this type of interview as the "standardized open-ended interview," (p. 284). He explains that interview questions are to be written out

carefully and exactly, choosing just the right wording. As a researcher who is both new to research and the qualitative method, it was important to me also to use this interview format to ensure that all participants were asked the same questions, so there would be no missing information. It was also important to use this format to, as Patton states, "minimize interviewer effects," and because "the necessity for interviewer judgment during the interview is reduced," (p. 285).

The interview questions were reviewed by the researcher's committee chair and other graduate students with some experience conducting research. Two veteran teachers, not participants in the actual study, were given the interview and asked to comment on and make suggestions for improvement of the questions and wording.

"Observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview," (Merriam, 1998, p. 94). The data collection format of observation was used to give the researcher insight in to the working conditions of the teacher participants. I was able to see the location where they work in the largest sense, the town, to the smallest sense, their own classroom. This allowed me to compare what I see as an outside observer to

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the participants' descriptions of their working conditions and provide a better understanding of their perceptions of this topic in the study. The researcher also used observation to help identify any underlying feelings regarding questions participants may not feel wholly comfortable expressing.

Observational data was collected in the form of field notes. The researcher took notes while watching a class. She was particularly observant of the size and layout of the classroom, the student demographics, teacher-student interactions, and any interruptions in the flow of the rehearsal. During the interview field notes were taken mentally regarding the researcher's perception of the participant's body language and expressions. The notes were then written down as soon as possible upon leaving the field in order to capture the experience as clearly as possible for future analysis (Merriam, 1998). The data from these observations will later be used to triangulate find from the interviews during analysis (Merriam, 1998).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how school-level factors, (those factors that seem to be out of teachers' control, such as administrative support, compensation, and work environment) and individual-level factors, (those factors within a teacher's control, such as personal characteristics and intrinsic rewards), combine to support teacher retention. Five veteran orchestra teachers, in the state of Texas, were interviewed about their professional lives, in order to understand factors, school-level and individual-level, that have led to their longevity. 61% of teacher responses related to school-level categories while 39% were about individual-level categories. The largest single sub-category with 23% of responses was teacher personal characteristics in the individual-level category. Thirteen categories emerged from the analysis of participant interview responses. Some categories of responses aligned themselves closely with categories found in the review of literature. These are: teacher personal characteristics, intrinsic/aesthetic rewards, administrative support, work environment, compensation, facilities, and student characteristics. Other categories emerged that were more specific to the participants. Those included: mentors, teacher training, early challenges, goals and motivators, work load, and work/life balance. Of the top ten, in order of most frequent category to least, responses centered on notions of:

1. Teacher personal characteristics

2. Work load

3. Intrinsic/aesthetic rewards

4. Mentorship

5.   Administrative support

6. Early challenges

7. Work Environment

8. Goals/motivators

9. Teacher training

10. Compensation.

While some of the responses were negatively phrased (as the writer found in the literature review) these five participants were largely positive in describing their teaching lives.

Participant Responses.

Interviews with each participant took place at their school. Individual responses to questions shared similarities and differences with the responses of other participants. Each teacher's interview had one or two reoccurring themes in their responses. Examples of themes are: work load, students as motivators, goals and motivators, and optimism. Before delving in to the results and discussion, what follows is a brief synopsis of the main themes from each participant's interview. Beth – The researcher met with Beth during her conference period on a typical school day. The interview was conducted in her office, which she shares with the choir director. The choir director was present during her interview. Beth's interview

responses frequently focused on her investment in her students and her relationships with them as a prime motivator for teaching. Beth was also open about how the work load and somewhat routine aspects that comes with teaching orchestra can lead to burn out. She emphasized the need for variety both in her life outside of school and within her classroom.

Fernando – The researcher met with Fernando during his conference time, the first period of the day. The interview took place in his office: the junior varsity mariachi ensemble was practicing in the orchestra room. Before beginning the interview questions, the researcher explained the purpose of her research, which led to an interesting discussion with Fernando about teacher attrition and the difference between the environment of teaching a core subject and that of a music class. He focused that portion of the discussion on his feeling of the growing institutionalization of the education system. Within the structure of the interview questions, Fernando talked about the need for "recharging" time to balance out the work load of being a teacher. He also emphasized the aesthetic rewards of music as a motivator for teaching.

James – The researcher met with James during what would normally be a rehearsal time for one of his classes. He had given his students a break from rehearsal after hosting a contest over the weekend. The interview took place in James' office while his students were in the orchestra room, working quietly on homework, or talking quietly; there was classical music playing over the speaker system. Throughout the interview, the theme of having a goal, or a vision was emphasized. James also talked

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about necessity of having colleague support and showed him-self to be extremely

organized, another thing he said was essential to running a successful program.

Luke – The researcher met with Luke during his conference period in the afternoon.

The interview took place in his office. His assistant was running rehearsal with their

7th grade orchestra in the orchestra room. Luke's interview responses focused on

being positive and optimistic. He also focused on the students as motivation and the

importance of having a vision as a purpose to keep teaching. He emphasized that it

was important to keep perspective about the profession as a job.

Rhonda – Rhonda's interview took place at two different times. The interview was

started at the end of a school day and later finished during her morning conference

period. Both meetings took place in her office. Rhonda was very open about her

struggles with the concept of continuing to teach year after year. She talked about

finding success as a motivator for staying in the profession. Rhonda also placed a

great deal of emphasis on having a connection with students and serving as a mentor

to them.

     Now, we will examine interview responses as a whole. For the purpose of this

chapter, reporting the results, participant responses will be organized by size of

category beginning with the largest category of responses, teacher personal

characteristics, and continuing in order of the categories with the most responses to the

least responses (see list above). In Chapter 5, we will return to the concept of school-

level and individual-level factors and discuss how each response category works

together to aid in these participants retention in the teaching field.

Teacher Personal Characteristics

Several relevant, repeated characteristics emerged in the data: perseverance and determination (7 responses), optimism (6 responses), need to keep improving (4 responses), ability to relate to students (4 responses), being creative (3 responses), and being organized (3 responses). Figure 4.1 below provides a visual representation of the response sub-categories.
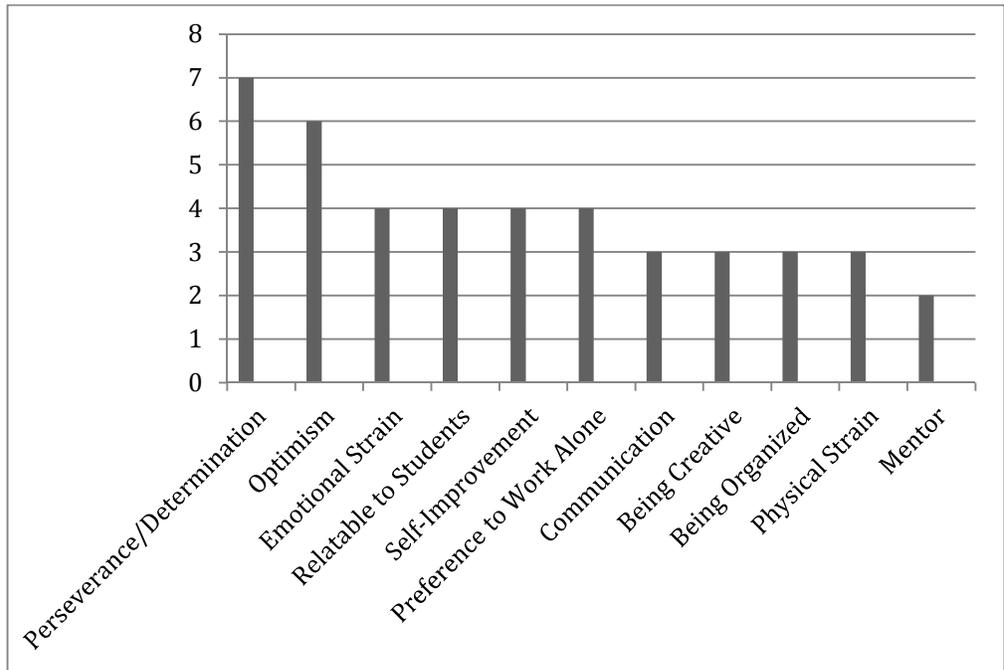

Figure 4.1. Teacher Personal Characteristics

Perseverance and Determination.

In previous studies, two of the traits used to describe successful veteran teachers are determined and resilient (Chapman & Lowther, 1982; Williams, 2003). In this study, two teachers, Rhonda and Luke, specifically addressed their determination. Rhonda referred to determination with the phrase "tunnel vision" (a kind of extra focus). Due to administrative turnovers at various levels, Rhonda told

me that for the past three years, and soon a fourth, her school has had a different bell

schedule. Often this scheduling makes it hard for students to register for orchestra due

to class conflicts or the schedule shortens the amount of time Rhonda will have with

her students each week. She went on to explain that despite these or other challenging

circumstances her "approach has always been just…teach my class to the best of my

ability…", thus her "tunnel vision".

Luke's determination was focused towards his students' success. His desire

was that all of his students, no matter their reason for being in orchestra or their skill

level, would do well. Luke stated that, "they do well…because I refuse to let them fall

through the cracks." This attention to each individual student appeared to be an

important factor to his orchestra's success.   Rhonda also directed her determination

towards student success. She stated, "I can't pinpoint any reason why I have success

except that I demand it…" This was her way of describing a teacher characteristic of

"attention to detail". It was not only a part of her make-up as a teacher, but also one

that she instilled in her students.

Intellectual Stimulation.

In her 2003 study of veteran teachers, Jackie Williams found that intellectual

stimulation was a key trait in successful teachers (Williams, 2003). The participants in

this study supported Williams' finding, and reflected that their intellectual stimulation

comes in the form of a constant need to keep improving. Luke said, "Maybe one of

the more motivating things [about] being somewhere consecutively [at the same

school for more than three years]…what level are they at? Cause if they're not at that

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level it's nobody's fault but yours…" There appeared to be a constant pressure on these successful orchestra teachers to maintain the same or greater level of success in their program. Rhonda explained that the "success…it's addictive." She continued, "Once you have it…you don't want to be worse so you have to try even harder." This constant need to maintain a successful program also affected the work load of these teachers, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The need to keep improving is related to improving the process of learning. Luke got excited as he described the ways he teaches new concepts to students, "It's cool to sit in front of kids and something as simple…as bending their thumb on a bow hold and see what you can do to make it interesting for them…" He also talked about being a "chameleon" and using that to positively affect the atmosphere in the classroom. Along with being creative, these successful teachers also constantly seek new information. Beth described herself by saying, "I'm a big question asker," and attributed this characteristic to her experience as an assistant orchestra director. Luke and James also explained the necessity of asking questions of other orchestra directors and seeing other, successful, programs. When talking about his early career and growth as a teacher, James said, "You have to see other programs, you have to listen to other orchestras."

Optimism and Creativity.

Optimism appeared to be another key factor in these five participants' longevity as teachers. While these teachers readily admitted that not everything that happens during a work day is going to be good, Luke emphasized that, "how you spin

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it," affects the gravity of a situation. This positive outlook is also something that is important to bring to the classroom. Beth explained that she "definitely brings her sense of humor to the classroom," in order to lighten the strained atmosphere that can often develop during an hour and a half rehearsal. Energy also comes from optimism. Luke explained his classroom as such:

> "You get in front of the kids at 7:30 and I've made up my mind that every day they're gonna have the best first period they've ever had in their life…so…drink lots of coffee…it's fun…it's important for you and your kids to stay positive about what you do."

Luke seemed to put more emphasis on staying positive than other participants. Perhaps this stemmed from the fact that he is a full-time middle school director and there is a greater need to keep a positive energy in the classroom with that particular age group.

Ability to Relate to Students.

Williams (2003) and Nieto (2003) found that veteran teachers thrive off the connections they make with students. The veteran teachers in this study also exhibited the characteristic of relating well to their students. Luke stated that, "You have to stay in touch with being a kid." He explained that teachers were once kids themselves and so "need to teach the way [they] would have liked to be taught." This statement reflects his personal characteristic discussed earlier of being creative with teaching techniques. Beth explained that, "the kids play and reflect...the personality of the director." Her understanding of this and ability to perceive the type of atmosphere her students need in the classroom creates an effective rehearsal time.

Mentorship.

The ability to relate to students leads to another teacher characteristic, that of being a mentor to students. This trait was particularly strong in Rhonda's teaching personality. She told of the discovery of the connection a music teacher can have with their students, "Maybe all you need is that one year of having that [student connection]…you know that it's possible…realizing there's more to it than music…" This connection with her students was one of the driving forces behind Rhonda's continued work as an orchestra director. She took her role as a mentor seriously: "I mentor a lot of my own kids…I check their grades and I help them out with their homework…what you're supposed to do when you're a mentor…"

Communication.

Another characteristic of successful teachers, James pointed out, is good communication skills. He said that, "it took me a long time to learn how to communicate in front of large groups…" James explained that he had to "become an actor" to show his ensembles what he was trying to communicate and to draw out of them what the music required. And being an actor means communicating non-verbally and letting students "do". For him, part of successful communication was having the students "doing" for a greater percentage of time than the teacher is talking. He observed that, "A lot of teachers that I see that are not successful…there's probably only about ten minutes of doing." This is a common problem among young teachers and one will be described in a later section on the challenges of the participants' early careers.

Organization.

Good organization or attention to organization was recognized as a key to success by many of these teachers. The researcher was particularly impressed with James' level of organization. When discussing scheduling for the orchestra program, elementary through high school or recruiting and program growth, he was able to print out spread- sheets with schedules and projections sheets for growth. James also shared a thorough knowledge of how budgeting worked within the state and within his school district. When the researcher commented on his level of organization, James responded, "well, but you have to be." As the head director of a 5A high school, he is "in charge of everything." Having a thorough understanding of the facets of his district is one of the things that has allowed this particular director to be successful. When he needs something, more staff or a budget increase for example, he is able to support his request with facts.

Fernando also recognized the fact that organization is a key to success. He said, "my own personal theory about this is…you've either got to be ultra organized…or…you've just gotta be a natural teacher." While he readily admitted that he is not the most organized of teachers, Fernando was aware of things he can and tries to do on an organizational level that will help him as a teacher. For him the struggle was, "How much of your personal time do you want to give up? …I don't want to spend all the time I have at home for myself…doing something to make my

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job easier." This is a conflict all five participants faced and will be discussed further in the section on work load.

Preference to Work Alone.

In the state of Texas, it is sometimes common for larger school districts to employee assistant directors, to a greater or lesser degree, in band, choir, and orchestra. Of the five directors participating in this study, three had an assistant. It was interesting to note however, that some teachers admitted they prefer to work alone. Fernando said that while he would "love an assistant," he was hesitant to "give up an orchestra," and what he would really prefer is a "data clerk." Often, most assistants are given control over the younger ensembles and Fernando felt that it was his responsibility to oversee the development of his younger students' technique and maintain the depth of his program. Having a "clerk" to handle paperwork would allow him more time to focus on his students.

Rhonda had similar beliefs to those of Fernando. "I like things my way," she admitted. She expounded upon this shared mode of operation by explaining:

> "I think orchestra is very much more personal…and most head directors have a certain way of doing things…because it's effective and it's really difficult to be successful in orchestra…so if there is a head director who has found a way that works, they become very…particular."

Physical and Emotional Strain.

The participants also described another teacher characteristic that comes with teaching, that of physical and emotional strain. Fernando explained that he struggles with losing his voice due to a condition with his vocal chords. "I feel like I'm treading water sometimes," he said to describe the exhaustion that often comes from running a

large program. Despite these hardships, the students remained the focus of Fernando'

work. "I feel like it's my job to make sure that my limitations don't limit them as

well."

When participants were asked about their feelings towards coming to work

each day, discussion of the emotional strain of teaching arose. Rhonda explained her

thoughts on some mornings, "you kind of start getting nervous and kind of

apprehensive…" But both she and Luke said those feelings go away once the teaching

starts. "Sometimes it is like practicing an instrument," described Luke, "the worst part

about practicing is sometimes taking out your instrument, but once you start

playing…that's where you make something of it." Rhonda also talked about the

necessity of breaks from school, such as spring break and summer because of the

physical and emotional demands of the teaching profession:

> "I think a lot of people…that are not teachers…all they see is the summers and
> the breaks and…that's all as a teacher you count down to because it's so
> exhausting, because when you're here you put every ounce of effort you can in
> to it, and that you couldn't…I mean there's no way I could survive without a
> time to release all that and kinda go, '[exhales] Okay…let's do it again.'"

Work Load

One of the greatest challenges these teachers faced was their work load. All

five teachers were head directors at their schools. Four of the five teachers were high

school directors who also aided in teaching and recruiting at their middle school feeder

programs. As James put it, "You're in charge of everything." Fernando explained,

"There's a million things to think about all the time." Whether they stay at one school

all day or travel to others, participants' schedules stayed busy and lengthy. Rhonda, who frequently traveled to middle schools to assist directors there, shared, "It's difficult to try and keep everything running here [high school]…spending all my mornings there [middle school] and all my afternoon teaching…" Fernando, who was able to stay at the high school all day described a typical time schedule as, "sectionals at 7:30, be here until 6:00."

Parenthetically, the writer feels it is also important to note that during the course of all five interviews, each teacher had at least one interruption in the form of a phone call or someone walking in to their office. These occurrences provided examples of head directors who are in charge of everything about their program and their work load is not just about teaching time, often it is unbalanced towards administrative tasks.

This 11 to 12 hour day is common among directors. Beth stated that in her first year as an assistant director, her head director, "was up there 'til really late hours at night…I had to [be] up there with her…it was very time consuming." Rhonda described her schedule during the early part of her career, "I worked way too much, I was there at, literally, 6:30 in the morning and stayed there until probably 8:30 or 9 every night."

Often, the necessity for long hours was from large amounts of paperwork and insufficient prep time during the school day. Rhonda explained it this way, "Knowing that I have to do…90% paperwork and only ten, maybe 5% teaching…that's what's frustrating more than anything…why you end up being at

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school 'til eight or nine in the evening." Luke described a large portion of the job as

"being your own secretary." Fernando supported this sentiment:

> "For all the things that are great about teaching, the interaction with kids and
> being able to influence lives, there is so much other minutia and paper work
> and emails and attendance and grades and all that stuff that you can really get;
> it's easy to get bogged down…"

As mentioned above, lack of appropriate preparatory time was one of the main

causes of the long hours these veteran teachers worked daily. "There's supposed to be

a law of prep time…if you're teaching four different levels like our middle schools

are…you should have four hours in the day to be able to prep for them…it doesn't

happen," explained James when asked about the amount of preparatory time he is

given during the day. Beth said that her conference time "is kinda split between

middle school… [and] my conference time." However, she seemed to take this with

some equanimity stating, "I think that just is…the territory that comes with being an

orchestra director, we're so busy and we have so much [work] outside of class time…"

James also mentioned working outside of class when responding to what he likes to do

"outside of work". He said, "I'm a big nerd as far as computers…when I get home,

I'm usually just doing some really geeky stuff…like I do our website." Thus, even his

activities outside of work are still related to his orchestra program.

As mentioned above, most of these teachers spread their time among multiple

schools, assisting the orchestra teachers in their middle school feeder programs. Some

teachers have a class time dedicated to working at their feeder schools. Beth said, "I

have a class period everyday where I can go to middle schools and help them out…I

see her [middle school director] everyday, which is great." This teamwork

atmosphere seemed to provide solidarity and support among staff. "We all team teach everywhere," James explained, "Each one of us (high school directors) goes to a…middle school to help them out." During this portion of the interview, James had been explaining the complexities of scheduling class times and travel periods. Every teacher, middle school and high school, in his district travels; including some who "go to five schools in a day." While this district seems to have everything running smoothly with the staff they have, James admitted that more staff would be helpful as the program continued to grow.

"It is nice, you know, to have two people available…it's good to have an extra hand…even if it's just, 'Hey can you check roll? I'll start teaching. Go.'" said Luke, as he explained why having a full-time assistant is ideal.

Non-Teaching Duties.

It is common for teachers to have duty assignments that are not related to their teaching. These are often activities such as lunch room duty, before or after school bus duty, or hallway duty. Hallway duty and lunch duty are frequently scheduled during a teachers planning period. Four of the five participants in this study were assigned one or more duties for the school year in which the interview took place. "We have a couple this year," said Rhonda. One of her duties was hall duty which was scheduled during her conference period. She explained that on hall duty one, "roam[s] around for an hour and a half…make sure the halls are clear." Rhonda said that her hall duty schedule "is really difficult to back it up to my class because there's always just the last minute…need ten minutes to prep." She also pointed out that,

"only the elective teachers have to do it." Rhonda was the only teacher to mention

that only elective teachers were assigned certain duty schedules and more research

would need to be done to find out if this is common in other schools. Beth was

assigned lunch duty which took up a fourth of her conference time and Luke was

assigned a morning and afternoon hall duty. Both pointed out that these schedules are

on rotation and do not occur every week of the school year, so they seemed to accept a

duty schedule as part of the requirements of teaching.

Intrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic rewards were found to be one of the key motivators in participants'

ability to stay in the teaching profession. The two most common sources of intrinsic

rewards were music, itself, and their students. Often, the two would combine.

"Music was always a part of my life," said Beth and the same was true for each

of the five teachers in this study. Some grew up in a household of musicians while

others discovered music through their school programs. However they first

encountered music, it became an integral part of their lives. James and Luke both

discovered the joy of music in their school programs. James explained, "something

clicked…I…liked music…was drawn at the recruiting concert." Luke told two stories

about how he discovered the enjoyment of music and orchestra, "It was really cool to

make music…I'm like this ten year old kid making music, it's neat…it's something

I'm doing," he said of his first year in orchestra. Luke shared about one of the most

significant experiences he had as an orchestra student, "Region orchestra…that was

probably one of the pivotal experiences that I was like, 'Oh that's music. This is cool, I like this…we're just like a real orchestra…"

Positive musical experiences in their childhood led participants to desire that music always be a part of their life. Not all participants decided to become music teachers directly upon entering college, but all were led to the career path during their time in undergraduate school. Fernando said, "I didn't know I was going to be a teacher…but I knew something, it was gonna involve music somehow." Now that he is in the teaching field, Fernando affirmed, "My job brings me so much--joy, simply because of what I do, what I teach." Later in the interview, when discussing the challenges teachers face, he continued:

> "I mean, if was gonna put anything in my life it would be music…again, I go back to, if I was teaching math…I don't know if could surround my life with math that much when, when my passion is not math, you know…and if my passion wasn't music, I, again…and I can see why teachers quit."

This is a very direct way of showing that, to orchestra teachers, subject matter is extremely important in their motivation to teach. Luke reiterated, "You just kind of get a feel for what motivates you and kind of what you can see yourself doing every day, all day."

Participants also remembered how much they enjoyed music when they were in school. Luke said:

> "I remember that feeling being in junior high, the first piece we ever played and like, 'Whoa, I'm a kid making music and this is so cool'…and so, to share that with other kids is…that's a really cool thing…to light that fire."

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Beth remembered the importance her orchestra teachers had on influencing her love of music:

> "I saw how much my high school directors loved it…I want to convey that love of music to other students…they were very instrumental in…me wanting to be an orchestra director just because…they get to teach kids music. How awesome is that?"

Connection with students is another type of intrinsic reward. "They're the reason I'm here," stated Fernando when asked about his students. Connection with students was a common thread among the motivation of these teachers. Rhonda explained the motivation in this way, "You know, once you have that connection with a couple kids, that's all you need." Beth put it simply, "They make me happy, you know, when the class starts it's like, 'Okay, this is why I'm here.'"

These five orchestra teachers felt that they were fortunate to be able to combine their passion for music with their joy of helping students. The teachers in this study have discovered that music is an effective tool in connecting with their students. "Teaching is a kind of ministry," explained Rhonda, "you're touching kids lives everyday…I realized…I could use music as the tool to connect with kids and I thought that was kinda cool, combining the two…" Rhonda also talked about the unique relationship that music teachers have with their students because they will have the same students in their classes for three or four years. This allows more time for student and teacher to get to know one another. She shared about the students who feel comfortable asking for advice on very personal matters and how at that point she realized, "maybe it's not about music anyway, maybe it never was."

Mentors

Participants identified three different types of mentorship during their interviews. These were: people who were mentors to them, working as an assistant during their early career, and colleagues.

Early influence to become a music teacher came from the positive experiences participants had while in their school programs. "She made it a lot fun, plus…you know, she cared about [you]," said Luke of his experience in All-Region orchestra. He continued,

> "It was making music and somebody who's passionate about it and you see that…and, I don't know about you, but when I see somebody who's passionate about something, I don't care how dorky they are, or how stupid they look, that's inspiring…"

Rhonda and Beth both remembered the influence of their high school directors. "He was…always a huge influence…just an incredible teacher, and incredible mentor," reminisces Rhonda. Beth credited her decision to teach orchestra to her high school directors saying, "I saw how much my high school directors loved it."

Fernando shared about the influence of a private lesson teacher in high school:

> "She taught me for free. And, back then I was—I didn't really know like, but looking back on it I was like, that's a lot to give to somebody, teaching them free lessons. And then she ended up giving me her cello bow, that I still use today…because she knew…that I couldn't afford my own stuff…when I think about it, just how much she really helped me…I don't think I'd be here…"

Early Career Mentors.

Three of the five directors in this study started their careers as an assistant director, and they commented on the value of this opportunity. "It was a good experience," said Luke, "coming out of college, you don't necessarily know how to

start kids from scratch…to see that my first year was…probably the best experience."

Beth explained, "My head director was my mentor…she was assigned to me." Beth

was also able to seek help of the teacher who was previously in her position as she was

still in the same town, but now at a different school.

Both Luke and Rhonda were assistants at two different schools during their

first year. While they both said they did not have a specific mentor, they expounded

on the value of being able to observe two different teaching styles. "Just seeing the

different styles and seeing what was successful, and being able to talk and share just

kind of different things…what to and what not to do," is how Rhonda related what she

was able to learn as an assistant director. Luke told of his first year,

> "My first year teaching I was with this very, very experienced teacher and then
>
> this very, very inexperienced teacher…so I learned a lot from this…you can
>
> learn good and bad from anybody."

Colleagues as Mentors.

Now, instead of having a mentor, these veteran teachers placed emphasis on

colleague support. "Every year is a struggle and every year is a different struggle,"

said Rhonda, "I would ask, I got a lot of information…nothing that I do is my own."

When asked about having a mentor, James responded, "My friends…we were all

going through the same thing." Luke also shared these sentiments saying, "To have

somebody that does what you do…you talk about problems and you run things across

them."

Luke also said of his colleagues, "I don't think of them as mentors as much as I do resources." This concept of using other orchestra teachers as resources is something that has aided all of the participants in this study. Rhonda said, "Something we all forget is to ask. People are experienced." She also added, "If you're willing to ask people and start getting information then…it kind of builds you up." James stressed the importance of talking to other directors and listening to other groups by saying, "if you don't have the concept of what good is…then you're not gonna be good. Rhonda agreed,

> "Getting other people's ears, other insight, other people to tell you, 'How do you do it? What do you do?, What works for you?, What could we change?, What should I change?, Can you watch me?'…that's the only way I…became successful."

Administrative Support

In extant research on the reasons teachers leave the field, administrative support is frequently ranked in the top five of possible categories (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Scheib, 2004). The participants in this study placed emphasis on support from administrators and most reported positive relationships with their administrators.

Fernando recognized the fact that he is fortunate to have an administration that cares about the fine arts programs at their school by saying, "I've been also very lucky that my administration…is very…supportive." Luke mentioned that there have been several turnovers in the role of head principal, but there is an assistant principal who is, "very understanding which is; it's been a good thing. So that's probably the biggest reason for the smooth changes between administrators."

"Having [administrators] that used to do what I do now and having that experience," was Fernando's way of explaining that there are often differences between the needs of an orchestra classroom and that of a general classroom. Having an administrator with experience on the teaching end of fine arts is useful. Luke said of his assistant principal, "She's always…just been aware of the situation…when there's special scheduling say, 'Okay, we've gotta think about fine arts too, since they teach all grades.'" Again, this illustrates that administrators who are aware of the special needs of a fine arts classroom or program can relieve some of the stress of the job. Beth began teaching at her current school the first year it opened and talked about the foresight of the administrators in setting up the schedule for their fine arts teachers, "My administration wanted to keep us on campus full time, the choir and the orchestra and the band directors."

These teachers also cited the necessity of administrators who create a positive, supportive environment in their school. James said of his administration, "They know the success of the school and the students is if they have…something that they latch on to…" This belief in the necessity of student involvement has led his school to offer numerous electives from music classes to broadcasting and culinary arts. Fernando explained simply, "The administration is very helpful…very positive environment." Such a straight-forward answer is a testament to the greater job satisfaction teachers have with a supportive administration.

It is not just the administrators' job, however, to maintain a positive and supportive environment for fine arts teachers. James said, "You can't just be worried

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about your own thing because you're not gonna get what you want if you just

concentrate on your own stuff…you have to play well with everybody." Luke also

pointed out that it is important to keep administrators informed of a special situation.

"You want to make sure…you talk to her [assistant principal] about it, make sure she's

aware of it…she doesn't get caught off guard." Keeping an open line of

communication with administrators appeared to be an important facet of maintaining

support for a program and a positive working environment.

Even though participants largely had a supportive administration, there were

still some challenges they faced regarding administrative turnover. James, Luke and

Rhonda all reported turnovers within their administrative system at some point during

their careers; James and Luke on a school level and Rhonda on a district level.

"Really, there was, there was always a change in administration pretty much every

year that I've been here," said James. As mentioned above, Luke shared about the

assistant administrator who has been consistently at his school in the midst of several

other changes in administration.

Rhonda had seen administrative changes at a higher level: in her district

superintendent and fine arts director. She explained that each year her school is on a

different bell schedule which affects rehearsal time and students ability to register for

orchestra:

> "I can see where she's [superintendent] going, she's trying to make it
> consistent throughout the district and I can see her vision, but it's really rocky
> for West Texas to try to be changing all sorts of stuff…I think it's for the better
> eventually…all the orchestra programs, music programs are gonna go through
> some hits and some…hurting years to make up for …the changes…"

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Work Environment

   Administration.

   Participants' administration and support from their colleagues appeared to both positively or negatively affect the work environment. For example, Luke pointed out how "the temperature of your school…the mood at which your school is run through your principals has a lot to do with, the character of the classes and children." As mentioned above, a supportive and understanding group of administrators seemed to be a factor that some of the participants enjoy and that helped sustain them in their career. However, this was not the case for every teacher in the study. Rhonda said of her school, "Because we're a low performing school…the district has to see them doing extra things…" This had increased her work load and duty schedule outside of class. Regarding some of the extra duties she said, "It's only the elective teachers that have to do it." While these extra duties may not have seemed entirely fair to Rhonda and her colleagues, the added work load did not appear to be enough of a factor to outweigh the positive aspects of Rhonda's job.

   Colleague Support.

   Three of the five participants also talked about the value of having a culture of support within and among other orchestra teachers in their school district.   Luke explained that, "it hasn't always been that way," in his district, but it is changing and now "I'll have other teachers come in and do positive good work and then next week I'm helping another junior high in town…it's good to have that open." When asked about mentors, Rhonda said of the second school district in which she worked, "The

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other teachers; we mentored each other." There was an open line of communication among them and offer of support if someone needed it. James stated it simply, "We all team teach everywhere." He seemed to be saying that in order to have a successful program; all of the teachers in his district help each other out from the high school orchestra down to the elementary string programs. Having a support network of this sort seems to help bolster spirits and commitment.

Institutionalization.

Fernando cited a feeling of institutionalization within the school system today as a challenge to the teaching profession. He said that is, "almost morally hard to be a teacher" in today's education system of "process[ing] kids." Meaning that the focus is now on getting kids to school and passing a test rather than the, "ultimate goal of the student, and the teacher, which should be learning and education." However, Fernando reasoned that because of what he teaches he can "get around a lot of that." This relates back to the earlier section on intrinsic rewards. Teaching music as subject matter appears to be filled with intrinsic rewards from the joy of making music to engaging students with music and seems to be an effect coping mechanism against the institutionalization of K-12 education.

Isolation.

Feelings of isolation are a part of school culture among fine arts teachers. The reasons for these feelings were discussed in the literature review, including the notions that there are few teachers on campus with similar experiences and interests, heavy before and after school work load, and the fine arts facility's distance from the main

part of the school building as is commonly found in schools (Fredrickson & Neill, 2004; Scheib, 2006). Participants in this study reported similar feelings as teachers in previous research. Fernando said, "It's a very isolating job." However, most of these teachers also seemed to take this isolation as just another part of the job and some even seemed to feel a sense of pride in their differences from the rest of the school. When talking about her school building layout, Beth explained, "We're pretty far away from the front office…we have our own little wing down here." And James described the fine arts wing of his school as, "our side of the school," and continued by saying, "We get real insular here." Both of these teachers took ownership of their part of the school and seemed to enjoy having their own special place to teach. Perhaps this was another way of coping with a sense of isolation or, for these teachers, perhaps the isolation allowed them a sense of freedom to teach and work the way they feel is best for their students and program. Rhonda took the exclusivity of place a step further and stated, "We're our own people," thus accepting her differences from other teachers and glad to be that way.

Beth did point out the stress that can come from being the only person who teaches her subject, "Cause it's just me…I don't have an assistant or anybody to help me out, so I have to do it right the first time." The pressure from this sentiment can easily lead to teacher attrition and while Beth still felt the stress of being the only one doing her job, her past experience helped her deal with it. She explained that starting as an assistant was a very good way to learn the various facets of teaching while not having so much pressure on her shoulders.

Early Challenges

As stated in the review of literature, nearly 50% of general education teachers are leaving the profession within their first five years of teaching; 34% of music teachers (Madsen & Hancock, 2002). As the most challenging time a teacher faces in their career appears to be these first five years, the researcher decided to ask the participants about their experiences when they first began teaching. Though asked to describe their first five years of teaching, the participants' responses tended to focus on solely their first year, or first two years. This could be due to the possibility that the first year leaves the strongest impression in a young teacher's mind. Responses to the question began as such:

> Researcher: "Could you describe your first five years of teaching for me?"
>
> James: "Now that one was difficult…"
>
> Beth: "…It wasn't easy…it was pretty difficult… 'baptism by fire'…it was stressful, it was just a lot of learning new things, how schools are run…I can understand why some people…if they…have a personality where they just get too overwhelmed, I can see that…turnover rate."
>
> Rhonda: "…It was exhausting…and I thought, 'How in the world do people do this?'"

Once the teachers moved past their initial reaction to recalling their early years of teaching, they began to talk about specific challenges within those first five years.

Rhonda talked about the struggle to make the switch between being a student and being a teacher. She said,

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"I don't think it has anything to do with teaching…but the process of growing up and making that change…you've been a student for so long… sixteen, seventeenish years…I think just naturally those years of switching from being a student to being a teacher, you go through a lot of personal struggle."

Rhonda also described changing from student to teacher by finding your own personality and style:

"I was so focused on trying to be that teacher that I had learned to be…that I forgot to have a personality and I forgot to connect with the kids…I forgot that there's a deeper thing about teaching than just what's the note on the page."

Fernando described a common challenge of young teachers, "I used to talk myself crazy...people have to arrive at things [in their] own time and you can't force them."

Rhonda also told of the stress of expectation that comes with being a first-year teacher. Her first teaching job was in the same district in which she student taught. It is a very high performing district and, as a result, she said it "has a lot of pressure…to be something…expectation." She said this was hard for her as young teacher and so moved elsewhere her second year of teaching in order to feel she had more freedom to learn and make mistakes.

While these five teachers faced many of the same challenges that cause other young teachers to leave the field, they continued in their work. Participants discussed reasons they felt they were able to survive their first five years.

Beth started as an assistant director and said of that opportunity:

"Getting the opportunity to ask questions and not have it be just all on my shoulders and so stressful all the time and all eyes are on me, and everything that I touch it has to be right, otherwise if it's not, it's your fault."

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The reader can gather from her explanation the great amount of pressure she felt or

would have felt if she had to start her first year alone. James discussed the need to

gather information and keep learning as one starts their teaching career, "you have to

be out there and…not be afraid to make mistakes…to volunteer for everything and to

see it all." Some of the participants seemed to have a fear of making mistakes, as are

found in Beth and Rhonda's responses, but at the same time all of the participants

realized in their first years that they were going to make mistakes and the only way to

keep going was to learn from them and not let their mistakes hinder their growth as

teachers.

Goals and Motivators

Four of the five teachers in this study stressed the importance of having goals

in their job. They acknowledged the necessity of goals both in their early careers and

as they continued in the teaching field.

Luke focused on having goals early in one's teaching career:

"Let me start with, the first five years of teaching, I think, are important to, it's

important to have a goal in mind…if you don't have a goal, then you're just

kind of wandering aimlessly…"

James also shared how having a goal helped him through the challenge of his first two

years of teaching:

> "I thought I was just gonna be doing the same thing every year. And I didn't
> have goals and I didn't have a vision…it wasn't until I had goals…even if they
> were real small, until I started to have ownership in it and I wanted to go to
> work. But the first few years…I just thought, you know, 'I'm just showing up

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and teaching kids and they don't really wanna be there and we're playing really crappy music and I don't wanna listen to it and all that'…I think that's when it gets dangerous, if you just think that you're kinda the hamster in the wheel and nothing's gonna change. You have to have change…in order for you to…survive."

Beth also talked about the necessity of change and variety in her classroom, "I…try to do new things within my class and play new music and do new techniques." But she also pointed out the need for variety in her life outside of school. "I try to always be changing also, so that I never get bored."

James said that even now, after fifteen years of teaching, there are times when the job can still be, "a fight; it's a struggle." His advice to help young teachers overcome this: "You have to have a vision of what you want and…live that vision every day, cause, you know, it'll happen, for sure."

Luke explained that one must always be building upon their goal or vision. In his second year teaching, he accepted a job at a new school and said of the benefits of starting from, "ground zero...you make it what you want…you have a goal in mind…every year after that, those first five years were to…improve upon, get better at, be more efficient at…whatever you do."

With these participants, success is a byproduct of having goals. Initial success and continued success stood out as a key motivator for participants. James said of his first two years teaching, "I had to have success or else I wouldn't have gone on." Rhonda explained how contest ratings motivated her towards success, "I think it was 1, 2, 2." (In the state of Texas contest ratings are given by three judges on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the highest rating.) "I was determined after getting that 1, 2, 2 to

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getting 1[or three 1's]…what was my ultimate goal." Once she and her students found something to work towards, Rhonda said "that's when it kind of turned for me…" It is important to note that these teachers have had continued success in their careers, but that all of them would likely not have continued teaching if they had not seen success within their first three years of teaching.

Teacher Training

The opportunity to student teach at the end of their undergraduate career is cited as the primary strength in these teachers' training. "The education classes that were just kind of general…prepared me to take the test," said Beth of her undergraduate general education classes. Fernando felt that he "would have been a lot more prepared after only one year [of student teaching] than after four or five years of college."

Participants explained that the in-field experience they received from student teaching gave them the greatest amount of useful knowledge in a short period of time. Luke described how the pedagogy of teaching is best learned while student teaching than in the college classroom. He said that it is, "not really…addressed as much as it should be, teaching how to teach…until you student teach and that's what that's for and so…but you have one semester to do it." The comment Luke made about only having one semester to student teach is important and also reflects Fernando' earlier comment about the possibility to learn more in year of student teaching than in four years of college. While these teachers were all able to find success within in their first

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five years of teaching, their desire to have spent more time student teaching begs the

question, "Would new teachers feel more confident on the job in their first five years

if they were able to spend more time in the field as a student teacher?".

Further comments from participants addressed the benefits of student teaching.

Beth said of her cooperating teacher, "She let me do a lot of hands on and teaching

and conducting in concerts which was great." Rhonda explained that choosing to

student teach in the district where she did "was the best thing that I could have ever

done. The information that I received…was beyond anything I've ever received

anywhere else."

Compensation

Salary has often been a focus of research on teacher attrition. A 2008 report by

the American Federation of Teachers showed that teachers are only making 70 cents

on the dollar with comparable professions (AFT, 2008). This means that someone

who is similarly educated could find a job in a different profession and make

substantially more money. Teachers must weigh this cost of their profession and

decide if the rewards of teaching are worth the lower salary. When the participants of

this study were asked their thoughts on the compensation they received, most

comments were favorable, but also recognized the challenges of having a lower salary.

"I'm able to have a comfortable living," said Beth. Orchestra, band and choir teachers

generally receive a stipend due to the extra work their job requires, such as All Region

auditions, contests, and concerts. Beth explained that "It's nice…they recognize we

do put in extra hours," but also added that, "If they were to put an hourly rate, I think, on the number of time that we have rehearsals and sectionals and everything, that would far exceed what I get as a stipend." James said of the stipend he receives, "We're not making as much as the band director or football coach… [but] they're actively trying to up our compensation." Inequality within the stipend amounts of head music directors – band, choir, orchestra and coaches appeared to be common among the school districts in which participants work. This was true in Luke's district. "Our stipend is the same as a junior high band assistant...there's a little inequality between band stipend and orchestra stipend…" It was good to see that James's district is trying to equalize stipend amounts and recognizes the importance of stipends on a similar scale for all teachers with extra work loads.

While participants did say their compensation was adequate, they also noted the challenges of having a salary that is lower than most jobs requiring similar education levels. Luke, who is married with three young children, said of his compensation, "It's fair…it's all I need…but your spouse has to be doing equal or more…it's gonna be hard to survive just on one…" Fernando also felt that "if you're a teacher…you shouldn't have to scrimp and save." Meaning that, the salary is enough to live on, but at times it can be hard and he pointed out, "I don't even have a family."

While all of these teachers said they are able to have an adequate lifestyle, their admission that a below average salary can put a financial strain on families brings to light something mentioned earlier in this section: "opportunity costs." Opportunity costs are the loss of rewards related to compensation and career path available in other

occupations (Guarino, Santizbanez, & Daley, 2006). In other words, there is little to no room for a career ladder in the teaching profession. Salary does increase over time spent in the field, but there are no promotions and few significant pay raises. This can result in a shortage of well-educated people who want to be and would be great teachers, but the career opportunities are not attractive to them. Fernando felt strongly about this and believed that "if you paid teachers a hundred grand a year, base…then all of a sudden you have…not only a lot more people that want to be teachers, you have lot more people that want to be good teachers." Fernando's ideas on this are not unique to him and research is being done to consider possibilities (such as competitive salary) in order to recruit more teachers (Liu, Johnson, & Peske, 2003; Murnane, Singer, & Willet, 1989).

Work/Life Balance

As discussed in the review of literature, teachers are especially prone to burnout. Work stressors such as school conditions, support staff, resources and work load are commonly cited as sources of burnout (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; McLain, 2005). The five teachers in this study were asked about their life outside work and all admitted to the struggle to balance a life outside of teaching with the demands of their job. "I honestly kind of see any personal time I get as like, recharging time…" said Fernando, describing the physical and emotional strain that teaching can cause. He also says that to alleviate some of the stress of work, he tries not to take any work home with him. Beth admitted that it can be hard to leave work at school at certain

times of the year. During the time of her interview for this study, she was preparing

her orchestras for contest and said, "it depends on the time of the year…like these past

two months just with contest going on…I haven't had a lot of extra outside class

time." But she was also aware of the need to have "escapes outside of class…do new

things…have fun."

 Luke talked about the need for perspective between one's work and one's life.

He said:

> "If your whole life is orchestra, that's all you see all the time becomes so
> important to you because you don't see anything else outside of what is your
> bubble, your orchestra bubble…if you don't get outside that environment, with
> your family, with the things you do…you can't see the big picture, you can't
> step back and be like… 'it's not the end of the world' [when there is a problem
> at work]".

Rhonda explained how her perspective towards her job has changed since having a

baby. She said that she will spend eight or nine hours a day at school and upon getting

home will only be able to see her "child for two [hours]…so I have officially tried to

cut anything outside of my work, my actual school work…so that I can…have time for

her…" This is a big change for Rhonda, who described being at school until eight or

nine at night in her early years of teaching. While all five participants cited an

understanding of the need for time outside work, Rhonda and Luke are the only two

with children, and they both described a shift in perspective regarding the importance

of work after having a family.

Research on burnout in teachers finds that there is a decline in stress among

veteran teachers, suggesting that over time they have been able to develop coping

strategies to deal with stress they encounter on the job (Hedden, 2005). The five

participants in this study appeared to have found a coping strategy within their effort

to make a distinction between their work as orchestra teachers and their lives as

themselves.

Student Characteristics and Demographics

Student characteristics and behaviors rank towards the top of the list of reasons

given by teachers who leave the field (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Frederickson & Neill,

2004). Characteristics most commonly cited are student socio-economic status,

ethnicity, and achievement rates. Two of the participants in this study shared early

experiences teaching in schools with a lower socio-economic demographic. Beth said

that while there she "had so many discipline problems…these kids, they're very low

socio-economic…kids…so they were dealing with so much more before they actually

came to school and orchestra sometimes was the last thing on their mind." James said

of his first school, "It was more of an inner-city type

school…apartments…government controlled…there's a lot of turnover, there's a lot

of crime…it's just bad." While both Beth and James found some success while

working in these school districts, neither stayed for more than two years. Beth said of

her school now, "These kids…socio-economic status is a little bit higher…they're

excited about being here…in orchestra because they enjoy playing their instruments."

Rhonda described how geography affected the characteristics of her students.

She said of her first two school districts, larger metropolitan areas, "in order to be seen

or to be successful you had to literally fight…to be somebody in a school," where she

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was now in West Texas she said, "out here there's not a lot of competition…there's a lot more apathy…" Rhonda also noticed that the demographics are changing at her high school, a Title 1 school. She said, "the incoming schools [middle school feeders] are changing the demographics…the student body would reflect a Title 1 school…" Title 1 schools typically serve students in a low income bracket and often the student bodies are largely made up of minority populations. Rhonda continued her description, "Hispanic is probably the majority…maybe then African American and White are about even…" She said she is able to see this change reflected in her orchestras. Most of her incoming freshmen are from minority populations while her advanced ensembles, juniors and seniors, have more white students enrolled. She noted, "It's definitely changing, not necessarily bad, but it's definitely changing."

Luke noted a cultural difference reflected in students' decision to join orchestra versus other elective classes. He said that he had a greater number of Indian and Asian students in his ensembles and reasoned that for white students there was a "larger majority that, in sixth grade, that they will take theatre, or art, and probably has to do with cultural differences…the American culture is 'be a star' and that's the closet thing that they have…is being in a theatre class…"

These teachers also described other characteristics about their students. Fernando said his students are "such high performers musically…and academically." This comment aligned with an earlier study that reports that less than 20% of teacher teaching the top quartile of high performing schools leave their job for another (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001). "Kids are kids, and I love kids," said Luke.

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"They're fun, they have an energy and a naiveté, that…adults don't have, and it's good to get that in little doses…every day." Luke's enjoyment of being around students and what he can learn from them served as a positive motivator to continue teaching.

When asked if they've seen any changes in students over their years of teaching, three of the participants' responses related to life skills. Beth explained:

"I think, as time moves on, it seems like orchestra directors and any kind of music directors, we just have to teach these kids a lot of life skills that maybe they aren't getting at home or they just, they just don't know."

Fernando attributed this to a lack of need for responsibility, "They won't listen because they know their parents are gonna take care of it for them." Rhonda tried to overcome some of these challenges by mentoring her students. She said, "I check their grades and I help them out with their homework…"

Despite these challenges mentioned by teachers, all of them seemed to have a love for their students and joy of being able to teach them each day. As Beth said, "They make me happy…when class starts it's like, 'Okay, this is why I'm here.'"

Facilities

For these participants, a discussion of facilities mostly centered on their classroom. Four of the five teachers had their own classroom, designed solely for the orchestra's use. It is interesting to note, though, that having their own room was not taken for granted, but instead teachers felt "fortunate to have an orchestra room," as

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Rhonda said. And Luke stated, "We're happy with what we have. It's better than sharing the band hall." It is not uncommon for band, orchestra, and choir programs to share classrooms. James told a story of having to commandeer an orchestra room over the summer at his first school and the researcher spent her first year teaching in a storage closet. Perhaps these teachers were aware that not every orchestra is given their own space and feel they should be grateful for what they have.

Beth shared a room with the choir. She and the choir director appeared to have a good working relationship, but admitted that both "wish that we could have our own rooms." However, she was hopeful that in a few years that would be possible. Her school was new and as they continued grow she said "there's been talk…they'll build us an orchestra room."

While Luke had a designated orchestra room, space was an issue. He described, "our biggest class is about sixty kids…when we're set up as an orchestra with enough room to play…people bring me notes and they can't get by…just pass the note up." He was also in need of more storage space, "We have a small office that's made for one teacher but it fits two teachers… [and] one joined practice room to the choir room; we share it, although I need it for instrument storage…" Despite this shortage of practice space and storage space, Luke was still satisfied with what he has because he knew it could be worse, as mentioned above. While all of these teachers could use improvements to their facilities, they all seemed to accept that what they have has to be enough.

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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher sought to shed light on the factors and experiences that allowed five public school orchestra directors in the state of Texas to remain in their field. Many factors emerged from the data, some aligning with previous research and some unique to the teachers in this study.

Summary

Responses from the participants in this study can be divided among two main categories, School-level factors and Individual-level factors of teacher retention or attrition, as found in the literature review. To review, school-level factors are those things that seem out of a teacher's control. These are factors such as: administrative support, work environment, and student demographics and behaviors. Individual-level factors are those teachers locate within themselves or feel they have control over. Examples of these factors are: teacher personal characteristics and intrinsic rewards. The school-level factors reported by participants are: administrative support, compensation, early challenges, facilities, mentors, school culture, student characteristics and demographics, teacher training, work/life balance, and work load. Individual-level factors for these participants are goals and motivators, intrinsic rewards, and teacher characteristics. 61% of teacher responses related to school-level categories while 39% were about individual-level categories. However, the largest single sub-category was teacher characteristics with 23% of responses. It is likely that

the higher percentage of responses about school-level factors is due to greater number of subcategories.

Participants described their own characteristics and personalities as teachers throughout the interviews. Eleven positive teacher characteristics identified through analysis of the interviews appear to be significant reasons why these five teachers had found success and resilience during their careers as orchestra teachers. The teachers in this study also pointed out challenges they faced when young teachers, as well as characteristics they see in other teachers who are struggling. That these participants have been able to recognize and improve on what they believe are important teacher characteristics has also led to their retention in the field.

These five veteran teachers shared many of the same school-level challenges as teachers who have left the field – administrative support (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Scheib, 2004); salary and career opportunity (AFT, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003); school culture (Frederickson & Neill, 2004; Scheib, 2006); and student characteristics and demographics (Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Hanusheck, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Day & Gu, 2008). Not all participants faced all of these challenges. Some, such as Luke and James felt they had very supportive administrators. Fernando and Beth both said that they have great, well-behaved, enthusiastic students. Yet while these participants may not have faced all or any of these challenges at the time of the interview, they all had at one time or another in their career. It is the individual- level factors that seemed to

have had the most effect in getting them through hard years and shaping them in to the satisfied teachers they are now.

Along with the teacher characteristics mentioned above, intrinsic rewards and goals and motivators played an important role in the participants' ability to remain in the teaching field. A love of music and of sharing music with students is an intrinsic reward that appeared repeatedly in the interviews as a main motivator for these teachers. Participants also appeared to derive great joy from working with their students and while a joy of working with students should likely be a requirement of any teacher, here it seemed to be driving force behind these teachers' determination and perseverance in the field. All of the participants cited a need for goals or something to work towards as necessary to staying in the teaching field. All of them came to this realization either after their first taste of success, which led to the need to continue being successful or during particularly challenging times in their career when they knew they needed success in order to stay in the field. More than just setting goals, however, participants found ways to learn from other teachers and make sure that they were able to realize their goals.

Emerging Theory

There may be some emergent theory at work in the data. All five participants spoke strongly of the individual-level factors intrinsic rewards and goals and motivators. Each placed emphasis on their commitment to music and to students and the two elements combined to form a connection with their students through music.

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Goals and motivators played a major role in the retention of these teachers. Four of

the five participants talked about the need for something to work towards each year

and how this also allowed for variety in their jobs.

These two factors of intrinsic rewards and goals and motivators, as well as

certain teacher personal characteristics, seemed to serve as a shield or a core around

the teacher that allowed for their longevity and helped to deflect often negative school-

level factors that may have led to teacher attrition. Figure 5.1 below depicts this

theory. The red, inner circle represents the core. The core contains the individual-

level factors of commitment to music and students, goals and motivators, and strong,

positive teacher personal characteristics. The gray, outer circle represents school-level

factors. These are factors such as administrative support, work load, work

environment, facilities, and compensation. The arrows in between the two circles

serve to show that school-level factors can have either a strengthening (<-) or

weakening (->) effect on the core. For example, positive administrative support will

only strengthen the core of the teacher and aid in their retention. However, a lack of

administrative support could weaken the core. With a weak core, school-level factors

may have a deleterious effect. While a strong core of individual-level factors may be

able to withstand negative school-level factors, it will grow stronger yet when
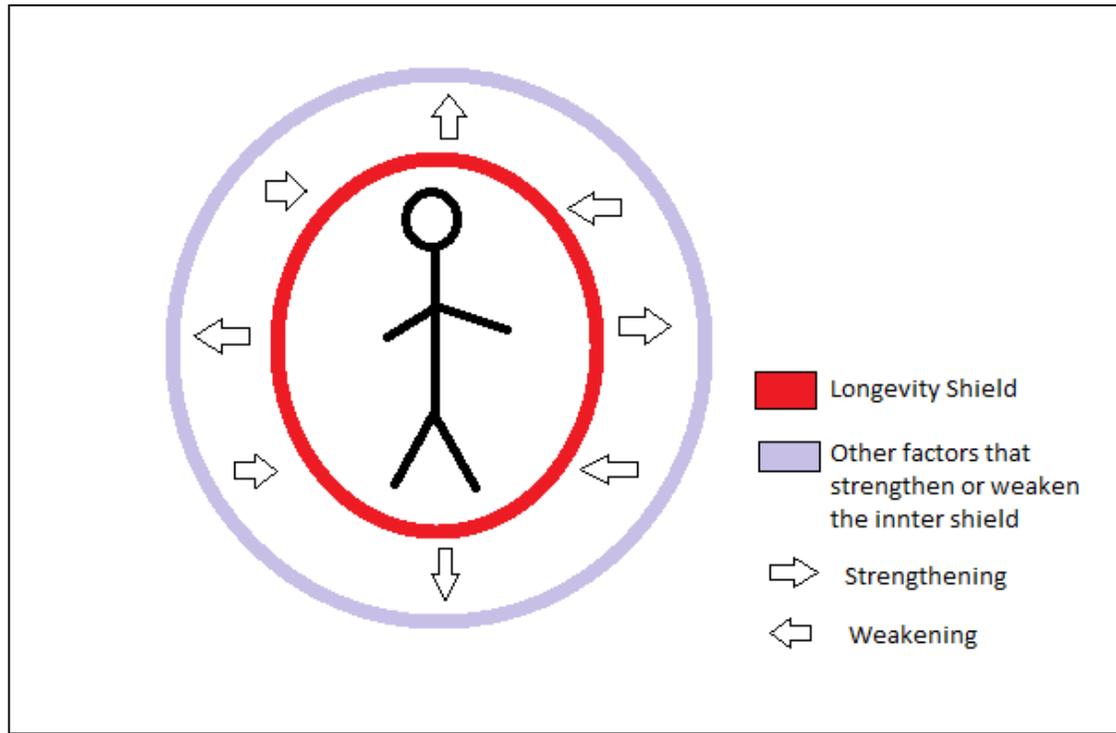
enforced with positive school-level factors.

Figure 5.1. Healthy Teacher Model

Topics for Further Research

   Three of the five participants started their careers as assistant orchestra directors. All three described the benefits of being able to learn as an assistant before assuming a head director position. While the other two directors in this study started out as head directors immediately in their career and have continued in the field, further research could be done to explore the benefits of young orchestra teachers being afforded the opportunity to start their careers as assistant directors. Further research could also be done to explore what would make it possible to provide more

assistant positions to head orchestra directors than are currently available, as all participants in the study without an assistant recognize the need for one.

As over half of the participants in this study say the opportunity to begin as an assistant is useful, it may also be pertinent to explore the possibilities of a longer amount of time student teaching. All five participants say that student teaching was the most important and useful part of their teacher training and some even said an extended time as a student teacher could have been more helpful in their preparation to enter the field. Further research should consider what would need to change in the college curriculum to allow for a full year of student teaching experience or for more opportunities for students to be in the field throughout their undergraduate degree. It would also be useful to seek out any music education programs that are already including more time in the field in their curriculum and compare the longevity in the teaching field of their graduates to those graduates with less time in the field pre-graduation.

The teachers who spent time working in schools with low socio-economic demographics all left their positions there after a few years. They went on to find positions in schools with a student demographic they felt better suited to teach. Further study would be warranted to study the factors causing retention among fine arts directors who stay for long periods of time in schools with a low socio-economic student body. It would be interesting to compare these five participants' reasons for staying with those who have spent years working in schools with a different demographic.

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APPENDIX A

POST SCRIPT

One teacher, Rhonda, was working in a Title 1 school at the time of this interview. The researcher feels it is important to note that she is no longer teaching. Her husband found a job and the family moved to another city. She has not yet sought out a teaching position in her new city.

The researcher would also like to note that she is still undecided about returning to the teaching field. She is teaching an elementary strings class part time and is encountering many of the same challenges as in her past. There are many students she cares about and enjoys working with, but the decision to return to teaching full time is as yet undecided. The researcher constantly remembers the goals and motivators that kept the participants of her study teaching and tries to apply them to her teaching.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Structured Questions

Background Information
- Where did you grow up?
- Did/do other members of your family actively participate in music?
- What musical opportunities did you have in your school/community?
- Where did you do your teacher training? Was it a four year institution offering certification in music education or did you receive an alternative certification?

Current life
Would you be comfortable telling me some of the basics of your life outside of your job?
- Marital status
- Children – age/grade/musical and other extracurricular involvement
- Geographical distance from extended family – parents, grandparents, etc
- Can you describe your life outside of work?

Work
- How many years total have your taught?
- How many years have you worked at your current school?
    o How many administrative turnovers have you seen in that time?
        ▪ Effect on your teaching?
- How many schools do you teach in?
- Describe the school building layout. Where is the orchestra room in relation to the administrative offices and other classrooms?
- Are you satisfied with the facilities?
- Are you provided preparatory time?
- Describe the demographics of your school
- Do you have a duty schedule that is not associated with teaching?
- How do you feel about the compensation you receive?
    o Is there a stipend included in your salary? Does receiving something beyond the base salary affect your perception of whether or not you are adequately compensated?
    o Have you received any raises over the past few years?

Unstructured Questions
1. How would you describe your personality?

2. How would you describe your personality as a teacher?
3. When did you decide to become an orchestra teacher?
   - Tell me the story of how you decided to become an orchestra teacher
4. Were there any specific people or events that influenced this decision?
5. How do you feel about your preparation to be a teacher?
6. Research shows that a critical time for teachers is during their first 3-5 years. Would you describe your first years (1-5) of teaching?
   - What challenges do you recollect?
   - What positive experiences do you remember?
   - How do you feel those first (1-5) years of teaching shaped you as a teacher?
7. Did you have a mentor during your first years of teaching?
   - Was this mentor another orchestra teacher?
   - Did you work together on a regular basis?
   - Did you ever serve as an assistant orchestra teacher? Describe the experience.
8. How do you feel about going to work every day? Are there apprehensions or anticipations that you often have as you're going to work (or before you start your work day)?
9. Tell me about your student
   - Describe the students in your first class
   - Describe the students you have now
   - Do you think there are any significant changes in students now versus years ago?
   - Have changes in students significantly altered the way you approach teaching?
10. In general, do you work alone or in collaboration with other teachers? Describe how that influences your feelings about the job?
11. During your time as a teacher was there ever a time when you consciously thought about the choice of staying in the profession or leaving? Can you describe the process?
12. Would you recommend that students enter the field of orchestra teaching?
    - Why or why not?