

CAREER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT  
OF SECONDARY CHORAL MUSIC TEACHERS

by

JOHN BENJAMIN COOK

MARVIN E. LATIMER, COMMITTEE CHAIR

CARL B. HANCOCK  
ANNE C. WITT  
JULIE BANNERMAN  
ELLARY DRAPER

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Music Education  
in the Graduate School of  
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2018

Copyright John Benjamin Cook 2018  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine factors that contribute to ongoing career identity among secondary choral teachers, identify whether or not a relationship exists between career identity and job satisfaction, and determine what relationship—if any—exists between professed career identity and professional practices of secondary choral teachers. For this study, a closed-response survey was administered to secondary choir teachers in the state of Alabama. Demographic data were gathered, and participants responded to a questionnaire. Additionally, some participants took part in structured interviews, which were transcribed and analyzed. Results indicated the lack of a unified group identity, as significant relationships were found between the preference of title (director or teacher) and professional priorities. Most respondents preferred titles that were specific to content area taught (*choir* rather than *music*) and task (*director* rather than *teacher*). Interview responses suggested role conflict and role overload to be primary agents of job stress among respondents.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. I would like to thank my mother and father, Kathy and John Cook; my grandmother, Peggy Hollis; my grandfather, John Cook; and my mother-and-father-in-law, Joan and Curtis Bynum for their constant support. I would also like to offer my sincerest thanks to my wife, Molly Cook, and our daughters, Emma Katherine and Hannah Grace “Lampshade” Cook; their sacrifices and support have made this possible.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

$\bar{x}$	Sample Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set
$p$	Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value
$r$	Pearson product-moment correlation
$SD$	Standard deviation
$VAR$	Variance
$=$	Equal to

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am honored to have the opportunity to thank the friends, colleagues, and faculty members who have helped me through the course of this study. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Dr. Marvin Latimer, the chairman of this dissertation, for his support and counsel. I am also grateful for the services of my other committee members, Drs. Carl Hancock, Anne Witt, Julie Bannerman, and Ellary Draper, without whose guidance I would have been unable to complete this project or this degree program. I would also like to thank the President of the Alabama Vocal Association, Mrs. Ginny Coleman, for allowing me to contact the membership of her organization for my sample.

I am privileged to have been able to pursue my doctorate while still teaching full-time. For that, I am tremendously indebted to my principals, Dr. Mark Richardson, Mr. James McLeod, and Mrs. Julie McAlister, as well as to my friends, colleagues, and students at Vestavia Hills Elementary East and McAdory Middle School. Furthermore, I would like to extend additional gratitude to the music education faculty at the University of Alabama for their flexibility and patience in working with my schedule.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	4
CHAPTER 3. METHOD.....	29
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS.....	34
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION.....	59
REFERENCES.....	70
TABLES.....	79
APPENDIX.....	91

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Grade Levels Taught.....	79
2. Full Years of Teaching Experience.....	80
3. Degree(s) Held.....	81
4. Courses Taught .....	82
5. Preference of Title.....	83
6. Reasons for Choosing Music Education .....	84
7. Extra-Curricular Music Involvement.....	85
8. Professional Affiliations .....	86
9. Committee Membership.....	87
10. Value of PD Activity .....	88
11. Within-Groups Correlations.....	89

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Identity is an important concept to all people, because it is a means of understanding who they are and governing how they act. Career identity allows individuals to function in specific roles and belong to specific groups. Because music teachers are, as a rule, deeply connected with their content area, they tend to develop musician identities alongside teacher identities, eventually synthesizing a separate music teacher identity. While the acquisition and development of identity have been studied extensively among preservice teachers, fewer studies have focused on in-service teacher identity.

#### **Statement of Problem**

The acquisition and development of identity affect all people. From a symbolic interactionist standpoint, identity is an abstraction that allows individuals to categorize and find meaning in patterns of thought and action. It is through this lens of identity that individuals interpret their surroundings and interact with others. Therefore, the study of identity acquisition and development has become increasingly popular in recent decades. While much identity research has focused on cultural or sexual identity (Troiden, 1983), a number of scholars have begun to study the development of career identity, or how that person interprets his or her role in a given career or career field.

The career identity acquisition of music educators tends to be complex, as the career necessitates both strong musicianship and strong pedagogy; thus, music teachers tend to identify as “musician,” “teacher,” or some synthesis thereof. The acquisition of this dual identity has

been studied largely from a preservice perspective—that is, the determination of factors that occur in undergraduate studies or early field experience that lead toward a pre-service teacher’s identification as musician or teacher. There have been fewer studies, however, on effects of in-service professional development, peer interactions, and school involvement on the continued development of these identities. Furthermore, I propose that there is a need to determine whether there exists a relationship between career identity and job satisfaction in secondary music education.

Presently, our nation’s public schools face a significant music teacher shortage (Eren, 2012). With increasing frequency, music teachers are leaving their schools (migration) or leaving their profession entirely (attrition). The decision to leave a school or profession is often largely based on job satisfaction (Hancock, 2008). While numerous studies have examined the effects of administrative support on job satisfaction—and, therefore, music teacher retention (Baker, 2005; Hancock, 2008, 2016)—there is a scarcity of existing literature examining what role career identity plays.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to the ongoing career identity development of in-service secondary choral music teachers. Furthermore, the study will attempt to identify whether or not a relationship exists between career identity development and job satisfaction. Finally, the study will attempt to determine whether or not a correlation exists between perceived career identity and professional practices of secondary choral music teachers.

This study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the career identity of in-service secondary choral music teachers?

2. What secondary socialization factors contribute to secondary in-service choral music teachers' identity development?
3. Is there a correlation between professional development activities and career identity?
4. Does career identity have an influence on job satisfaction among secondary in-service choral music teachers?

### **Anticipated Contributions of the Study**

This study will contribute to the body of research related to career identity acquisition and development in addition to that of teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention. While many studies have been conducted regarding career identity acquisition among pre-service teachers, few have examined identity development beyond tertiary education (Russell, 2012). This study examines some of the secondary socialization factors that contribute to and are defined by career identity, such as peer interactions, professional learning communities, job responsibilities outside of the classroom, and professional development choices.

There has been little research investigating the relationship between career identity and job satisfaction among music teachers. As music teachers leave the profession in increasing quantity, researchers who have studied teacher attrition have determined that job satisfaction is key to retention (Hancock, 2008, 2009, 2016). Due to the critical need for teacher retention, the study of any factors related to job satisfaction may be beneficial. Through determining the role socialization plays in determining career identity, teachers, mentors, administrators, and other policy-makers may be able to help guide teachers to fuller self-realization and greater satisfaction within their jobs.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature centers on five areas of research: (a) the theoretical background of identity studies, (b) the process of developing music teacher identities, (c) the professional development of in-service music teachers, (d) role conflict related job stress, and (e) music teacher attrition. Brief concluding thoughts follow the literature review.

#### **Theoretical Background of Identity Studies**

The studies of self and identity are key components of social psychology. Humans seek to understand the world by means of categorization of symbols (Dweck, 2005; Langer, 1942). This applies not only to the classification of concrete elements in the natural world—such as biological life and chemical elements—but also to abstractions, including myth, art, and all other manners of understanding (Langer, 1942, pp. 18-15). This forms the basis of social constructivist theories, such as symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interaction theory, coined by Blumer (1986), refers to how people interpret and interact with the world. Symbols or ideas are assigned meaning through socialization. Therefore, meaning is derived from interpretations and social interactions which thereby dictate future action. According to Stryker (1987), “[a] truly sociological social psychology [...] is a social psychology that explicates the profound impact of social structure on the behavior, both individual and social, of persons” (92). Through this lens, relevant concepts such as *self*, *identity*, and *career* are abstractions which arise from interrelated foundational questions: “Who am I to be?” and “What am I to do?”

The former question has been the basis of much sociological discussion throughout the twentieth century. Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self is centered around the notion that understanding of self is social. Individuals understand themselves by imagining how others perceive them, then how others judge them, and respond with a self-judgement (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Mead (1913) employed grammatical logic to explain the development of identity, describing two aspects of the self: the subject, "I," and the object, "me." The me-self is the known self, developed by observing the responses of others, whereas the I-self is the active self, constructing action within the confines of the me-self's understanding. "The growth of the self arises out of a partial disintegration—the appearance of the different interests in the forum of reflection, the reconstruction of the social world, and the consequent appearance of the new self that answers to the new object" (pp. 379-380). Blumer intended his symbolic interactionist theory to be convergent with the social interactionist theory of Mead (Blumer, 1980).

The latter question, "What am I to do?" has also been examined through the lens of social symbolism. Social identity theory states that social identification is a process by which individuals classify themselves and find commonality within defined social groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Groups are categorized by interest, type, and perceived benefits of membership. Meanings are derived from social interactions, and actions are governed by congruency with identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Identity acquisition occurs on personal, group, and role levels (Stets & Burke, 2000; Troiden, 1983). A role identity is developed reciprocally through input from self and feedback from others. A person who makes music may experience pleasure from such an activity and simultaneously imagine that others would likewise respond positively; thus, a role identity as a musician is established and strengthened, leading the musician to continue to act in a manner that is consistent with his or her understanding of what it means to be a musician.

The self and imagined-other form the basis of identity acquisition, though studies have found incongruity between the perceptions of imagined-other and actual-other (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979).

The study of career identity has gained traction over the last few decades. Early studies focused on the socialization involved in career identity acquisition: the adoption of customs, ideologies, and motives (Becker & Carper, 1956a). Social cognitive career theories suppose that careers are developed actively, and that individuals have primary agency in developing their own career identities. Career interest is predicted by success in past performances and developed through self-efficacy and outcome expectation (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

### **Music Teacher Identity Acquisition and Development**

Specific to the field of music education, career identities tend to be complex; that is, music teachers tend to develop both musician and teacher identities. Many studies have examined the identity formation of preservice music teachers, beginning with their decisions to enter the field of music education. In a mixed-methods study by Madsen and Kelly (2002), undergraduate music education students ( $N = 90$ ) responded to an open questionnaire, the results of which were analyzed to determine the participants' earliest natural remembrances of wishing to become a music teacher, where this occurred, who was with the participants at the time, and how they felt at the time. The majority were in high school, with their ensemble, and their ensemble director. Participants who first wanted to become a music teacher before entering college reported stronger feelings toward the decision than those who first wanted to become a music teacher after.

Madsen and Kelly's findings are congruent with those of Thornton and Bergee (2008), whose study examined reasons undergraduate music education students chose to seek a career in music education through the framework of a social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2002). Preservice music teachers responded to a survey inquiring about their career influences. Additionally, participants were asked to provide suggestions for recruiting future students into music education programs. The most common responses credited influential individuals, such as teachers, and an intrinsic love of music for the decision to pursue a career in music education. To encourage others to enter the field, respondents suggested field experiences and models of career satisfaction.

Isbell (2015) has written at length about teacher socialization as it pertains to the decision to become music teachers, primary socialization of music teachers (pre-college), secondary socialization of music teachers (typically in a college or university undergraduate music program), and models of music teacher identity. In a typical undergraduate music education degree program in the United States, about 50% of the required coursework focuses on musicianship and performance, with only 15-20% focused on professional studies, such as education. Music teachers were found to have a stronger association with their content area than did teachers of most academic subjects or general education teachers; in contrast to these, music teachers' reasons for pursuing careers as teachers were more content-driven than altruistic or practical (though altruism and practicality can be factors).

This is consistent with the findings of a case study by Manuel and Hughes (2006) which examined the motivating factors that led to decisions to become teachers. Participants ( $N = 79$ ) were members of a cohort program in an Australian university. All participants were third-year undergraduates in a five-year degree program, though none were music education majors.

Participants responded to a questionnaire in order to ascertain their motivations to become teachers, their career ambitions, and their ideals of an effective teacher. Recurrent responses to the question of why these preservice teachers chose to pursue a career in education included personal fulfillment of a desire to be a teacher, making a difference in the lives of children, and maintaining an engagement with their primary subject of choice. The majority of respondents (73%) cited teaching as their first career choice and would choose to remain in education for at least ten years (70%).

Some minor differences were found in a similar study by Hellman (2008), which examined preservice music teachers' short- and long-term intentions to teach music in a K-12 context. Six structurally different colleges or universities provided a sample of preservice music teachers ( $N = 157$ ) to participate in a survey. Responses indicated that a majority intended to graduate with a music education degree (94%), teach music as a profession (86.8%), and teach music in schools until retirement (63.4%). Love of music was commonly cited as a reason to choose the profession, and the desire to work in another music field, lack of confidence in teaching skills, anticipated job stress, fear of instability, and low salaries were commonly cited as reasons not to teach.

According to Isbell (2015), undergraduate music education majors reported feelings of stigmatization as teachers rather than performers, leading to stress in developing music teacher identities. As previously noted, music schools in the United States tend to emphasize performance in their undergraduate studies, creating an implicit perceived hierarchy of importance in which performance-related studies or activities are viewed as more important than professional studies or activities. This is consistent with Hellman (2007), who found that undergraduate music education majors noted a perceived preference toward their performance-

major peers and a generally performance-heavy curriculum. Additionally, the transition from a high school music teacher—perceived as a teacher—as a primary role model to an applied studio professor—perceived as a performer—was identified as a hindrance to the development of a teacher identity.

Isbell (2008) studied the self-reported identities and socialization processes of 578 preservice music teachers from 30 universities. Participants responded to a 128-item questionnaire designed to measure identity development and socialization factors. Supportive parents and music teachers were seen as positive figures during primary socialization, with university faculty emerging as positive secondary socialization figures, though experiences were found to be more influential than people in developing a career identity. Additionally, secondary socialization factors were found to be more influential than primary socialization factors. The results indicated that the participants' career identities were complex, consisting of musician, teacher (self), and teacher (other); these results are consistent with the symbolic interactionist framework of the study.

While music teachers are prone to identify as both practitioner and educator, undergraduate music students typically choose to pursue a career in either performance or education. Parkes and Jones (2012) examined whether any of the six motivational constructs that comprise the expectancy-value motivational model—expectancy, ability perceptions, intrinsic interest value, attainment value, social utility value, and cost—could predict students' intentions to become music teachers or performers. Undergraduate music majors ( $N = 270$ ) responded to an online questionnaire. Among the six constructs, social utility value was most predictive of music education career choices, while intrinsic interest was most predictive of performance interest. All constructs were correlated statistically, suggesting generalizability to

music students. Likelihood of a teaching career and likelihood of a performing career were found to be negatively correlative. Higher expectancy and value ratings for a particular field were found to be predictive of likelihood to pursue a career in that field.

Schmidt, Zdzinski, and Ballard (2006) examined the effects of preservice teachers' motivation orientation and self-concept on academic achievement and career goals. Undergraduate music education students ( $N = 148$ ) responded to a survey. Factor analysis of the responses revealed five factors: competitive/ego (desire to be the best), achieve success/avoid failure (desire to appear competent vs. desire to avoid appearing incompetent), cooperative vs. individual, intrinsic/mastery (desire to improve one's practice and reach goals), and personal development competition (competition that improves practices and fosters interpersonal relationships).

Results indicated that undergraduate music education majors define their successes through mastery, cooperation, and overcoming challenges. The majority of respondents indicated a desire to enter public education upon graduation (69%), with nearly half expressing a goal of remaining in education long-term. Women were significantly more likely to desire to remain in education long-term than were men. Interestingly, disaggregated data from a study by Madsen and Hancock (2002) suggested that women were more likely than men to leave the field of music education during the early years of their careers.

A multi-institution study (Austin, Isbell, & Russell, 2010) of secondary socialization factors examined the psychological and sociological processes by which college music students develop musician identities. Undergraduate music majors ( $N = 454$ ) responded to a questionnaire regarding influences, occupational roles in the discipline of music, and career commitment. Performance activities were found to be highly influential, as were studio teachers

and parents. Studio teachers were also regarded most highly as musicians. Career commitment was impacted by occupational identity, which itself was found to be complex (musician/teacher). According to Ballantyne and Grootenboer (2012), the musician identity is developed before the teacher identity.

Ballantyne, Kerchner, and Aróstegui (2012) investigated preservice music teachers' perceptions of their own identities. The participants were undergraduate music education students ( $N = 25$ ) from three different nations: Australia ( $n = 9$ ), The United States ( $n = 8$ ), and Spain ( $n = 8$ ). The author noted similarities and differences among their music teacher education programs. The three most common factors in choosing to study music education were musical orientation based on previous experiences, the desire to emulate mentors in the field, and convenience. Broadly, the participants did not view their identities as static, instead noting change over time. The primary themes found in the study were the broadening of university experiences and the dynamic relationship between musician and teacher identities.

McClellan (2014) examined relationships among social identity, value of music education, musician-teacher orientation, certain demographic factors, and music educator self-concept. Undergraduate music education majors ( $N = 968$ ) responded to the Undergraduate Music Education Major Identity Survey (UMEMIS). Responses indicated that secondary socialization factors (social experiences and influences during undergraduate studies) made the greatest contributions to the development of musician identity, while field experience and authentic context learning contributed most to the development of a teacher identity. The author claimed that, contrary to the findings of Austin et al. (2012), the imagined perceptions of school children along with teachers' own self-concepts contributed to preservice teachers' identity development.

Bouij (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of Swedish music teachers' training and professional identity development. Data were gathered via interviews and questionnaires administered to participants during their preservice training and again after they had become practicing teachers. Findings indicated that role identity development occurred alongside multiple variables. The author illustrated these as identity quadrants, with the x-axis representing (left-to-right) professional role as musician to professional role as teacher and the y-axis representing (low-to-high) narrow musical comprehensiveness to broad musical comprehensiveness. Four role types emerged: performer (musician role, narrow comprehensiveness), musician/all-round musician (musician role, broad comprehensiveness), content-centered teacher (teacher role, narrow comprehensiveness), and pupil-centered teacher (teacher role, broad comprehensiveness).

Some research suggests that authentic context learning experiences can be beneficial to identity development in preservice music teachers (Conkling, 2004; Haston & Russell, 2011; Isbell, 2015). Conkling (2004) described the benefits of local school–university partnerships, called professional development schools, by which preservice teachers gain practical field experience as they complete their coursework. The preservice teachers reported a strengthening of teacher identities, clearer understandings of themselves, expanded views of teaching. “In traditional music teacher preparation, where schoolchildren are often nameless, faceless abstractions and where the facts and concepts that comprise the music curriculum are immutable, there is also only one music teacher identity story that can be told” (13). In addition to the benefits for the preservice teachers, such partnerships provide enrichment opportunities for the students and professional development for the teachers in these schools (Robbins & Stein, 2005).

Conkling's (2004) statements are validated by Haston and Russell's (2011) study. This multiple-case study observed the occupational identity development of five preservice music

teachers as they participated in a year-long authentic context learning program at a professional development school. Data were collected via multiple formal interviews, observations, and participants' written reflections. The four emergent themes that the authors believed to be directly influential to the development of teacher identity were the development of general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of self, performer/teacher symbiotic outcomes, and professional perspectives. The impact of the learning experiences—positive or negative—was mediated by peer interactions and adaptive or maladaptive responses on behalf of the participants. The authors noted that, while the data in the case study cannot be generalized, “in the case of these students, their occupational identities were transformed as their general pedagogical knowledge increased, their knowledge of themselves as educators became more nuanced, they realized the teacher roles they assumed in performance activities, and they gained more insight into how they viewed their role in music education and music teacher role models” (p. 385).

Acknowledging the identity conflict common among preservice music teachers, Johnson (2014) suggested that the study of conducting “has the potential to integrate performer and teacher identities” (p. 118). Operating within the framework of Wenger's (1998) communities of practice, this case study examined the identity development of three undergraduate music education majors over the course of thirty-one class sessions. In addition to observations, each participant was interviewed five times. The author identified four emergent themes: synonymy of conducting and teaching, conducting as a performance outlet, learning through observation of other conductors, and assumption of the role of conducting expert. The first two emergent themes suggest that the study of conducting is an important measure in unifying disparate musician/teacher identities.

Another study that combined Wenger's (1998) theory of social learning with authentic context learning was conducted by Harlow and Cobb as part of a multi-school collaboration. At the beginning of their teacher education program, all Bachelor of Teaching students at the University of Waikato in New Zealand were invited to participate in an online survey and a focus group. Additionally, three lecturer interviews, three principal interviews, and two surveys for associate teachers were administered. In following Wenger's framework, responses were categorized as *engaging in practice*, *developing meaning*, *immersed in community*, and *developing identity*. The collaborative process between university and public schools was found to have aided preservice teachers in developing their identities as teachers through early field experience in an authentic context.

The role of the university music education program has been discussed by many (Bernard, 2005; Bouij, 2007; Freer & Bennett, 2012; Haston, Hourigan, & Scheib, 2007; Hellman, 2007; Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014; Pellegrino, 2009; Roberts, 1991). Some have called for significant changes in the structure of music teacher education programs. According to Bernard (2005), identity should be viewed as a construct that develops simultaneously on individual, social, and cultural levels rather than primarily through social interactions, with authentic music-making experiences of primary importance in developing a musician identity.

Bernard's (year) call for a different framework of music teacher education included (1) listening to preservice music teachers' discourses about their identities and embracing the complexity of musician–teacher identity statuses, (2) recognizing the centrality of music-making experiences in the development of musician identities, and (3) the validation of personal perspectives of music-making; Dolloff (2007) shared Bernard's critique and expanded upon it by

asserting that the field of music education itself was in search of an identity. Bouij (2007) criticized Bernard's article, claiming that Bernard's stated understanding of identity as processual contradicted the body of her article, which implied that it was static. Bouij also claimed that broadening the identity of musician–teachers was an oversimplification that would not advance the practice of music teacher education.

A transcendental phenomenological study by Freer and Bennett (2012) examined the emerging perceptions of musician and teacher identities among music students ( $N = 72$ ) in the United States ( $n = 34$ ) and Australia ( $n = 37$ ). Participants completed multiple surveys in which they responded with words or drawings. The responses indicated that musician identities develop before teacher identities do. Those whose responses indicated a teacher identity also indicated a strong musician identity, but the inverse was not necessarily true, further corroborating the findings of Dolloff (1999) and Ballantyne and Grootenboer (2012). In terms of future self development, *hopeful* and *confident* can develop alongside *doubtful* and *feared* selves.

With regards to how identity is developed among in-service teachers, there has been considerably less study. Teachout (1997) compared preservice and experienced in-service music teachers' perceived values of specific skills or behaviors within the context of a music classroom. The sample included preservice teachers ( $n = 35$ ) and experienced music teachers ( $n = 35$ ) who had served as cooperating teachers, graduate students with teaching experience, or professors of music education at a large university.

Participants responded to a questionnaire in which they rated specific skills on a four-point Likert-style scale. Of the top ten desired skills, seven were found to be common to both groups: "Be mature and have self-control," "Be able to motivate students," "Possess strong leadership skills," "Involve students in the learning process," "Display confidence," "Be

organized," and "Employ a positive approach" (p. 45). Several items—mostly related to classroom management—were ranked much higher (10 places or more) by experienced teachers than by preservice teachers.

In a longitudinal study, Hargreaves, Purves, Welch, and Marshall (2007) examined the developing identities and attitudes of music students ( $n = 29$ ) and preservice-to-early-career music teachers ( $n = 29$ ). Participants were administered a questionnaire in two distinct phases: at the beginning of their training and the final stage of their training/beginning of their professional practice. The questionnaires measured self-efficacy, group identification (musician/educator), and attitudes toward the value of certain skills. No significant differences were found between the groups in the variable of self-efficacy, but there were significant correlations between attitudes toward certain skills and group identification: those who identified more strongly as musicians strengthened their appreciation for musical skills, while those who identified more strongly as educators showed greater appreciation for social skills.

Russell (2012) compared the reported identity of preservice music teachers and in-service music teachers from a symbolic interactionist/looking glass self theoretical framework. Using instruments from previous research (Isbell, 2006, 2008), the author devised a Music Educator Career Questionnaire (MECQ) to measure how participants see themselves, how they believe others see them, career confidence/commitment, and perceived social influences on their career decisions. In-service music teachers were found to have integrated teacher identities (congruence of self and other) but differentiated teacher identities. Isbell (2008) found the opposite to be true of preservice teachers. In-service music teachers differentiated conductor, entertainer, and creative elements of musician identities. The strongest reported positive

influences were other music educators, and the most positive professional activities involved directing ensembles and attending music conferences.

### **Professional Development**

In most professional teaching roles, teachers are expected to participate in ongoing professional development. This takes the form of in-service conferences, seminars, training sessions, classes, graduate studies, and more. Regardless of the form it takes, effective professional development must have an impact on student learning (Bauer, 2007). Ideally, engaging in professional development activities provides teachers opportunities to improve their practice through an expansion of their knowledge base, though many teachers have expressed disdain for the opportunities they are presented, believing them to be irrelevant to their situations and misappropriations of their time (Bush, 2007).

Some have argued that in order to improve professional development, music teachers need to take an active role in its policy, planning, and research. Individual regions and school systems present different needs for professional development; it is the duty of the music teachers to vocalize those needs, as administrators would likely be unaware of them otherwise. Informal professional interactions have continually emerged as effective professional development, and preservice music teachers should be made aware of their value. Differentiated professional development may be beneficial for teachers in various career stages, and engaging in research can be an effective professional development activity in itself (Bauer, 2007; Conway, 2007; Robbins & Stein, 2005).

Research into music teachers' preferred modes of professional development has suggested that musician identity and music teacher identity have an impact on professional development preference. A mixed-method case study by Laor (2015) examined the perceptions,

practices, and attitudes of experienced music teachers ( $n = 22$ ) enrolled in a two-year M.Ed. program. The quantitative data were gathered from closed-response questionnaires administered following each year, while the qualitative data were derived from open-response questionnaire entries and structured interviews.

Three distinct identities emerged: musician, educator, and researcher. Results indicated less satisfaction with their program curriculum than their opinion of the program's contribution to professional development, even though their practices changed significantly. Specifically, the participants were critical of the program's focus on research methods and educational theories. The author notes the participants' biases against these studies, speculating that such attitudes are likely formed during undergraduate education. Conway (2007) found that participating in research was a significant professional development activity in itself.

Bush's (2007) study attempted to determine which types of professional development activities were deemed important by in-service music teachers. The results of a survey indicated that music teachers prefer content area-specific professional development, particularly workshops or courses that are offered over the summer or on weekends. Interactions with other music teachers were ranked highly, while district-level professional development activities were ranked much lower. This could indicate a disconnect between what administrators and music teachers deem to be appropriate, beneficial professional development.

Pellegrino (2011) has written of the importance of engaging in music-making as professional development for music teachers. Acknowledging that most music teachers identify at least partially as musicians, it is beneficial to the teachers' personal fulfillment and sense of wellbeing that they practice their art. Meeting such needs would likely be beneficial in increasing the teachers' effectiveness in the classroom (pp. 85-86).

Bowles (2000) examined the professional development opportunities desired by in-service music teachers ( $N = 456$ ) in the state of Texas. Participants responded to a survey in which they were asked to identify professional development topics that they believed would be most beneficial and their preferred manners of participating in professional development activities. Technology, assessment, repertoire, standards, creativity, and grant-writing emerged as the most desirable themes overall.

Most participants (63%) indicated that they were satisfied with state and local academic leadership (clinicians) for their professional development. Results indicated that the majority of respondents preferred in-person to electronic professional development in addition to an overall preference of traditional summer programs, with about half interested in intensive weekend programs, as well. Further research has been largely consistent with these findings, and teachers' professional development needs have been observed to evolve alongside phases of their careers (Conway, 2007).

### **Role Conflict and Job Stress**

Because role identification is integral to a sense of understanding one's job, conflicts between or among personally identified roles can lead to disjunction of identity and job stress. Conley and Woosley (2000) examined the effects of teacher role stress on administratively desired work outcomes and whether or not teachers' higher order needs provided any moderation for these stress-outcome relationships. Participants ( $N = 371$ ) completed a survey, and ten were also interviewed. Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload were measured as components of role stress. Among secondary teachers, role ambiguity and role conflict were related to job dissatisfaction but not to stress. For elementary teachers, ambiguity and conflict were related to both dissatisfaction and stress. Strength of higher order needs was found to moderate the

conflict–dissatisfaction relationship among secondary teachers and the ambiguity–dissatisfaction relationship among elementary teachers.

Scheib (2007) identified five role-related concepts as important in understanding role development: role set, role expectation, role pressure, role force, and role behavior. A role set is a set of offices or positions that influence a given role and hold expectations for it. These are called “role expectations,” and they are directly or indirectly communicated with the person who fills the role. Communicated requirements or demands are role pressures. Role forces are motivations derived from communicated expectations and pressures, and role behaviors are behaviors consistent with the expectation of a given role.

Role conflict occurs when the sent expectations or pressures do not comply with the received expectations or pressures; in other words, there is contradiction among role expectations. Role ambiguity becomes a stressor when the expectations of a role are not clearly communicated or are contradictory (similar to role conflict). Role overload occurs when a person is given too many tasks or tasks outside his or her perceived area of competency. Feelings of underutilization of skills may arise when the tasks demanded are not specific to the expected skill set of a role, such as excessive administrative duties performed by music teachers.

The author derived parallels from teacher-coaches, who are often hired as teachers and evaluated as coaches. Similar to the musician–teacher dual identity found among music teachers, physical education teachers or teachers who also coach tend to identify dually as teacher–coaches. Also similar to music teachers (but not necessarily to teachers of general academic subjects such as math, science, social studies, or language arts), coaches tend to be drawn to the field of education by positive experiences participating in athletics prior to

undergraduate studies. Role conflict has been cited as a factor in teacher–coach burnout (Konukman et al., 2010).

The similarities of teacher–coach conflict and teacher–musician conflict are evident in Yalçın (2000) and Pagnano (2002). Yalçın’s (2000) tested the model of role preference, role congruence, and job satisfaction among high school teacher–coaches. Participants for this study were 436 high school teachers and coaches. Role conflicts were found to impact job satisfaction negatively; that is, teacher–coaches who preferred to identify as coaches reported decreased job satisfaction when engaged in non-coaching activities. Gender, specific sports coached, and major field of study were found to have a significant effect on role preference.

Pagnano (2002) conducted an ecological comparison case study which examined contextual similarities and differences of teaching a sport as a physical education (PE) teacher and as a coach. One teacher–coach, physical education students ( $n = 23$ ), and a varsity softball team ( $n = 15$ ) served as participants. Data were collected over the courses of a one-week (five-day) PE unit covering softball and a twelve-week (sixty-day) period of training for the softball team. Methods of data collection included observation, interviews with students/student–athletes and the teacher–coach, and content analysis. Rigor was found to be significantly higher during team activities than during PE classes, illustrating discrepancies in expectations. Differences were also noted in number of tasks, type of tasks, and opportunities to respond. Contextually, coaching activities were more involved, varied, and intense than were teaching activities.

As noted, similar conflicts exist in the area of music education, where music teacher identity as a sociological construction and teachers’ perceptions of the relative value of various skill sets—musical, personal, and teaching—form the basis of teachers’ identified roles (Miksza, 2007). A case study (Scheib, 2003) focused on a high school music department featuring four

music teachers. Six stressors were identified and studied: role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, underutilization of skills, resource inadequacy, and nonparticipation. Significant stressors were found to be underutilization of skills due to “tedious administrative responsibilities,” role conflict, role overload, and resource inadequacy. The participants were said to have been more influenced by interactions with each other than by external forces. The author suggests, “Praxis-oriented research should be conducted to help circumvent music teacher role stress created by fulfilling the role of music educator” (p. 135).

### **Music Teacher Attrition**

Schools in the United States face a music teacher shortage; that is, more music vacancies exist than do teachers to fill them (Eren, 2012; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Welch, Purves, Hargreaves, & Marshall, 2011). Music teachers have reported considerable job stress caused by lack of support, restrictive policies, and the perception of a lack of agency in their schools and programs (Jorgensen, 2010). Krueger (2000) interviewed music teachers ( $n = 30$ ) in their first ten years of practice.

The participants were asked the following questions: (1) What did you find most challenging and problematic as a new teacher? (2) What were the most satisfying aspects of your first years? (3) What sort of support system did you find or build to facilitate your professional growth and success in the classroom? (4) What conditions were present in your school that were challenging, and how did you negotiate these? and (5) What do you see yourself doing professionally in the next five to ten years? (p. 23). Responses indicated that new teachers considered positive administrative support, sufficient resources, and a support network that includes experienced music teachers to be critical to their senses of well-being, success, and probability of continuing to work in their jobs.

Administrative support was also studied by Baker (2005). In this study, music teachers at early stages of their careers ( $n = 87$ ) and their principals ( $n = 53$ ) were administered identical questionnaires to determine the congruency of the teachers' and principals' philosophies regarding music education. The teachers also answered questions related to their job satisfaction. A non-significant positive relationship was found between the philosophies of teachers and administrators. Job stress, lack of support, and lack of student discipline were reported to be major factors influencing teachers to leave, and early career teachers were found to value community and administrative support in determining their job satisfaction.

Hancock (2008, 2009, 2016) studied risk factors involved in teacher attrition or migration, the magnitude of attrition or migration, and teacher perceptions following attrition or migration. Comparisons of music and non-music teachers were made. For the 2008 study, comprehensive data were gathered from the National Center for Educational Statistics' 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey and analyzed for music educators ( $n = 1,931$ ). Significant factors predicting teacher attrition or migration included youth, employment in a secondary or private school, hours worked outside of the standard workday, salary concerns, and lack of administrative support.

For the 2009 study, data were gathered from a follow-up survey. Between the years of 1988 and 2001, the year-to-year rate for music teacher retention was 84%, with 10% migrating to different schools and 6% leaving music education altogether. Of those who left music education, about 28% returned to college (compared to 3% of non-music teachers who left the profession), with over 54% expressing a desire to return to the classroom eventually (compared to 38% of non-music teachers).

Hancock's (2016) examined teachers' perceptions one year following migration or leaving the classroom. Utilizing data from the U. S. Department of Education's 2003-2004 School Staffing Survey and the 2004-2005 Follow-up Survey, respondents were coded as music teachers ( $n = 270$ ) or non-music teachers ( $n = 6,520$ ) and further disaggregated as *movers*, *leavers*, or *stayers*. Notably, music teachers who chose to move to a different school claimed significantly improved quality of life and job satisfaction. Of those who left the profession, 19% had begun new careers, despite only 5% indicating the intention to do so as a reason for leaving. Those who left did not necessarily report improved working conditions or personal lives, though many reported more manageable workloads, time required, and opportunities for professional advancement (p. 431-433).

Many music teachers are lost to attrition within their first years of teaching (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Welch et al., 2011). Pillen and Brok (2013) adopted a social-psychological perspective to examine beginning teachers' identity tensions, as they struggle to balance their personal identities with their professional identities. Beginning teachers ( $N = 24$ ) were interviewed. Final year student-teachers ( $n = 12$ ) and first year in-service teachers ( $n = 12$ ) responded to questions about tensions they experienced. The tensions identified in the interview were compared to tensions found in a literature review. Based on this information, a questionnaire was generated and completed by participants. The primary identity tensions identified were (1) wanting to care for students versus expectations of toughness, (2) wanting to invest in a private life versus expectations of investment in work, and (3) experiencing conflict between one's own and others' orientations regarding learning to teach (p. 253).

Ballantyne (2007) conducted a study in which fifteen early-career music teachers in Australia responded to a questionnaire and were interviewed in order to determine their

perceptions of the effectiveness of their preservice training. Most respondents indicated an experience of praxis shock—the misalignment of expectations and actual experiences in the classroom. Factors that contributed to this perception of praxis shock were isolation and the feeling of being overworked, especially in relation to other teachers within the school. The author suggested that music teacher education programs in universities address the “realities” of the school environment with preservice teachers.

Praxis shock was also addressed by Buchanan (2015), who conducted a study investigating the examination of metaphors chosen by teachers. A cohort of preservice teachers was used as a convenience sample. Metaphors were categorized by locus of pedagogy (teacher-centered or student-centered). The author found that most metaphors “appeared to assume (via the explanation) an implied or explicit ‘other’, and/or a sense of purpose or product” (39). The author concluded that praxis shock may in part be the product of a conflict between the sometimes subconscious metaphors developed in preservice training and the realities of the classroom.

Job stress may be traced not only to praxis shock, but also incongruity of preservice job preference and actual employment. Kelly (2003) examined whether or not selected cultural factors have an effect on the type of school environment in which preservice teachers prefer to intern or teach. These factors included family culture, pre-college school attended, pre-college music program, and the completion of a cultural diversity course. Participants ( $N = 406$ ) completed a twenty-one question closed-response survey. Results indicated that respondents were most inclined to teach in schools similar to those they had attended and whose music programs are most similar to the ones in which they had participated. Most participants expressed a desire to teach in large, suburban high schools with a majority population of white

students, similar to what most of them experienced prior to their post-secondary educations. Completion of a cultural diversity course was found to be nonsignificant in determining career preference.

Employment preferences were also examined by Robinson (2012). She/He employed a market research tool called adapted conjoint analysis (ACA) to determine employment preferences of preservice music teachers ( $N = 187$ ). ACA is a model used to study consumers' decision-making processes using a series of compromises when comparing importance and value in multiple propositions. Results indicated that the participants preferred high salaries, strong administrative support, excellent resources, excellent facilities, high sustainability, short commutes, and strong community support. The majority of participants also indicated that they favored suburban public schools—such as the ones many of them had attended—and schools with a diverse population. Administrative support, community support, and program sustainability were identified as the most important perceived attributes.

Predicting career longevity is difficult. Kammemeyer-Mueller, Judge, and Piccolo (2008) examined the relationship among education, self-esteem, occupational prestige, and income. Working from a perspective of social identity theory and self-consistency theory, the authors collected data recorded during a seven-year period during the early stages of participants' (non-music education) careers. Positive one-way relationships were found from self-esteem to occupational prestige and from self-esteem to income, but self-esteem was unaffected by career outcomes. This could indicate that self-esteem and its components may be used as predictors of career success or longevity.

## Summary

As stated above, music teacher identity acquisition is a complex process that could have substantial impact on personal fulfillment and job satisfaction. Because the field of music education demands competent performance skills from its teachers, who must demonstrate proficiency as performers on a day-to-day basis, undergraduate music education programs often emphasize musicianship skills at a disproportionately greater ratio than education skills. This often leads to music teachers' self-perceptions as teaching practitioners and contributes to their deep connections to their subject matter.

These connections form before a future music teacher enters college (Isbell, 2008, 2015; Kelly, 2003; Madsen & Kelly, 2002; Robinson, 2012) and are often of primary importance in determining their careers (Isbell, 2015; Manuel & Hughes, 2006). Perhaps it is this connection with the content area that leads music teachers to return to the profession at a higher rate than non-music teachers after leaving the classroom (Hancock, 2009).

With regard to professional development, music teachers prefer face-to-face interactions with other music educators, focusing on content-specific topics or activities (Bush, 2007; Laor, 2015; Pellegrino, 2011). Whether or not these activities are in line with administrators' beliefs is not clear (Bauer, 2007).

The effects of professional development on the career identities of in-service music teachers may merit further study. Are music teachers' expressed feelings of isolation on the school-level exacerbated by preferences for professional development activities that service their musician identities more than their teacher identities? Could failing to participate in the content-specific communities of learning (Wenger, 1998) also exacerbate feelings of isolation on the professional level?

Furthermore, does role conflict play a significant part in teacher burnout? Reconciling how music teachers see themselves, how their non-music teacher colleagues see them, and how their students see them is important to managing career expectations and maintaining a healthy sense of self in the workplace. If a music teacher's concept of his or her role within the school is misaligned with an administrator's, role stress is inevitable, along with diminished job satisfaction (Scheib, 2007).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

This study involves both quantitative and qualitative research methods employed in an embedded mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative data were gathered via a questionnaire designed to gather information regarding teachers' self-concept, role identities, task priority, and professional development preferences in addition to basic demographic data such as degrees held, grades taught, and years of experience. Following analysis of the quantitative data, participants were selected for qualitative data collection based on criteria determined by their questionnaire responses. Qualitative data were gathered via structured interviews, which were transcribed and analyzed as outlined by Richards and Richards (1994). Qualitative data were used to support and expound upon quantitative data while addressing the fourth research question, which would not be sufficiently answered using solely quantitative methods. The questionnaire and interviews were modeled after instruments used in similar studies (Cox, 1994; Isbell, 2006; Schonauer, 2002).

#### **Participants**

The initial questionnaire was distributed to members of the Alabama Vocal Association (AVA), a professional organization for secondary choral music teachers within the state of Alabama. AVA is a division of the Alabama Music Educators Association, itself a state-level division of the National Association for Music Education.

Membership within AVA is mandatory for participation in such events as State Choral Performance Assessment, Solo and Ensemble Performance Assessment, Outstanding Choral

Student Competition, and the All-State Choral Festival. Notably, participation in these events is compulsory in some school districts as a requirement for choir teachers to obtain supplemental income (Motley, 2015). Because employment as a teacher of vocal or general music in an Alabama school and membership within the Alabama Music Educators Association

and the National Association for Music Education are requisites of membership within AVA (*The Alabama Vocal Association Handbook*, 2016), each potential participant could be presumed to meet these criteria.

Potential participants ( $N = 217$ ) were invited by e-mail to participate in the survey. At the conclusion of the questionnaire, participants were invited to provide their e-mail addresses to be contacted to participate in a telephone interview. Because e-mail addresses are identifiable data, this step was made explicitly voluntary.

### **Quantitative Research Tools**

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by the researcher and was modeled after instruments used in previous career identity studies (Isbell, 2006; Russell, 2012; Schonauer, 2002). The questionnaire consisted of 19 items. Among those items, most were multiple choice or Likert-type scales, though there was also an open-response question related to the respondent's job title. The questions were largely based upon the elements of role development identified by Becker and Carper: occupational titles and associated ideology, commitment to task, commitment to particular organizations or institutional positions, and the significance of one's own position in the larger society (Becker & Carper, 1956b). Schonauer (2002) used a similar framework in her study.

### **Qualitative Research Tools**

Interview subjects were selected from those respondents who indicated that they would be willing to participate at the end of the questionnaire. Participants provided an e-mail address at which they could be contacted to schedule a telephone interview at their convenience.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Once transcribed, the responses were coded and

analyzed using the “Code and Retrieve” method (Richards & Richards, 1994). By employing this method, the content of responses could be compared across interviews.

The interview questions were designed to expound upon the elements explored in the questionnaire. As such, the sample was chosen purposefully in order to examine responses more thoroughly. Interview participants were selected based on criteria such as their teaching experience, level of education, grade levels taught, gender, and the school system in which they work.

**Interview 1.** This interview was conducted with a second-generation music teacher who had taught for 15 years. At the time of the interview, he taught grades 9-12 at a large public high school, though he had previously taught grades 6-8. He held a bachelor’s degree in music education and was a National Board Certified Teacher. He identified as a “Choir Teacher.”

**Interview 2.** This interview was conducted with a young male music teacher who had taught for eight years. He taught grades 9-12 in a large public high school in an affluent community. Earlier in his career, he had taught grades 9-12 in a less affluent public high school. He held a bachelor’s degree in music education. His stated career identity was “Choir Director.”

**Interview 3.** This interview was conducted with a female music teacher who had taught for 16-20 years. She taught grades 6-8 in a middle school in an affluent community. Prior to this teaching position, she had also taught grades 9-12 in a high school with a high rate of poverty. She held a bachelor’s degree in music education and a master’s degree in music education. She identified as a “Director of Choirs.”

**Interview 4.** This interview was conducted with a young female teacher who had taught for four years. She taught grades 6-12 in an urban middle school and high school. The high school at which she teaches was also home to numerous academies and an International

Baccalaureate program. She held a bachelor's degree in music education. She identified as a "Choir Director."

**Interview 5.** This interview was conducted with a male teacher who had taught for three years. He taught grades 6-12 in a middle school and high school. He held bachelor's degrees in vocal performance and music education. He identified as a "Director of Choral Activities."

**Interview 6.** This interview was conducted with a female music teacher who taught grades 6-8 in an affluent middle school. Prior to this position, she taught grades 6-8 in a rural middle school and grades 9-12 in rural high school. She had taught for 9 years. She held a bachelor's degree in vocal performance and a master's degree in music education. She identified herself as a "Choral Director."

**Interview 7.** This interview was conducted with a female teacher who had taught for ten years. She taught grades 9-12 in a school system with very few choral music programs. Additionally, she held a position at a university. She held a bachelor's degree in music education, a master's degree in music education, and a Ph.D. in music education. She identified as a "Choral Director/Assistant Professor."

**Interview 8.** This interview was conducted with a young female music teacher who had recently completed her first year as a teacher. She taught grades 7-12 in a rural area. She held a bachelor's degree in music education. She identified as a "Choral Music Director."

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that contribute to the ongoing career identity development of in-service secondary music teachers. A link to an online survey was distributed to 217 secondary choral music teachers via e-mail. Of the 87 responses that were returned, 73 were complete and therefore determined to be usable. The survey's questions were designed to gather demographic information and address the first three research questions:

1. What is the career identity of in-service secondary choral music teachers?
2. What secondary socialization factors contribute to secondary in-service music teachers' identity development?
3. Is there a correlation between professional development activities and career identity?

#### Demography

Of the respondents, about 67% were female ( $n = 49$ ) and about 33% ( $n = 24$ ) were male. The majority of the respondents worked in public schools ( $n = 63$ ), while only a few taught in a private school setting ( $n = 10$ ). Nearly 70% of the respondents ( $n = 52$ ) taught high school (grades 9-12), while 56% ( $n = 42$ ) taught middle school (grades 6-8); about 26% of the respondents taught both middle school and high school. Fewer respondents indicated that they taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade ( $n = 34$ ) compared to the others, possibly due to 6<sup>th</sup> grade being considered an elementary grade in the state of Alabama (Table 1).

Respondents indicated the range of complete years they had taught (Table 2). The options available to them were 0-2 ( $n = 13$ ), 3-5 ( $n = 8$ ), 6-10 ( $n = 15$ ), 11-15 ( $n = 10$ ), 16-20

( $n = 6$ ), 21-25 ( $n = 8$ ), 26-30 ( $n = 9$ ), and 31 or more ( $n = 4$ ). Information regarding participants' education was also gathered (Table 4). Participants indicated which degree or degrees they held. A large majority held bachelor's degrees in music education ( $n = 52$ ), with many also holding master's degrees in music education ( $n = 23$ ). Over 21% held bachelor's degrees in music performance ( $n = 16$ ). A smaller number of respondents held bachelor's degrees ( $n = 3$ ) or master's degrees ( $n = 4$ ) in non-music education. Three respondents held education specialist degrees, while four held doctorates. Bachelor's degrees ( $n = 2$ ) and master's degrees ( $n = 2$ ) in other unspecified areas were also indicated. Six respondents were National Board Certified Teachers.

Data were gathered pertaining to the courses each respondent taught (Table 4). Due to the sample used for this survey, all participants taught at least one course of choral music. Additional courses taught were general music ( $n = 18$ ), band ( $n = 7$ ), other fine arts courses ( $n = 23$ ), and other courses that were not associated with the fine arts ( $n = 8$ ).

### **Career Identity**

One open-response questionnaire item provided an opportunity for respondents to list their job titles. Responses were varied, but most included the words *director* or *teacher*. Most were simple, such as *Chorus Teacher* or *Choir Director*, but some were more complex: *Director-Teacher; K4-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Music Teacher and 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Choral Director*; and *Choral Director, Piano Instructor, Music Appreciation Teacher*. The complexity of some responses is consistent with the findings of Austin, Isbell, and Russell (2010), suggesting a task-contingent fluidity of role identity. Responses were coded as *director* or *teacher*; if the words "director" and "teacher" appeared in the response, it was coded as both. Most respondents identified their job titles as *director* ( $n = 52$ ), with significantly fewer identifying as *teacher* ( $n = 26$ ).

A later questionnaire item asked respondents to rate their preference of job titles on a five-point Likert-type scale, with 1 being least preferable and 5 being most preferable (Table 5). The titles were *Music Teacher*, *Choir Teacher*, *Choir Director*, *Music Specialist*, *Conductor*, and *Director of Choral Activities*. Each respondent rated their preference of the six job titles individually; the titles were not ranked. *Choir Director* was the most highly preferred title ( $\bar{x} = 4.53$ , *Median* = 5, *Mode* = 5, *SD* = .85, *VAR* = .73), while *Music Specialist* was found to be least preferable ( $\bar{x} = 2.44$ , *Median* = 2, *Mode* = 1, *SD* = 1.33, *VAR* = 1.78).

Additionally, 89% considered the title of *Choir Director* to be preferable (4) or highly preferable (5), while 53% of respondents considered *Music Specialist* to be unpreferable (2) or highly unpreferable (1). Between-group analyses found no significant correlation among the variables of *job title* and *title preference*, though within-group analysis found a significant negative relationship between the reported job titles of *teacher* and *director* ( $r = -.854$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

### **Socialization**

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they chose to pursue a career in music education in high school ( $n = 35$ ), while the next most common selections—middle school/junior high and during undergraduate studies—each were reported by 14 respondents. Nine respondents reported to have decided to pursue a career in music education after having already completed an undergraduate degree program, and only one reported to have made that decision during elementary school.

Respondents also indicated their reasons for choosing music education as a career (Table 6). Over half the responses ( $n = 39$ ) indicated the desire to teach children as their primary reason. Other factors included the desire to direct an ensemble/perform high-quality literature

( $n = 21$ ) and the relatively stable employment in the field of music ( $n = 10$ ). One respondent indicated a desire to pursue an eventual career as a collegiate choir director, and two respondents planned to leave the field of music education entirely.

Additionally, information was gathered regarding respondents' extra-curricular musical involvement (Table 7). Various social musical activities—such as church choirs, community bands, and musical theatre productions—were included, and respondents were free to select all activities in which they participated. The most commonly selected activity was *church choir* ( $n = 42$ ), though all activities other than *civic orchestra* were selected by at least one respondent.

### **Professional Development**

Participants were asked to identify their professional affiliations (Table 8). All but one respondent claimed to be affiliated with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). It is possible that the one participant who did not select NAfME made a mistake, since membership within the organization was a prerequisite of inclusion on the mailing list utilized for this survey's sample. The other most common affiliations were the American Choral Directors Association ( $n = 42$ ) and the National Education Association ( $n = 25$ ).

Another questionnaire item information gathered regarding school committees on which respondents served (Table 9). Multiple responses were possible. The most common committee served was School Improvement ( $n = 15$ ). More than half of the respondents indicated that they did not serve on any school committees ( $n = 41$ ).

On a five-point Likert-type scale, respondents rated 10 PD activities on their perceived value (Table 10). Results indicated a preference for content area-specific activities, such as the AMEA Annual In-Service Conference ( $\bar{x} = 4.1$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ), AVA Fall Workshop ( $\bar{x} = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ), an ACDA Conference ( $\bar{x} = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), the ACDA Summer Celebration ( $\bar{x} = 3.53$ ,

$SD = 1.23$ ), the National NAfME Conference ( $\bar{x} = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ), and district-level music PD sessions ( $\bar{x} = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). By contrast, broader PD activities, such as district-wide general education seminars ( $\bar{x} = 2.11$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ) and local school faculty meetings ( $\bar{x} = 1.96$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ) were deemed less valuable by respondents. Notably, *local school faculty meeting* was given extremely low value (1) by more than 53% of respondents ( $n = 39$ ).

## Correlations

Within-group Pearson correlation analysis indicated significant relationships between preferences of titles at the .05 and .01 levels (Table 11). Significant positive relationships existed between preferences of the titles *Music Teacher* and *Choir Teacher* ( $r = .466$ ,  $p = .000$ ), *Choir Teacher* and *Choir Director* ( $r = .274$ ,  $p = .019$ ), *Choir Director* and *Director of Choral Activities* ( $r = .342$ ,  $p = .003$ ), and *Music Specialist* and *Conductor* ( $r = .332$ ,  $p = .004$ ). A significant negative relationship existed between preferences of the titles *Music Teacher* and *Director of Choral Activities* ( $r = .297$ ,  $p = .011$ ).

To address the second research question, variables of identity and socialization were analyzed. The independent variables were *preference of title*, while the dependent variables were *gender*, *degrees held*, *National Board certification*, *number of years taught*, *public/private school*, *grade levels taught*, *the decision to become a music educator*, *extra-curricular music involvement*, and *courses taught*. Bivariate analyses indicated no significant correlations.

To address the third research question, variables of identity and professional activities were analyzed. The independent variables were *preference of title*, while the dependent variables were *professional affiliations*, *school committee service*, *importance of professional activity*, *importance of literature criteria*, *importance of PD topic*, and *value of PD activity*.

A significant positive relationship was found between preference of the title *Director of Choral Activities* and service on school committees ( $r = .284, p = .015$ ), and a significant negative relationship was found between preference of the title *Music Teacher* and service on school committees ( $r = -.238, p = .042$ ). Significant positive relationships were found between preference of the title *Music Specialist* and the perceived importance of planning lessons ( $r = .324, p = .005$ ) and assessments ( $r = .309, p = .008$ ). Further significant positive relationships were found between preference of the title *Director of Choral Activities* and the perceived importance of teaching sight-reading ( $r = .231, p = .049$ ), assessment ( $r = .270, p = .021$ ), and conducting concerts ( $r = .370, p = .001$ ).

Bivariate analysis also found significant positive correlations between preference of title and perceived importance of literature criteria: between preference of the title *Choir Director* and the perceived importance of voicing ( $r = .363, p = .006$ ) and text ( $r = .363, p = .002$ ) and between preference of the title of *Director of Choral Activities* and the perceived importance of voicing ( $r = .267, p = .022$ ), range ( $r = .240, p = .041$ ), text ( $r = .276, p = .018$ ), chorister enjoyment ( $r = .238, p = .043$ ), audience enjoyment ( $r = .331, p = .004$ ), and contest/assessment appropriateness ( $r = .366, p = .001$ ).

Analysis of correlation between the variables of preference of title and perceived importance of PD activities also revealed significant relationships. Significant positive relationships existed between preference of the title *Music Teacher* and the perceived importance of PD related to repertoire selection ( $r = .252, p = .032$ ) and classroom management ( $r = .294, p = .012$ ); preference of the title *Choir Director* and the perceived importance of PD related to choral warm-ups ( $r = .275, p = .019$ ); preference of the title *Music Specialist* and the perceived importance of PD related to lesson planning ( $r = .315, p = .007$ ),

assessment ( $r = .390, p = .001$ ), and interpretation of school-wide data ( $r = .349, p = .002$ ); preference of the title *Conductor* and the perceived importance of PD related to conducting ( $r = .330, p = .004$ ) and assessment ( $r = .243, p = .038$ ); and the preference of the title *Director of Choral Activities* and the perceived importance of PD related to conducting ( $r = .266, p = .023$ ).

With regard to specific professional development activities, further correlation was found. Significant positive relationships were found between preference of the title *Music Teacher* and the perceived value of classroom management workshops ( $r = .246, p = .036$ ) and the preference of the title *Choir Director* and the perceived values of the ACDA Summer Celebration ( $r = .255, p = .029$ ) and AVA Fall Workshop ( $r = .254, p = .030$ ). Significant negative relationships were found between the preference of the title *Music Teacher* and the perceived value of an ACDA conference ( $r = -.258, p = .027$ ) and the preference of the title *Choir Teacher* and the perceived value of PD at a collegiate honor choir ( $r = -.234, p = .047$ ).

Between-group analysis revealed a significant relationship between the variables of *gender* and *director identity* ( $r = .264, p = .024$ ). A significant negative relationship existed between the variables of teacher identity and the importance of teaching music fundamentals ( $r = -.242, p = .039$ ). Regarding the importance of criteria when selecting repertoire, significant relationships existed between the variables of teacher identity and the criterion of teachable musical concepts ( $r = -.311, p = .007$ ) and director identity and the same criterion ( $r = .278, p = .017$ ).

## **Qualitative Results**

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. Coding was performed by the principal investigator and two coding partners who were not otherwise attached to this study. Following discussions among all researchers involved, intercoder agreement was

determined to be 100 percent. Emergent themes related to career identity, professional development practices, and job satisfaction—as described by Cano & Castillo (2004)—were identified by means of common phrases or similar responses. The most prevalent codes were used in this analysis.

**Formative experiences and figures.** A common theme that emerged in the interviews was the importance of specific experiences and figures in the participants' lives. All but one participant reported making the decision to pursue a career in music education in high school or as a result of a choral experience that occurred while they were in high school. One respondent said, "I sat in choir with [my high school teacher] and I thought to myself, 'I can do that. I want to do that. That's really cool.' In ninth grade is when I said I wanted to be a choir teacher." Another claimed to have wanted to pursue a career in music but was unsure of the practicality of a career as a performer, until she met a choir teacher who inspired her to become a music educator. She said,

I figure that the performance aspect of loving music is not super realistic. In 11th grade I finally got a teacher in choir that taught me something that I didn't already know. I decided that, that's what I wanted to do.

The participant who did not cite a high school choral experience as her primary motivation to become a choir teacher entered her undergraduate studies with the intent of pursuing a different career. She recalled,

I've always loved music. I had my first solo in second grade, always was very close to my choir teachers, loved singing, but I was kind of going to follow in my father's footsteps and be a pharmacist, because I had grown up working at the pharmacy, you know pretty much since I was a young teen. . . . I was in the University Chorale my first year as an

undeclared major, and just met some phenomenal people. I had a wonderful conductor. . . . The summer going into my sophomore year, I got asked to be a youth intern in a church. . . and fell in love with working with teenagers and I had this idea if I could have a job that allowed me to work with teenagers and utilize my gift in music, that that would be the best job ever. So that was when I decided that I would finish out my performance degree, but that I would do a master's in education.

In addition to these formative experiences, participants noted specific individuals as their professional role models. Most participants named their high school choir teachers as role models before—and sometimes after—they entered the field of music education. Many listed their collegiate professors as influential figures, as well, even naming them as professional role models once the participant became a practicing music teacher. Other professional role models named were internship cooperating teachers, community chorus directors, church musicians, and colleagues.

**Preference for certain age groups.** Another emergent theme was the preference for teaching specific age groups. The reasons for these preferences were identified as *musical fulfilment*, *personalities of students*, and *preparing for future studies*.

***Musical fulfilment.*** A common theme among the high school teachers who were interviewed is that of musical fulfilment: the capability of the students to achieve a more nuanced and complex performance. When asked if he would consider teaching other grade levels, one high school teacher said, “I’ve got to say, I do perceive myself staying at the high school level. If any level did change, I think it would be that I would work at a collegiate level. . . but that's mostly due to the high-quality output that we're able to produce at the high school level. . . in terms of performance. . . . It's the higher quality literature and then, more that we are

able to do at the high school level as far as musicality and technical accuracy.” Another participant who had experience in both middle and high school levels said of teaching high school, “What I enjoy most is the level of musicianship that we can achieve at this level with this age group.”

When considering the rewarding aspects of teaching each grade level, a participant who taught grades 6-12 remarked, “I like teaching middle school, because I like the introductory level of teaching music. I like being the ‘light going off,’ if you will, in their heads, when they actually get that what they're doing is more than just singing. I also like teaching high school because I can do more in-depth music and get more into the music theory aspect. . . . The capability of high school students is on a higher level, which does fulfill a lot of my core music wishes.” Another participant said, “I like the level of music that they are able to succeed with. I like the harmonic quality of upper secondary teaching, the depth of the chords and such.”

*Personalities of students.* Student personalities within certain age groups contributed to some participants’ preference. One middle school teacher said, “I just like their quirkiness. I like the fact that they're different every single day when they walk in the door and you just never really know what you're going to get. I just like the middle school kid.”

The inverse was also true: student personalities could make specific age groups less preferable to teach. One participant who taught grades 7-12 noted, “I'm thinking specifically about middle-schoolers when they walk in, and they're just in a bad mood, so that's going to go into the singing and how they just don't sing if they're in a bad mood. I say, ‘Hey, I need you to sing out,’ and they think it is a personal affront to them, and they get so mad.” Another participant said, “At a drop of a hat they can go berserk if they want. That's just the way. It's middle school.”

*Preparing for future studies.* Participants noted the task of preparing students for future music studies as both a rewarding and challenging aspect of teaching at the high school level. One participant said, “I like that we are in a transition into what they think they want to do as a career, and so being able to prepare them better. . . than. . . I may have been prepared. . . . Being able to really help them—or try to help them—be successful if they choose to do that in the future. I like being in that position.” Another participant said, “I love being able to talk to the seniors and tell them, ‘Let music take you places,’ which is pretty much my motto. And giving them the opportunities to say, ‘Hey, you don’t have to major in music when you graduate from high school but, you can minor or just be in choir.’”

Most participants spoke of this opportunity as a positive aspect of teaching high school students. One participant said, “They’re young adults, so they’re finding themselves and they’re about to go to college. I feel like I’m forming their music opinion. It may be their only music opinion, but it may propel them to be a lifelong musician.”

Another participant noted the challenges related to this task, saying,

[Something] that I find challenging is dealing with college scholarships and entrances. That is very inefficient, if I can use a word that kind of encompasses a lot of different reasons, because there’s no set path and no one way to go through that communication. Every college has a different recommendation application process and timeline, so that tends to be frustrating.

Trying to get kids prepared and ready and make sure they’ve done what they need to do and find where they want to go to school and what the rules are and what their expectations are. You know, we have college counselors for that, but they tend to focus more on the academic side, and we don’t have the manpower that the athletic department

has to help navigate all that. And it's only frustrating because I sometimes feel like I'm not doing a good job—or a good enough job—and our students may be missing out on things that they deserve.

**Frustrations.** Participants identified factors they found frustrating about the grade levels they taught in addition to frustrations related to choral music in general. Frustrations they shared included *the need for validation, student motivation, scheduling, and the need for an assistant.*

***The need for validation.*** Several participants reported frustration over the perceived need to validate their choral programs. One stated,

The most frustrating thing for me is always having to validate your program and what you do with others. I mean, that's a daily--hourly--frustration that we're constantly trying to come up with new, and creative, and different ways of showing that we need the support, and the time, and the resources that other programs receive. . . . And not just with your administration, but also with the student body and even with your parents. Some of the parents, you're actually teaching their students, but many of them have not realized the value of that yet.

This feeling was shared by other participants.

It's the constant mode of frustration, it's the constant mode of defense that the musician seems to be in, or music teachers seem to be in. . . . I have to defend my art, or my culture, or what it is that we do, or we could possibly lose jobs and opportunities for our students. I mean if it came down to it, I can probably get another job somewhere. But my students would never get an opportunity to learn about music and, having to continuously defend to keep students with that opportunity is very frustrating.

This participant concluded, “I would be more frustrated by other things in my classroom if I didn't have to fight so hard to make sure that [others know] my field is still valid.”

*Student motivation.* Student motivation emerged as a theme of frustration among participants. “Sometimes, the lack of effort that the students give when I know they can give more, they can achieve more—and they just refuse to do it—[is frustrating].” Other participants shared this sentiment. “I find the most challenging thing is to keep students interested in things that are not part of their everyday social lives, so that's one side of it. The second is convincing them that something that does not have a monetary worth that they can connect directly to it still worth their best effort and their time.” Another noted, “I've been the director of some choirs where the level of commitment in the room is very broad. . . . But there are times where I've struggled with some students who really, really want to do what it takes to take the group to the next level, and then others in the class who are just okay with being mediocre.” One participant said, “It takes a lot to move those mountains in high school sometimes.”

Some participant saw this as a challenge to be overcome. “Kids that are just in there just for an easy A or to go on a trip. That's frustrating but I always kind of feel like it's my job to turn those kids into lovers of music you know? But, it's frustrating at first.” Of the nature of elective classes, another participant noted,

The students in my class, for the large part, if not 100%, choose to be in this class each day. They might rather be at home on the couch playing Xbox, but they have to be at school, then they prefer to be in this classroom, which makes a lot of things more challenging for me as a teacher. Because if I want to continue to recruit and retain students, it needs to be a place that they enjoy, I need to create goals and expectations for the students that are lofty yet attainable, yet still allow them to leave the classroom with a

good grade. Because if the students aren't making a great grade in my choir class, it may be something that they will consider not taking in the future, because we're a very academic-heavy school and GPA is very important to a large majority of our students.

**Scheduling.** Another emergent theme was frustration over scheduling. Competing over students with other elective programs is an issue multiple participants faced. One participant who teaches in a middle school said, "I lose some of my seventh and eighth graders to foreign language, because they have it told to them that you can get high school credit for it if you go ahead and do it in middle school." When asked what she would change about her job, she said, "I'd probably ask for them to be able to have two electives." Another participant also felt frustrated by competition among elective courses, although he proposed an opposite solution. "If I were to change anything, there would be very few electives for which students to choose. . . . It's very difficult to recruit against these other programs and opportunities and electives that are so great at what they do as well, that the students want to be a part of."

Other scheduling frustrations were the results of the inverse: students are placed in choral classes they did not wish to take. Regarding this, one participant shared,

They don't choose to be in my class, but they're in my class. That is really hard. . . . I don't have many kids who are in my program because they want to be. They're in there because they need an art credit or because they just need somewhere to go, and I'm a dumping ground essentially. [If I could change one thing about my current job,] it would be to have an auditioned group. I don't have one.

Still more scheduling frustrations stemmed from issues related to courses offered by the school. A participant who taught at a middle school related her frustration over being unable to have classes separated by sex, stating,

All the research says that the best thing to do is to put all the girls in one. . . . Like middle school, seventh and eighth grade girls in one class and separate the boys. And, I've done it. I've taught it that way. It's awesome that way. But, scheduling that way is very hard for just numerous reasons you know? Because, it creates a class where only this grade, this sex kid can be in this class. And so, it makes it more limited as far as where they can put them for all their other classes. So, if they're taking like an advanced English class and eighth grade boys choir and an advanced math class, it's really hard to make a master schedule where there's enough slots that they can do that.

Another participant who taught middle school noted the extra work her schedule created for her. “I know the other two middle schools [in my school system] have their show choir meet during the school day, and we don't have that capability into our schedule.”

A participant who taught at two different schools believed that his students suffered because of his schedule. He said,

Neither school gets my hundred percent. They get as much as I can give them but, if we've got a big project going on at the high school the middle school seems to get a little less of me and I've got a big project at the middle school the high school gets a little less of me. It's just not really very fair for the students to have me split amongst [sic] these two. . . .

***The need for an assistant.*** Among the participants, a common response to the interview question about changing one aspect their jobs was their perceived need for an assistant. For some, this was due to a perceived inadequacy on their part. “I would love to have an accompanist, so whether that means my skills improve or I have somebody.” Other participants agreed. “If I could change one thing, I would have an accompanist.” A participant who taught

middle school believed she would benefit from having a male assistant to help her teach students with changing voices, stating,

I would have a male assistant because I think. . . having a male model in the classroom makes so much of a difference in their overall sound. I mean, you know, I don't sound right singing their part when their voice is changing and they're singing tenor today and bass tomorrow and alto the next day.

One participant who had an assistant choir teacher noted a desire to have someone who could handle time-consuming matters that did not require his personal expertise. He said,

I wish I had a secretary that would handle communications. The communication that's not sensitive, just all that stuff. So, if I could change one thing, that would be it. I would love to have someone--it doesn't have to be a paid person--someone that can handle those things that are important but do not have to come from me. . . Like, communication about scheduling, communication about calendar, communication about--you know--uniforms, reminders about what kids are supposed to have. You know, the hundreds of e-mails we write to parents and students that—you know—it's just words and anyone can write them.

It's just a matter of taking time to put them down and send them, as opposed to—you know—an email about a student's specific abilities; I would have to answer that. Or a sensitive situation about an auditioned choir. Those kind of things--yes I need to handle those, but there's so much of our time that's taken up with communication that--like you said you don't have to be a choir teacher to send out those things.

This wish was also stated by another participant, who said, “Really, we need a bookkeeper that goes along with us so we can do out teaching.”

**Choral classroom as a community.** One of the most common emergent themes throughout the interviews was the notion of the choral classroom as a community. When asked what he believed was the most important thing he did in his classroom on a daily basis, one participant said, “I think [it is] connecting people from different backgrounds, helping students feel valuable with who they are, and hopefully. . . provide students with a different voice or different perspective on their life. And that sounds bigger than I mean for it to be, but on their perspective of the future and the present.” He went on to say of choral music,

Situations are created that you and the students can be very vulnerable with each other, to the point of really understanding, well, individuals for sure, on the individual level, but also just on a human level. There are other classes that can do that, as well, but in other classes, there is not that environment, and even that teaching tool that allows that or facilitates that, and I think music—especially choral music—I think is one of those that automatically opens those situations or create those situations.

You already know this, but your voice for one already is unique to you. So, to share that at all is sharing something that you usually don't share in another class. And then, you're working with another group of people trying to accomplish something. If you picked the right music and you have text that is meaningful and challenging, then it also opens up, you know, opportunities for trust to be built, and people just to be open, to be vulnerable, to take chances. And this is just me speaking, but that's the most rewarding part about teaching choral music is the relationship side that can be built through that.

A participant who taught middle school said that the most important thing she did was to “make relationships with kids. Connect to kids. Like, be an influence in their life. I think that's the

most important thing I do. To me, the music and all that comes later, comes after that.” Another participant said that the most important thing he did on a daily basis was to facilitate communication, reporting,

[The most important thing I do is] give my students a chance to communicate. That, to me, is the most important thing. And music itself is communication so, giving my students the opportunity to actually communicate. If not with me, if not through words, through the music, through some form, they get a chance to communicate with me about what it is that they're doing. They can express to me in multiple ways with the music and other ways. And even through body language and what not. It's just all different ways. And giving them those tools to make those expressions and be consistent, as well as persistent, with those expressions so that audiences may get a wonderful gift for what they are able to offer.

Some participants considered their classrooms to be safe havens for their students. One participant reported,

I give the students a place to go and feel at home. I give them a place to go where they can release all of the energy they've built up at the classes that they've been in all day. A safe place.”

Another participant said, “I have a few kids who are just awful in other classes, and those teachers tell me that, but they come into my class, and they're great. I think it's just because I care about them.”

**Place in the school.** A few themes emerged related to the choir teacher’s role in the school at large. These themes were identified as *extra-curricular involvement*, *commonalities with other teachers*, *differences from other teachers*, and *administrator understanding*.

*Extra-curricular involvement.* The participants of this interview indicated that they were involved with school activities outside of the instructional day. In many cases, it was to support their students. One participant noted the importance of attending events outside of school, stating,

I went to everything, as much as I could, which I believe—as a choir teacher—is very important, not only for recruitment, to get a varied group of students into your program, but also for relationships within the school system on a colleague-to-colleague level and also on an administrative level. If they see that you are supporting as many things as you can, either consciously or subconsciously, a lot of times, that support is returned. And it also gives you some leverage; when you do need things, it also gives you some intangible leverage points.

Having time to attend these events was a factor for some participants. One said, “I go to a few after school athletic events. I have three of my own children so I'm usually doing their athletic events. But, I try to go to at least one or two a year just to show my face. Let the kids know I support them.”

Most participants also had official roles in some extra-curricular activities. Many held after-school rehearsals, and some sponsored clubs. One participant said, “I am the drill team sponsor for the band, so I go to all the football games, home and away, and I go to all the band competitions. I am a medical assistant, which means I have to go on field trips if they don't have one, and I'm a diabetic assistant.” Another participant said, “[I] stay after for rehearsals, and I'm heavily involved with the musical, as with my show choir, and so there is [sic] very few afternoons that I'm not at school, and I'm not one of these teachers that when the 3:15 bells rings I'm out in the parking lot by 3:30.”

*Commonalities with Other Teachers.* Participants were asked to identify similarities between their jobs and the jobs of other teachers in their schools. The most common responses related to professionalism and the desire for student success. “Structure, discipline, things like that are always similar because that's just how you deal with class. Classroom management is just, simply put, a similarity that goes across the board.” Another participant noted of the similarities in expectations, “We all have a curriculum and we all have state guidelines and things like that that we have to teach.”

In addition to professional expectations, several participants cited the desire for student welfare and success as similarities between themselves and the other teachers they worked with. “I think that all teachers should be working to help students see all perspectives. Not all do, but I think that should be a similarity. Similarities are that we want students to be successful in what they want to do, not just what we want them to do.”

*Differences from Other Teachers.* Most participants were more forthcoming about ways in which their jobs differed from the jobs of other teachers in their schools. One claimed,

I feel that it's different. Again, just from the fact that I have kids that I can either see for all three years or I get some students that just decide to join choir in the eighth grade and I'm expected to kind of catch them up to where they need to be so that they can fit in with the rest of the ensemble. I feel like our classes are different in that when you walk into my classroom if you want to say, ‘Well, what is your objective for the day? . . .’ We don't have one objective.

We're working on several different tasks and many of them are scaffolding to new tasks and so my objectives are going to be my warmups, my sight reading, and my literature. All those pieces of literature are going to be at different stages, and so I think

many times when we're observed, you know they walk into a core class and they say, 'Okay, there is one objective for today, what is the lesson on?' And I don't think ours falls in that category.

This response was common to several other participants. One described choral music teachers' lesson structure as "all-encompassing" compared to those of the other teachers in his school, later adding, "We're off in a world of our own to some degree." Another teacher elaborated on this idea,

We also tend to teach, compared to a lot of the classes I've observed, more preps in one class than others. What I mean by that is that when we're teaching a normal choir class, we're actually teaching music theory, music literacy, performance, vocal pedagogy, score analysis. . . . I mean, there's a whole list of things we're teaching and trying to get done in one class, as opposed to another discipline that may be able to pare it down into smaller skill sets. Or more specific skill sets, I guess.

The participants noted that the mode of delivering curriculum tends to be more flexible for choir teachers. One participant said, "I don't think there's gonna be math teachers that select an idea or unit of study where they have to think, okay, the students have to enjoy this. Whereas when I'm selecting repertoire, that's one of the first things I think of." This was a common theme among the participants. Another observed,

We tend to have to create our curriculum a little bit more than other teachers, meaning that every year we reinvent our textbooks with, you know. At least we do a strong theory component, and that doesn't change, but our music, which is basically our textbook, our materials, you know, that's new every year.

Another difference identified by the participants was the nature of the relationships with students. A participant who taught in a high school said, “The first difference I think of is that the students in my class, for the large part, if not 100%, choose to be in this class each day.”

Another participant shared this view, saying, “Sometimes students go to math, or social studies, or English because they have to. In my class, they go because they want to.” A participant who taught middle school said, “Because we teach music—and singing in particular—we form more of a bond with the kids and because we have them for more than one year most of the time. We have them, usually I have them for three years. And so, you know I get to know them. I get to know their families and their siblings and that's a little different.”

***Administrator understanding.*** Most participants claimed that their administrators did not understand what they did professionally. In most cases, the participants did not mind, so long as they received support. One recalled,

I think I only had one assistant principal in my classroom this year. So, what specifically I do on a daily basis, I don't think my administration is very aware of that. Do they need to be? I don't feel like they need to be with me. Do they need to be with their teachers and have a better idea of what's going on? Yes. I know some of the administrators might be a little bit too hands on, but the fact that the administrators, the head principal attends each of my concerts. I think that gives him enough that he needs to know about what's going on.

Another participant shared this perspective, suggesting,

Overall, I think they're open to what we do. I think very few of them *really* understand what we do. The good ones are able to make parallels and connections to things they do

know really well, and at least say, "Okay, it's like this," and they can make comparisons and kind of understand, you know, empirically.

Others were less satisfied with their administration. One participant felt very strongly that her administrators neither understood nor valued her program. She reported,

I had no observations, really. They don't attend the students' performances. Not one administrator was at our concert at all last year. I feel like it's hard to understand what I do or what the kids worked so hard for if you don't ever come to see the product.

Another participant listed specific deficiencies in her administration's understanding and support of her program, sharing,

I think especially when we go to things like performance assessment and things of that nature, I don't think they know how high the stakes are or what it is we're being graded on. They may just hear, "Oh, well, the band gets 'superiors,' the choir gets 'superiors,' or you know they get 'excellents' whatever," and they don't really know what all that means. Personally, I was kind of disheartened that my choir went to AMEA this year and I didn't have an administrator that showed up. I don't think that they knew that that was a big deal that they needed to come and support the kids. I don't think they knew what a big honor that was.

Another participant belied that her principal did not understand what she did, but she also believed that her assistant principal was understanding and supportive of her program. She claimed,

My vice principal is musical. He plays the piano at church. He's the one who comes to my concerts. He knows what I do, but my principal has no idea what my standards are. He has only ever come into my classroom once. It is a completely separate thing. When

my vice principal comes in, he gives me great feedback. He knows what I'm teaching and how I should be teaching it essentially, but my principal does not know what I'm doing, and he doesn't understand how it could help the students.

**Worthwhile professional development.** Consistent with the findings of previous research (Bush, 2007; Laor, 2015; Pellegrino, 2011), most participants felt that peer-to-peer interactions among choral teachers were the most valuable PD experiences. One participant suggested that informal interactions with peers might be some of the best PD activities. She opined,

I love roundtable discussions when I can get with people in my feeder pattern—specifically the other middle and high school directors in my feeder pattern. . . . I know sometimes when we go to conferences if we all ride together, that can be some of the most beneficial PD because we're all just kind of talking and there's not really an agenda, it's kind of just whatever comes up naturally in conversations.

Others felt similarly. One said, “I feel like the most beneficial to me are when I'm actually able to go and meet with other choir directors in my district and ask them questions.” Another said, “I think the most valuable professional development is sitting around and talking to other people who do what I do. I learn more from going to dinner or lunch or sitting around chatting with a bunch of other middle school and high school choral directors.” Yet another said, “I think the most valuable professional development is sitting around and talking to other people who do what I do. I learn more from going to dinner or lunch or sitting around chatting with a bunch of other middle school and high school choral directors.”

Others highly valued conferences. One participant stated,

I'd say the more local conferences that we attend are, even though they may not be as in-depth and those who are leading them may not have as much knowledge or being paid as much as someone on the national or regional level, there are so many opportunities to get involved with other teachers or colleagues in our state or our area who have more of the same challenges. And reaching out to them for assistance with those challenges, those teachers in our area can relate a bit more.

Another praised the ACDA National Conference, saying, "I think it's the performance experiences, the professional affiliations with people from all over the United States. The sense of community is really overwhelming."

Almost unanimously, the participants agreed that PD activities that were not specific to their content area were the least valuable. One participant said,

Sometimes it's the same thing and you have to sit through year after year. I understand that we need to know that, but rehashing it over and over. . . . I know some of my colleagues don't have to sit in on data meetings of their schools, like going over different standardized test data. I think I can read that in an email. I don't know that I necessarily need to be part of the faculty meetings where we are dissecting that data because I don't give a standardized test. I feel like what I'm already doing is reinforcing reading concepts and math concepts. I don't know that that really pertains to me.

Others felt the same way. One participant said, "General assemblies are basically one of the biggest wastes of time, to me, and is a big loss." Another participant did not appreciate her school system's yearly requirement that she attend "technology crap that doesn't have anything to do with music."

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that secondary choral music teachers lack a unified group identity. Significant practical differences were found among those who prefer to be referred to as *teacher* and those who preferred to be referred to as *director*. Implications related to role conflict and job stress could exist.

#### Research Question One

The first research question asked about the career identities of in-service secondary choral music teachers. Responses to the questionnaire revealed a majority preference for job titles that align with the identity of *director*. The open-response questionnaire item revealed that 71.2% of the sample claimed—accurately or not—that their job titles included the word *director*.

These results were consistent with the respondents' preference of titles. *Choir Director* was considered favorable by 19% of the sample and highly favorable by an additional 70%; during the interviews, participants favored the term *choir director* when discussing others in the field. *Choir Teacher* was also deemed favorable, though not as favorable as *Choir Director*, and with more than double the variance. *Music Teacher* was not deemed unfavorable, but it also received the greatest number of neutral responses (27%). *Director of Choral Activities* was a polarizing title, deemed highly favorable by 27% of the sample and highly unfavorable by 23%. *Music Specialist* was the least preferable of the group, as it was deemed highly favorable by less than 10% of the sample and highly unfavorable by more than 34%.

This suggests a dual process of identity: content area identification and task identification. As noted in Chapter Two, musicians feel a strong affinity toward their content area (Isbell, 2015), and traditional secondary education by its very nature applies a narrower focus. Therefore, it stands to reason that secondary choral music teachers would prefer titles more specific to their area. It is possible that this is why the titles without a variant of the word *choir* were deemed less preferable.

Regarding task identification, the rationale may be less clear. The word *director* implies authority and importance, naturally increasing its appeal. It is also somewhat specific, as is *teacher*. Both *director* and *teacher* are commonly understood words that imply action. By contrast, *specialist*—while still implicitly important—is explicitly vague. Therefore, by these suppositions, *Music Specialist* would be the least preferable title, while *Choir Director* would be the most preferable.

The significant correlations among preferences of these titles support these assertions (Table 11). *Choir Director* and *Choir Teacher* share a like content identity, as do *Music Teacher* and *Music Specialist*. Likewise, *Choir Teacher* and *Music Teacher* share a like task identity, as do *Choir Director* and *Director of Choral Activities*. It should also be noted that *Music Teacher* and *Director of Choral Activities* share neither and are significantly negatively correlated.

*Director of Choral Activities* seems to meet the criteria of favorability, as well. As stated above, it was a polarizing title. This could possibly be explained through socialization. One item in the interview inquired about professional role models. Collegiate choral directors (often true Directors of Choral Activities) were commonly cited as professional role models during the participants' pre-service education. Though only one interview participant identified as a *Director of Choral Activities*, his only ongoing professional role models were Directors of

Choral Activities. The inverse of this could also apply. Because Directors of Choral Activities are typically associated with institutions of higher learning, some choir teachers can identify that title as one that does not apply to them. In other words, it could be that an affinity toward the title *Director of Choral Activities* is symptomatic of an aspiration toward that station or the ideals held by professional role models, while an aversion to the title stems from a dissociation from the collegiate choral environment. The reasons for these career identifications warrant further study.

### **Research Question Two**

The socialization factors that contribute to ongoing career identity development are not immediately clear from the quantitative data. While analysis found no correlations among secondary socialization factors and career identity factors, a few themes emerged from descriptive statistics and interviews.

**The decision to teach music.** Consistent with the findings of Thornton & Bergee (2008), most secondary choral music teachers sampled in this study chose to become music teachers during high school. The interview participants typically named their high school choir teachers as influential figures in making this decision. The decision to teach music was also typically due to the desire to teach children (53.42%) or the desire to conduct an ensemble or perform high-quality literature (28.77%), a teaching activity and a directing activity, respectively. Due to the prevalence of high school as the period when most participants decided to become music teachers, most participants held degrees in music education.

**Involvement in music.** The majority of this sample (84.93%) was active in musical activities outside of school. Pellegrino (2011) suggested that participating in musical activities as performers was important to the professional development of music teachers.

**The desire to interact with peers.** The survey results found that participants valued conferences, especially on the state level. Interview responses indicated that what participants enjoyed most was interaction with their colleagues in choral music education. As one participant noted, “We’re off in our own world,” referring to the isolation of choir teachers in the school setting. Another participant said, “We are all like choir geeks. We all love the same thing.” This desire to be with others perceived as similar is one of Troiden’s (1989) *identity assumption* stage of identity homosexual identity formation.

### **Research Question Three**

A significant positive correlation existed between preference of the title *Director of Choral Activities* service on school committees. Returning to the prior assertion of task identity, this is reasonable; serving on committees would be consistent with the activities of a director.

Those who preferred to be called *Music Specialists* valued planning lessons and assessment, while those who preferred to be called *Directors of Choral Activities* valued teaching sight-reading, assessment, and conducting concerts. These preference–value relationships are consistent with content–task identities these titles represent. The same could be said of the preference–value relationships regarding repertoire selection: those who preferred the title *Choir Director* and—especially—those who preferred the title *Director of Choral Activities* placed higher value on repertoire selection criteria than those of the teacher task-identity.

The preference–value relationships regarding PD topics also fit within the theoretical parameters of content–task identity. It is reasonable to expect that a *Music Teacher* would value repertoire selection and classroom management PD; a *Choir Director* would value PD in choral warm-ups; a *Music Specialist* would value PD in lesson planning, assessment, and interpretation

of school-wide data; a *Conductor* would value PD in conducting and assessment; and a *Director of Choral Activities* would value PD in conducting.

Some of these activities are firmly associated with one task identity. For instance, *classroom management* is associated with *teacher* identity, while *conducting* is associated with *director* identity. Some activities, however, belong to both identities. *Assessment*, for example, is an activity employed by teachers to inform instruction or to communicate progress, while it is employed by directors to evaluate performances and inform rehearsal techniques. Many such similarities exist between teaching and directing an ensemble.

The attitudes of the interview participants toward PD indicated an aversion to PD activities that are not specific to their content area. One participant said that “all faculty meetings” are of little benefit. Broad, education-centered PD was deemed to be of minimal value by those who responded to the questionnaire, as well.

The significant negative correlations between the variables of claiming a job title containing the word *teacher* and the perceived importance of teaching music fundamentals/the perceived importance of teachable concepts when selecting repertoire warrant further study.

#### **Research Question Four**

The participants of the telephone interviews exhibited commitment to their tasks and self-efficacy, two essential elements of job satisfaction. No participant displayed a negative attitude toward his or her job. Still, their stated frustrations provided insight into potential role stress related to their career identities.

While few participants believed that their administrators understood what they did professionally, most felt supported. Those who were most negative toward their administration felt neither understood nor supported. It was important to the participants that the administration

recognized their good work, as was found to be the case in previous studies (Cano & Castillo, 2004). No responses indicated a belief that an administrator understood but did not support the choral teacher.

Intense workloads contributed to diminished career satisfaction, as well. One participant moved from a long-held position at a school he enjoyed because another school afforded him higher pay and more time with his family. Another participant lamented that he was unable to serve his middle and high schools to the extent that he would like because of his schedule. A middle school teacher listed all her extra-curricular responsibilities and noted that other schools in her system allot time for some of those responsibilities during the school day.

Another factor that could negatively impact job satisfaction was the feeling of isolation. Most participants noted how they valued face-to-face time with other choir teachers. They also identified differences between themselves and their coworkers, a factor that could potentially exacerbate feelings of isolation, as most of them were the only teachers of their content area in their respective schools.

The primary positive force contributing to job satisfaction was the community in the choral classroom. Regardless of their career identities, the participants indicated a desire to foster positive, inquisitive, mutually supportive communities in their classes. When asked about the aspect of music she valued most, one participant said, “The emotion, the unity, the feeling, the sound is in and of itself something beautiful that we create. I guess we're able to create something together, something from nothing.”

## **Conclusions**

The secondary choral music teachers sampled for this study typically exhibited career identities aligned with both content area and task. This content–task identification affected

certain values, priorities, and practices related to their jobs. The career identities are likely acquired early, when the pre-service teachers begin to imagine themselves as teachers. For this reason, early career identities are based on professional role models—often choir teachers or professors.

It is likely that a given career identity self-propagates through social interactions and professional development. The participants favored professional development that aligned with their career identities. Specifically, they favored professional development that aligned with their career identities and provided social interaction with others they perceived to be like them.

The most important factor affecting job satisfaction might be administrator understanding. If administrators truly do not understand what their choir teachers do professionally, role conflict is likely. A lack of alignment between the values of the choir teacher and those of his or supervisor could lead to tension. School faculty meetings are typically organized by local school administrators, and the sample included in this study considered them of minimal professional benefit. Irrespective of career identity, most respondents identified their students as the reasons they chose to teach music, and the community forged in the choral classroom was commonly identified as “rewarding” and “important” by participants. Regardless, the implications of identity conflicts are serious and worth investigation.

These identity conflicts pose serious implications not only for teacher job satisfaction, but also for classroom instruction and program advocacy. Knowledge of learning theories and teacher qualities—such as classroom management, rapport, quality of instruction, and classroom environment have been found to be of high importance to student learning (Wang & Walberg,

1997). In order to teach students most effectively, teachers must engage in research-based, differentiated instructional practices (Rock, Gregg, Ellis, & Gable, 2008).

While certain identity parallels can be found between choir teachers and teachers of other academic subjects who also coach athletic teams (Konukman et al., 2010), there are important distinctions: teacher-coaches typically do not organize their academic classrooms and plan lessons as they would as coaches, while many choir teachers organize, manage, and plan as directors. For instance, choir teachers often prefer larger class sizes, despite the difficulty inherent in assessing large classes (Kotora, 2005) and the fact that numerous studies have found an inverse relationship between academic achievement and class sizes (Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopolous, 2000). Might the students achieve more if there were fewer students per class? Might their learning be easier to assess? Might such a scenario allow for more differentiated instruction?

Pedagogical concerns must take precedent over musical desires. The ability to perform high-quality literature was frequently cited as a reason to enter the field of music education or to teach high school choir rather than elementary or middle school. However, this is not sufficient cause to justify the inclusion of a choral program in a school's curriculum. The performance of any choral literature—regardless of difficulty, aesthetic preference, or prestige—must be the result of the teachers' assessments of the students' needs.

This calls attention to one of the most foundational philosophical questions of any classroom: Who—or what—is at the center of instruction? Student-centered learning is a teaching philosophy that places an emphasis learning through student participation in activities (Baeten, Dochy, Struyven, Parmentier, & Vanderbruggen, 2016). Superficially, this seems to

apply well to the framework of a secondary choral classroom. In practice, however, this is only the case when the teacher leads instruction in a manner that is consistent with that of a teacher.

If students are to be the beneficiaries of instruction in a choral classroom, then teachers must approach literature differently. Teachers must not consider whether their students satisfy the requirements of the music, but rather whether the music meets the needs of their students. This shift from content-oriented, teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning with strategic support through content would help to align choral music education with research-based instructional strategies expected of other educational disciplines (Blumenfield et al., 1991).

A teacher-centered model emphasizes performance of literature as a product, whereas a student-centered model emphasizes the process of learning. As previously noted, music teachers have been found to have stronger affinities toward their content area than do teachers of subjects such as mathematics, social studies, or science (Isbell, 2015), but that cannot mean that the music performed is more important than the acquisition of transferable musical knowledge and skills attained through its study.

The benefits of being able to craft a curriculum unique to each class through repertoire selection were noted by interview participants. It is critical that teachers take responsibility to plan repertoire selection intentionally from a curricular mindset. This is expected of teachers of other subjects—many of whose curricula are prescribed for them—where curriculum is a tool to teach standards; music educators must be no different.

This study's findings of a significant positive relationship between teacher identity and the perceived value of PD related to repertoire selection supports the notion that respondents who identified as teachers understood this necessity, though there was a significant negative correlation between teacher identity and the importance of teachable musical concepts as a

criterion of repertoire selection. Because respondents who claimed a teacher identity felt that studying repertoire selection was important but did not claim to value teachable musical elements as an important criterion when selecting repertoire, one of two conclusions seems likely: the teachers lack the self-efficacy to build their curricula, or the teachers value repertoire as “high-quality literature” rather than as a curricular tool to teach transferable musical concepts or skills.

Therein lies the conflict with director identities in the classroom: personal musical fulfillment of the teacher is not always correlative with student learning. While classroom structures in many subjects see frequent reimagining, performing ensembles have largely remained static, teacher-centered classrooms. Participant-cited professional role models—both prior to entering the field of music education and as practicing music teachers—commonly included high school and collegiate choral directors. Previous research has indicated the importance of role-imagination in identity development (Austin, et al., 2012; McClellan, 2014; Schrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Given these two facts, it is reasonable to conceive that professional identity development of choral music teachers could be guided by the desire—explicit or otherwise—to be like role models whose practices may not necessarily be applicable to their personal teaching situations in an evolving field of education.

Ultimately, neither the personal fulfillment of the teacher nor the performance of literature deemed to be “of high quality” are sufficient to justify the inclusion of choral music in a public school. Music education standards are meant to be the basis of a school music program, not obstacles that must be overcome to focus on rehearsals. Previous research has found that musical performance scores positively correlate to the practice of fundamentals, as long as those fundamentals are authentically connected to performance literature (Lehmann & Ericsson, 1996;

Price, Blanton, & Parrish,1998). Students who are taught to read music require less rote teaching, those who are taught proper techniques and expressions require fewer corrections during rehearsal, and those who are taught critical listening skills may take more ownership of developing their artistry.

Naturally, this “slow-and-steady” approach is unappealing to some, as it requires much more work during earlier lessons and frequent reinforcement through formative assessment. Nonetheless, standards-first student-centered instruction pays dividends in the long-term. This philosophy of education requires a teacher, and administrators have been found to favor applicants whose philosophies are congruent to these practices when hiring teachers (Dunton, 2001).

Ultimately, in order to maximize their efficiency as educators, choir teachers must be willing to ask themselves the all-important formative question: *Who am I?* It is possible that the answer might vary with the task being performed, but if one does not identify as a teacher on any level, one should not endeavor to teach. Furthermore, in order to avoid role conflict, open dialogues must take place between teachers of choral music and their administrators to establish the professional expectations of both parties. This may necessitate a philosophical shift on the part of choral music educators, but such an adjustment could be necessary in order to advance the cause of music education advocacy and secure the continued existence of choral music education in the public school curriculum.

## REFERENCES

- The Alabama Vocal Association Handbook*. (2016). Tuscaloosa, AL: The Alabama Vocal Association. Retrieved from [http://www.myamea.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GM\\_Handbook\\_2016-2018.pdf](http://www.myamea.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GM_Handbook_2016-2018.pdf)
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(1), 20-39. doi: 10.2307/258189
- Austin, J. R., Isbell, D. S., & Russell, J. A. (2010). A multi-institution exploration of secondary socialization and occupational identity among undergraduate music majors. *Psychology of Music*. doi: 10.1177/0305735610381886
- Baeten, M. Dochy, F., Struven, K., Parmentier, E., & Vanderbruggen, A. (2016). Studentcentered learning environments: An investigation into student teachers' instructional preferences and approaches to learning. *Learning Environments Research*, *19*(1), 43-62. doi: 10.1007/s10984-015-9190-5
- Baker, V. D. (2005). *The relationship between job satisfaction and the perception of administrative support among early career secondary choral music educators*. Texas Tech University. doi: 10.1177/10570837070170010111
- Ballantyne, J. (2007). Documenting praxis shock in early-career Australian music teachers: the impact of pre-service teacher education. *International Journal of Music Education*, *25*(3), 181-191. doi: 10.1177/0255761407083573
- Ballantyne, J., & Grootenboer, P. (2012). Exploring relationships between teacher identities and disciplinarity. *International Journal of Music Education*, *30*(4), 368-381. doi: 10.1177/0255761412459165
- Ballantyne, J., Kerchner, J. L., & Aróstegui, J. L. (2012). Developing music teacher identities: An international multi-site study. *International Journal of Music Education*, *30*(3), 211-226. doi: 10.1177/0255761411433720
- Bauer, W. I. (2007). Research on professional development for experienced music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *17*(1), 12-21. doi: 10.1177/10570837070170010105
- Becker, H. S., & Carper, J. W. (1956a). The development of identification with an occupation. *American Journal of Sociology*, *61*, 289-298. doi: 10.1086/221759

- Becker, H. S., & Carper, J. W. (1956b). The elements of identification with an occupation. *American Sociological Review*, 21(3), 341-348. doi: 10.2307/2089290
- Bernard, R. (2005). Making music, making selves: A call for reframing music teacher education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 4(2), n2. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ844813>
- Blumer, H. (1980). Mead and Blumer: The convergent methodological perspectives of social behaviorism and symbolic interactionism. *American Sociological Review*, 409-419. doi: 10.2307/2095174
- Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. doi: 10.2307/590791
- Bouij, C. (1998). Swedish music teachers in training and professional life. *International Journal of Music Education*, (1), 24-32. doi: 10.1177/025576149803200103
- Bouij, C. (2007). A comment to Rhoda Bernard: Reframing or oversimplification. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 6(2), 2-18. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bde6/79f172bc777873ffdd2890779fd472222c81.pdf>
- Bowles, C. (2000). The self-expressed professional development needs of music educators. *Update: Applications of research in music education*, 21(2), 35-41. doi: 10.1177/87551233020210020701
- Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996). Who is this "We"? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 71(1), 83. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.71.1.83
- Buchanan, J. (2015). Metaphors as two-way mirrors: Illuminating preservice to in-service teacher identity development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(10), 3. doi: 10.14221/ajte.2015v40n10.3
- Bush, J. E. (2007). Importance of various professional development opportunities and workshop topics as determined by in-service music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 16(2), 10-19. doi: 10.1177/10570837070160020103
- Cano, J., & Castillo, J. X. (2004). Factors explaining job satisfaction among faculty. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 45(3), 65-74. doi: 10.5032/jae.2004.03065
- Conkling, S. W. (2004). Music teacher practice and identity in professional development partnerships. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 3(3), 1-15. doi: 10.1177/105708370201100203

- Conley, S., & Woosley, S. A. (2000). Teacher role stress, higher order needs and work outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 179-201. doi: 10.1108/09578230010320163
- Conway, C. M. (2007). Setting an agenda for professional development policy, practice, and research in music education. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17(1), 56-61. doi: 10.1177/10570837070170010109
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). The looking-glass self. *O'brien*, 126-128. Retrieved from: [http://facweb.northseattle.edu/ratkins/ClassMaterials/Scans%20Diagrams/SOC101/Soc101Activities/05C-Looking-Glass\\_Self.pdf](http://facweb.northseattle.edu/ratkins/ClassMaterials/Scans%20Diagrams/SOC101/Soc101Activities/05C-Looking-Glass_Self.pdf)
- Cox, P. H. (1994). *The professional socialization of Arkansas music teachers as musicians and educators: The role of influential persons from childhood to post-college years*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of North Texas).
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). Choosing a mixed methods design. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 53-106. Retrieved from: [https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/10982\\_Chapter\\_4.pdf](https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/10982_Chapter_4.pdf)
- Dolloff, L. (2007). All the things we are: Balancing our multiple identities in music teaching. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 6(2), 1-21. Retrieved from: [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Dolloff6\\_2.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Dolloff6_2.pdf)
- Dolloff, L. A. (1999). Imagining ourselves as teachers: The development of teacher identity in music teacher education. *Music Education Research*, 1(2), 191-208. doi: 10.1080/1461380990010206
- Dunton III, J. C. (2001). Selection criteria used by high school principals in Virginia when hiring first-year career and technical education teachers. (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).
- Dweck, C. M., D. (2005). Self-theories: Their impact on competence motivation and acquisition. *Handbook of competence and motivation*, 122-140. Retrieved from: <http://www.physics.emory.edu/~weeks/journal/aronsonsteele05.pdf>
- Eren, A. (2012). Prospective teachers' interest in teaching, professional plans about teaching and career choice satisfaction: A relevant framework? *Australian Journal of Education*, 56(3), 303-318. doi: 10.1177/000494411205600308
- Freer, P. K., & Bennett, D. (2012). Developing musical and educational identities in university music students. *Music Education Research*, 14(3), 265-284. doi: 10.1080/14613808.2012.712507
- Hancock, C. B. (2008). Music teachers at risk for attrition and migration. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 56(2), 130-144. doi: 10.1177/0022429408321635

- Hancock, C. B. (2009). National estimates of retention, migration, and attrition: A multiyear comparison of music and non-music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 57(2), 92-107. doi: 10.1177/0022429409337299
- Hancock, C. B. (2016). Is the grass greener? Current and former music teachers' perceptions a year after moving to a different school or leaving the classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63(4), 421-438. doi:10.1177/0022429415612191
- Hargreaves, D. J., Purves, R. M., Welch, G. F., & Marshall, N. A. (2007). Developing identities and attitudes in musicians and classroom music teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(3), 665-682. doi:10.1348/000709906X154676
- Harlow, A., & Cobb, D. J. (2014). Planting the seed of teacher identity: Nurturing early growth through a collaborative learning community. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(7), n7. doi: 10.14221/ajte.2014v39n7.8
- Haston, W., Hourigan, R., & Scheib, J. (2007). The socialization of undergraduates in higher education. *Roles, identity, socialization and conflict: The transition from music student to music teacher (A literature review)*. Retrieved from: [http://www.academia.edu/download/3447028/Impediments\\_to\\_the\\_Development\\_of\\_the\\_Music\\_Teacher\\_Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Social\\_Context\\_in\\_the\\_Music\\_School\\_on\\_the\\_Emerging\\_Identity\\_of\\_Future\\_.pdf](http://www.academia.edu/download/3447028/Impediments_to_the_Development_of_the_Music_Teacher_Impact_of_the_Social_Context_in_the_Music_School_on_the_Emerging_Identity_of_Future_.pdf)
- Haston, W., & Russell, J. A. (2011). Turning into teachers: Influences of authentic context learning experiences on occupational identity development of preservice music teachers. *The Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59, 369-392. doi:10.1177/0022429411414716
- Hellman, D. (2007). Impediments to the development of the music teacher: Impact of the social context in the music school on the emerging identity of future music educators. *Roles, identity, socialization, and conflict: The transition from music student to music teacher (A literature review)*, 34-68. Retrieved from: [http://www.academia.edu/download/3447028/Impediments\\_to\\_the\\_Development\\_of\\_the\\_Music\\_Teacher\\_Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Social\\_Context\\_in\\_the\\_Music\\_School\\_on\\_the\\_Emerging\\_Identity\\_of\\_Future\\_.pdf#page=34](http://www.academia.edu/download/3447028/Impediments_to_the_Development_of_the_Music_Teacher_Impact_of_the_Social_Context_in_the_Music_School_on_the_Emerging_Identity_of_Future_.pdf#page=34)
- Hellman, D. (2008). Do music education majors intend to teach music? An exploratory survey. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 27(1), 65-70. doi: 10.1177/8755123308322378
- Isbell, D. S. (2006). Socialization and occupational identity among preservice music teachers enrolled in traditional baccalaureate degree programs. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder).

- Isbell, D. S. (2008). Musicians and teachers: The socialization and occupational identity of preservice music teachers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 56(2), 162-178. doi: 10.1177/0022429408322853
- Isbell, D. S. (2015). The socialization of music teachers: A review of the literature. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 34(1), 5-12. doi: 10.1177/8755123314547912
- Johnson, E. (2014). "Conducting is everywhere!" A case study of the development of preservice music teacher occupational identity in a beginning conducting course. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 2(3), 118-128. doi: 10.11114/jets.v2i3.422
- Jorgensen, E. R. (2010). School music education and change. *Music Educators Journal*, 96(4), 21-27. doi:10.1177/0027432110369779
- Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2008). Self-esteem and extrinsic career success: Test of a dynamic model. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 57(2), 204-224. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00300.x
- Kelly, S. N. (2003). The influence of selected cultural factors on the environmental teaching preference of undergraduate music education majors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 12(2), 40-51. doi: 10.1177/10570837030120020106
- Konukman, F., Agbuğa, B., Erdoğan, Ş., Zorba, E., Demirhan, G., & Yilmaz, I. (2010). Teacher-coach role conflict in school-based physical education in USA: a literature review and suggestions for the future. *Biomedical Human Kinetics*, 2, 19-24. doi: 10.2478/v10101-010-0005-y
- Kotora Jr, E. J. (2005). Assessment practices in the choral music classroom: A survey of Ohio high school choral music teachers and college choral methods professors. *Contributions to Music Education*, 65-80. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24127154>
- Krueger, P. J. (2000). Beginning music teachers: Will they leave the profession? *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 19(1), 22. doi: 10.1177/875512330001900105
- Langer, S. K. (1942). *Philosophy in a new key: A study in the symbolism of reason, rite, and art* (3rd ed.): Harvard University Press.
- Laor, L. (2015). Evaluating graduate education and transcending biases in music teachers' professional development. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(1), 56-63. doi: 10.11114/jets.v3i1.517
- Lehmann, A. C., & Ericsson, K. A. (1996). Performance without preparation: Structure and acquisition of expert sight-reading and accompanying performance. *Psychomusicology: A Journal of Research in Music Cognition*, 15(1-2), 1. doi: 10.1037/h0094082

- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (2002). Social cognitive career theory. *Career Choice and Development* 4(1), 255-311. doi: 10.4135/9781412952675.n261
- Madsen, C. K., & Hancock, C. B. (2002). Support for music education: A case study of issues concerning teacher retention and attrition. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 50(1), 6. doi: 10.1080/10632910209600035
- Madsen, C. K., & Kelly, S. N. (2002). First remembrances of wanting to become a music teacher. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 50(4), 323. doi: 10.2307/3345358
- Manuel, J., & Hughes, J. (2006). "It has always been my dream": Exploring preservice teachers' motivations for choosing to teach. *Teacher Development*, 10(01), 5-24. doi: 10.1080/13664530600587311
- McClellan, E. (2014). Undergraduate music education major identity formation in the university music department. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, 13(1). Retrieved from: [http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/McClellan13\\_1.pdf](http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/McClellan13_1.pdf)
- Mead, G. H. (1913). The social self. *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 10(14), 374-380. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2012910>
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society* (Vol. 111): Chicago University of Chicago Press. doi: 10.1086/347028
- Miksza, P. (2007). Musician/performer role conflict. *Roles, Identity, Socialization, and Conflict: The Transition from Music Student to Music Teacher (A Literature Review)*, 44-49. Retrieved from: <http://smte.us/wp-content/uploads/2007/02/rolesidentitysocializationconflict.pdf#page=44>
- Moss, J. M., Gibson, D. M., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2014). Professional identity development: A grounded theory of transformational tasks of counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 3-12. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00124.x
- Motley, K. S. (2015). Alabama public high school choral teacher involvement in Alabama vocal association sponsored events. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama).
- Pagnano, K. (2002). A case study of the dual roles of a teacher/coach: an ecological comparison. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 73(1), A78. doi: 10.1080/02701367.2002.10609056
- Parkes, K. A., & Jones, B. D. (2012). Motivational constructs influencing undergraduate students' choices to become classroom music teachers or music performers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 60(1), 101-123. doi:10.1177/0022429411435512

- Pellegrino, K. (2009). Connections between performer and teacher identities in music teachers: Setting an agenda for research. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 19(1), 39-55. doi: 10.1177/1057083709343908
- Pellegrino, K. (2011). Exploring the benefits of music-making as professional development for music teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 112(2), 79-88. doi:10.1080/10632913.2011.546694
- Pillen, M., Beijaard, D., & Brok, P. d. (2013). Tensions in beginning teachers' professional identity development, accompanying feelings and coping strategies. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(3), 240-260. doi: 10.1080/02619768.2012.696192
- Richards, T. J., & Richards, L. (1994). Using computers in qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2, 445-462. doi: 10.1177/089443939401200221
- Robbins, J., & Stein, R. (2005). What partnerships must we create, build, or reenergize in K-12 higher and professional education for music teacher education in the future. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 14(2), 22-29. doi: 10.1177/10570837050140020104
- Roberts, B. (1991). Music teacher education as identity construction. *International Journal of Music Education*, 18(1), 30-39. doi: 10.1177/025576149101800104
- Robinson, N. R. (2012). Preservice music teachers' employment preferences: Consideration factors. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 60(3), 294-309. doi: 10.1177/0022429412454723
- Rock, M. L., Gregg, M., Ellis, E., & Gable, R. A. (2008). REACH: A framework for differentiating classroom instruction. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 52(2), 31-47. doi: 10.3200/psfl.52.2.31-47
- Russell, J. A. (2012). The occupational identity of in-service secondary music educators: Formative interpersonal interactions and activities. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 60(2), 145-165. doi:10.1177/0022429412445208
- Scheib, J. W. (2003). Role stress in the professional life of the school music teacher: a collective case study. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51, 124+. doi: 10.2307/3345846
- Scheib, J. W. (2007). School personnel role-related tension and job satisfaction. *Roles, Identity, Socialization, and Conflict: The Transition from Music Student to Music Teacher (A Literature Review)*, 50. Retrieved from: <http://smte.us/wp-content/uploads/2007/02/rolesidentitysocializationconflict.pdf#page=50>
- Schmidt, C. P., Zdzinski, S. F., & Ballard, D. L. (2006). Motivation orientations, academic achievement, and career goals of undergraduate music education majors. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 54(2), 138-153. doi: 10.2307/4101436

- Schonauer, A. L. M. (2002). *Teaching at the foundation: Role development and identification among elementary general music teachers*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Oklahoma).
- Shrauger, J. S., & Schoeneman, T. J. (1979). Symbolic interactionist view of self-concept: Through the looking glass darkly. *Psychological bulletin*, *86*(3), 549. doi: 10.1037//0033-2909.86.3.549
- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *224*-237. doi: 10.2307/2695870
- Stryker, S. (1987). The vitalization of symbolic interactionism. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *50*(1), 83-94. doi: 10.2307/2786893
- Taber, B. J., & Blankemeyer, M. S. (2015). Time perspective and vocational identity statuses of emerging adults. *Career Development Quarterly*, *63*, 113-125. doi: 10.1002/cdq.12008
- Teachout, D. J. (1997). Preservice and experienced teachers' opinions of skills and behaviors important to successful music teaching. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *45*(1), 41-50. doi: 10.2307/3345464
- Thornton, L., & Bergee, M. (2008). Career choice influences among music education students at major schools of music. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 7-17. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40319448>
- Torff, B., & Sessions, D. N. (2005). Principals' perceptions of the causes of teacher ineffectiveness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *97*(4), 530. doi: 10.1037/0022-0663.97.4.530
- Troiden, R. (1983). Self, self-concept, identity, and homosexual identity: constructs in need of definition and differentiation. *Journal of homosexuality*, *10*(3-4), 97-109. doi: 10.1300/j082v10n03\_13
- Troiden, D. R. R. (1989). The formation of homosexual identities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *17*(1-2), 43-74. doi: 10.1300/j082v17n01\_02
- Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1997). What helps students learn? *Spotlight on Student Success*. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ474287>
- Welch, G., Purves, R., Hargreaves, D., & Marshall, N. (2011). Early career challenges in secondary school music teaching. *British Education Research Journal*, *37*, 285-315. doi:10.1080/01411921003596903
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/cbo9780511803932

Yalçın, H. (2000). Congruence of preferred and enacted roles of teacher-coaches and satisfaction: the effects of task and individual difference factors. *Unpublished Thesis, The Ohio State University, Columbus OH.*

## TABLES

Table 1

*Grade Levels Taught*

		Cumulative			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	6	34	46.6	100.0	100.0
Valid	7	42	57.5	100.0	100.0
Valid	8	42	57.5	100.0	100.0
Valid	9	51	69.9	100.0	100.0
Valid	10	51	69.9	100.0	100.0
Valid	11	50	68.5	100.0	100.0
Valid	12	51	69.9	100.0	100.0

Table 2

*Full Years of Teaching Experience*

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-2	13	17.8
3-5	8	11.0
6-10	15	20.5
11-15	10	13.7
16-20	6	8.2
21-25	8	11.0
26-30	9	12.3
31+	4	5.5

Table 3

*Degree(s) Held*

Degrees	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's degree in music (performance)	16	21.92
Bachelor's degree in music (education)	52	71.23
Bachelor's degree in education (not music)	3	4.11
Master's degree in music (performance)	2	2.74
Master's degree in music (education)	23	31.51
Master's degree in education (not music)	4	5.48
Ed.S.	3	4.11
D.M.A.	1	1.37
Ph.D.	3	4.11
Bachelor's degree (other)	2	2.74
Master's degree (other)	2	2.74

Table 4

*Courses Taught*

Course	Frequency	Percent
General Music	18	24.7
Choir	73	100.0
Band	7	9.6
Other (fine arts)	23	31.5
Other (not fine arts)	8	11.0

Table 5

*Preference of Title*

	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Variance
Music Teacher	3.37	3.00	3	1.264	1.597
Choir Teacher	3.84	4.00	5	1.214	1.473
Choir Director	4.53	5.00	5	.851	.725
Music Specialist	2.44	2.00	1	1.333	1.777
Conductor	2.93	3.00	3	1.417	2.009
Director of Choral Activities	3.11	3.00	5	1.514	2.293

Table 6

*Reasons for Choosing Music Education*

---

	Frequency	Percent
It affords me stable employment in the field of music.	10	13.7
I want to direct ensembles and perform high-quality literature.	21	28.8
I want to teach children.	39	53.4
I intend eventually to pursue career as a collegiate choir director.	1	1.4
I intend to leave the field of music education entirely.	2	2.7

---

Table 7

*Extra-Curricular Music Involvement*

	Frequency	Percent
Community Band	6	33.87
Civic Chorus	21	9.68
Community Musical Theatre	10	16.13
Church Choir	42	67.74
Church Band	14	22.58
Church Orchestra	2	3.23
Jazz Band	1	1.61
Pop/Rock/Country Band	1	1.61
Opera Company	1	1.61
Recording Artist	1	1.61
Accompanist	18	29.03
Vocal Soloist	25	40.32
Instrumental Soloist	10	16.13
Composer	3	4.84

Table 8

*Professional Affiliations*

	Frequency	Percent
National Association for Music Education (NAfME)	72	98.6
American Choral Directors' Association (ACDA)	42	57.5
National Education Association (NEA)	25	34.2
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)	3	4.1
Association of American Educators (AAE)	1	1.4
Other, arts education	7	9.6
Other, not arts education	5	6.8

Table 9

*Committee Membership*

	Frequency	Percent
School Improvement	15	20.55
School Culture	10	13.7
PST/BBSST/RTI	3	4.11
Social (empathy, welcome, etc.)	3	4.11
Budget	5	6.85
Scheduling	7	9.56
Other	15	20.55
None	41	56.16

Table 10

*Value of PD Activity*

Activity	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error
AMEA Conference	4.10	1.069	1.143	-1.036	.281
NAfME Conference	3.18	1.316	1.732	-.226	.281
ACDA Summer Celebration	3.53	1.226	1.502	-.430	.281
ACDA Conference	3.82	1.326	1.760	-.948	.281
AVA Fall Workshop	3.93	1.071	1.148	-.836	.281
Collegiate Honor Choir PD	2.79	1.247	1.554	.005	.281
District-Level Music PD	3.14	1.134	1.287	-.394	.281
District General Education Seminar	2.11	1.125	1.266	.621	.281
Classroom Management Workshop	2.88	1.312	1.721	-.032	.281
Local School Faculty Meeting	1.96	1.263	1.596	1.142	.281

Table 11

*Within-Group Correlations*

		Preference of Title - Music Teacher	Preference of Title - Choir Teacher	Preference of Title - Choir Director
Preference of Title - Music Teacher	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.466** .000	-.135 .256
Preference of Title - Choir Teacher	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.466** .000	1	.274* .019
Preference of Title - Choir Director	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.135 .256	.274* .019	1
Preference of Title - Music Specialist	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.043 .721	-.144 .225	-.050 .674
Preference of Title - Conductor	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.040 .737	-.200 .089	-.050 .675
Preference of Title - Director of Choral Activities	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.297* .011	-.013 .915	.342** .003

*Within-Group Correlations (cont.)*

		Preference of Title - Music Specialist	Preference of Title - Conductor	Preference of Title - Director of Choral Activities
Preference of Title - Music Teacher	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.043 .721	-.040 .737	-.297* .011
Preference of Title - Choir Teacher	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.144 .225	-.200 .089	-.013 .915
Preference of Title - Choir Director	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.050 .674	-.050 .675	.342** .003
Preference of Title - Music Specialist	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.332** .004	.265* .024
Preference of Title - Conductor	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.332** .004	1	.282* .016
Preference of Title - Director of Choral Activities	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.265* .024	.282* .016	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER**

John Benjamin Cook, Principal Investigator from the University of Alabama, is conducting a study called “Career Identity Development of Secondary Choral Music Teachers”. He wishes to find out what factors impact choral teachers’ identification with their career.

Taking part in this study involves completing a web survey that will take about 5-10 minutes. This survey contains questions about choral music education, job tasks, and professional development.

We will protect your confidentiality through the anonymity of the survey, unless you choose to waive your anonymity by participating in an optional telephone interview at a later date; even so, your identity will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone other than the investigators of this study. Only the investigator will have access to questionnaire data. Questionnaire data are not identifiable and password-protected. Only summarized data will be presented at meetings or in publications. As stated above, there will also be an opportunity for you to take part in a voluntary interview at a later date, should you choose to do so, though that is not required as part of this survey.

There will be no direct benefits to you. The findings will be useful to music teacher trainers in planning support and professional development for music teachers.

The chief risk is that some of the questions may make you uncomfortable. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Ben Cook at (205) 901-7526 or by e-mail (jbcook1@crimson.ua.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Tanta Myles (the University Compliance Officer) at (205) 348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. If you have complaints or concerns about this study, file them through the UA IRB outreach website at [http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO\\_Welcome.html](http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html). Also, if you participate, you are encouraged to complete the short Survey for Research Participants online at this website. This helps UA improve its protection of human research participants.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.** You are free not to participate or stop participating any time before you submit your answers.

If you understand the statements above, are at least 18 years old, and freely consent to be in this study, click **CONTINUE** to begin.

**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Gender

- Male
- Female

Degree(s) held--Select all that apply

- Bachelor's degree in music (performance)
- Bachelor's degree in music (education)
- Bachelor's degree in education (not music)
- Master's degree in music (performance)
- Master's degree in music (education)
- Master's degree in education (not music)
- Ed.S.
- Ed.D.
- D.M.A.
- Ph.D.
- Bachelor's degree (other)
- Master's degree (other)
- Doctorate (other)

Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?

- Yes
- No

How many full years have you taught?

- 0-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31+

Job Title:

Which of the following better describes the school at which you work?

- Public School
- Private School

Which grade(s) do you teach? Please select all that apply.

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

Indicate which courses you teach. Please select all that apply.

- General Music
- Choir
- Orchestra
- Band
- Other (fine arts)
- Other (not fine arts)

Please select any professional organizations in which you are a member.

- National Association for Music Education (NAfME), parent organization of Alabama Music Educators Association (AMEA) and Alabama Vocal Association (AVA)
- American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)
- National Educators Association (NEA), parent organization of Alabama Educators Association (AEA)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA)
- Association of American Educators (AAE)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Other (arts education)
- Other (non-arts education)

Please indicate any committee(s) on which you serve.

- School Improvement
- School Culture
- PST/BBSST/RTI
- Social (empathy, welcome, etc.)
- Budget
- Scheduling
- Other

When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?

- Elementary School
- Middle School/Junior High
- High School
- During undergraduate studies
- After earning an undergraduate degree

Which of the following best describes your reasons for choosing music education as a career?

- It affords me stable employment in the field of music.
- I want to direct ensembles and perform high-quality literature.
- I want to teach children.
- I intend eventually to pursue career as a collegiate choir director.
- I intend to leave the field of music education entirely.

Outside of work, do you perform music unrelated to your job? Please select all that apply.

- Civic chorus
- Community band
- Community orchestra
- Community musical theatre
- Church choir
- Church band
- Church orchestra
- Jazz band
- Pop/rock/country band
- Opera company
- Recording artist
- Accompanist
- Soloist (vocal)
- Soloist (instrumental)
- Composition

How do you prefer to be addressed? Please rate your preference of the following titles, with 1 being least preferable and 5 being most preferable.

	Preference of Title				
	1	2	3	4	5
Music Teacher	<input type="radio"/>				
Choir Teacher	<input type="radio"/>				
Choir Director	<input type="radio"/>				
Music Specialist	<input type="radio"/>				
Conductor	<input type="radio"/>				
Director of Choral Activities	<input type="radio"/>				

Please rate the following activities by the importance you place upon them, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

	Importance of Activity				
	1	2	3	4	5
Planning Lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching Sight-Reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching Music Fundamentals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rehearsing Concert Repertoire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting Concert Repertoire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting Concerts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate the following by importance when selecting repertoire for a choir at your school, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

	Importance of Criterion				
	1	2	3	4	5
Voicing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Range	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachable musical concepts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much choristers will enjoy it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How much the audience will enjoy it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appropriateness for contest/assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How it will fit into a concert program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rank the following PD topics by how important they are to you, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important.

	Importance of PD Topic				
	1	2	3	4	5
Repertoire selection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sight-reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesson planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pedagogy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choral warm-ups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpretation of school-wide data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which professional development (PD) activities do you prefer? Please rate the value you place on the following PD activities, with 1 being least valuable and 5 being most valuable.

	Value of PD Activity				
	1	2	3	4	5
Alabama Music Educators Association (AMEA) Conference	<input type="radio"/>				
National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Conference	<input type="radio"/>				
Alabama Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Summer Celebration	<input type="radio"/>				
American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Conference	<input type="radio"/>				
Alabama Vocal Association (AVA) Fall Workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
PD sessions at a collegiate honor choir	<input type="radio"/>				
District-level music PD	<input type="radio"/>				
District-wide general education seminar	<input type="radio"/>				
Classroom management workshop	<input type="radio"/>				
Local school faculty meeting	<input type="radio"/>				

If you would like to participate in a brief telephone interview, please provide your e-mail address below. Please understand that participation in this interview is voluntary, and that by providing your e-mail address, your survey responses will no longer be anonymous, though your identity

will remain confidential.If you would prefer not to participate in this interview, you may leave this space blank.

Name:

E-mail address:

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?
2. Who were your professional role models before you became a teacher? As a practitioner?
3. How did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach?
  - a. Have you/would you ever consider teaching other grade levels?
  - b. What do you find most rewarding about the grade levels you teach? Why?
  - c. What do you find most frustrating about the grade levels you teach? Why?

If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

What do you consider to be the most important thing you do at you job on a daily basis?

What do you consider to be the similarities and differences between your job and those of other teachers in your school?

What do you consider to be the most valuable professional development experiences and why? Least?

Do you believe your administrators understand what you do?

Describe your involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as parent nights or athletic events.

What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music? Why? Most frustrating thing? Why?

What do you value most about music in general?

**APPENDIX D**  
**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

**Coding Key**

The following codes have been placed in the text of each interview. As themes emerged from participants' remarks, the appropriate code was inserted in bold print. Not every remark was coded, and some remarks received multiple codes.

A. Formative experiences and figures

1. Participation in high school choir
2. Participation in collegiate choir
3. High school choral teacher
4. Collegiate choral director
5. Student teaching assignment
6. Cooperating teacher
7. Colleague

B. Preference for certain age groups

1. Musical fulfilment
2. Personalities of students
3. Preparing for future studies

### C. Frustrations

1. The need for validation
2. Students
  - a. Instruction
  - b. Motivation
3. Scheduling
4. The need for an assistant

### D. The function of the choral classroom

1. Musical preparation
2. Community-building

### E. Place in the school

1. Extra-curricular involvement
2. Commonalities with other teachers
3. Differences from other teachers
4. Administrative understanding and support
  - a. Administrator understands
  - b. Administrator does not understand
  - c. Administrator supports
  - d. Administrator does not support

F. Worthwhile professional development

1. Music
  - a. Face-to-face
  - b. Conference
2. Not music

## **Interview 1**

**What experience was most important in your choice of music education as a career?**

Repeat that one more time.

**What experience was most important in your choice of music education as a career.**

Okay.

**Like, was there one experience that--more than anything else you can point to--that led you toward the career you're in.**

No, I don't think so. I don't think there's one experience. I would probably have to say it was my high school experience, if I had to pick one. (A.1)

**Okay. All right, that's fine. Whom do you consider to be your professional role models or influential figures in choral music before you entered the field music education?**

Diana Mayhall, who was my high school choral teacher (A.1); Ruth Miller, who is my mom and was also a music teacher (A.7, A.8); Ken Berg (A.9); and Hugh Thomas, who was my collegiate choral director (A.4).

**Excellent. And what about as a practitioner? Do you have any role models you look up to or influential people as a practicing choir teacher?**

Sure. Lisa Latham (A.7) and... I'm trying to think who else... Who's always the go-to ... I just went blank. Meagan Rudolph (A.7), probably, and--oh!--Mortimer Jordan [High School's choir teacher] Margaret Heron (A.7).

**Fantastic. Thank you. When and how did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach?**

So when and how? When was 2011, I guess, 2012. So, I've been teaching 15 years. The how... And that was the decision to teach high school, 10 through 12 at that time. But that was the

when. The how was based on money and family. So, just a little bit of explanation: going from a school where I had a lot of after-school responsibilities, and choirs, and extracurricular activities to a school where I would be teaching... well, a drastic cut in outside-of-school responsibilities for a little bit more money. So, less time for a little more money. So that would be an initial impetus to move. I would not have moved... I would not have changed grade levels except for that.

**Okay. So, you kind of already answered this question, but you have taught other grade levels?**

Right. So, I've taught 6th through 8th --well, I've actually taught 3rd and 4th grade one year, then I taught 6th through 8th for 15 years and now I'm teaching 9th through 12th.

**Okay. What do you enjoy most about the grade levels you teach?**

I would say what I enjoy most is the level of musicianship that we can achieve at this level with this age group **(B.1)**. I like that we are in a transition into what they think they want to do as a career, and so being able to prepare them better--that was going to sound bad, but I'll say it anyway--being able to prepare them more than we--I may have been prepared **(B.3)**. When I say *we*, Mrs. Slay, who teaches here also. Being able to really help them--or try to help them--be successful if they choose to do that in the future. I like being in that position. Those are probably the two biggest things. Can I tell you what I don't like? Or were you just about to ask that question?

**Actually, my next question is... What do you find most challenging about the grade levels to teach?**

The most challenging thing is--and I don't know if this is unique to us or this grade level or anything-- I guess I'll talk to you really about just what we do. I find the most challenging thing

is to keep students interested in things that are not part of their everyday social lives, so that's one side of it (C.2.b). The second is convincing them that something that does not have a monetary worth that they can connect directly to it still worth their best effort and their time (C.2.b). And then the third thing that I find challenging is dealing with college scholarships and entrances. That is very inefficient, if I can use a word that kind of encompasses a lot of different reasons, because there's no set path and no one way to go through that communication. Every college has a different recommendation application process and timeline, so that tends to be frustrating.

**Okay, so for clarification, are you talking primarily about music scholarships?**

Yes. Yes. Trying to get kids prepared and ready and make sure they've done what they need to do and find where they want to go to school and what the rules are and what their expectations are. You know, we have college counselors for that, but they tend to focus more on the academic side, and we don't have the manpower that the athletic department has to help navigate all that. And it's only frustrating because I sometimes feel like I'm not doing a good job—or a good enough job—and our students may be missing out on things that they deserve.

**I understand. All right, and if you could change one thing about your current job, what might you change about it?**

[pause] That's a good question. I'm not sure... I'm not sure.

**Okay. That's fine.**

We just made a bunch of changes in our schedule for next year, so if you ask that question again midway through next year, I probably would have some answers (C.3). I do know the constant that all of us would probably agree on that I would change is that I wish I had a secretary that would handle communications (C.4). The communication that's not sensitive, just all that

stuff. So, if I could change one thing, that would be it. I would love to have someone--it doesn't have to be a paid person--someone that can handle those things that are important but do not have to come from me.

**I want to make sure that I'm understanding you correctly: the things that are, as you said, important but not specific to your content area or your level of expertise?**

Sure, just, like, communication about scheduling, communication about calendar, communication about—you know—uniforms, reminders about what kids are supposed to have. You know, the hundreds of emails we write to parents and students that—you know—it's just words and anyone can write them. It's just a matter of taking time to put them down and send them, as opposed to--you know--an email about a student's specific abilities; I would have to answer that. Or a sensitive situation about an auditioned choir. Those kind of things—yes, I need to handle those, but there's so much of our time that's taken up with communication that—like you said you don't have to be a choir teacher to send out those things.

**I understand that totally. All right, and what do you believe is the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

[Pause] I was trying to make it short, and I'll still keep it short, but I think connecting people from different backgrounds, helping students feel valuable with who they are, and—hopefully, I mean, I don't know if I accomplish this, but hopefully—provide students with a different voice or different perspective on their life (D.2). And that sounds bigger than I mean for it to be, but on their perspective of the future and the present. I don't know. To break that down a little bit more, it seems to be that most of what they hear in our school systems is that you have to plan, plan, plan, and if you don't know what you're doing, if you don't do this now, you're going to mess this up, and it's going to cause problems later. And I feel like something we've got to do—

and I feel like *all* [emphasis his] the arts try to do—is get them to see that if you don't live in the moment, and if you're not present in the moment, then it doesn't really matter how much you plan for the future. And in a sense, in a wraparound way, that also does help them plan for the future more efficiently, because if they can be still and have an experience that is now, then it gives them more clarity about what may happen later. So.

**Well, that's excellent. Thank you. In what ways do you believe your job is similar or different compared to other teachers in your school?**

Similarities. Similarities? I think that all teachers should be working to help students see all perspectives (**E.2.b**). Not all do, but I think that should be a similarity. Similarities are that we want students to be successful in what they want to do, not just what we want them to do (**E.2.b**). And then, of course, a similarity is that we all have the same requirements, and those kinds of things in terms of professionalism (**E.2.a**). Differences? I think that we do not grade as many papers as other teachers, which is a positive for us (**E.3.a, E.3.b**). Then, some other differences... we have a lot more students (**E.3.a**). Our subject is, compared to most other subjects, more subjective when it comes to assessment and success (**E.3.b**). Ours can be--you know, it's hard to measure exactly. You can measure some things we do objectively, but some things are very subjective, and some things. . . You know, it's more of a progress-based assessment, as opposed to a benchmark-based assessment or a goal assessment. What else do we have, differences? We tend to have to create our curriculum a little bit more than other teachers, meaning that every year we reinvent our textbooks with, you know (**E.3.b**). At least we do a strong theory component, and that doesn't change, but our music, which is basically our textbook, our materials, you know, that's new every year. We also tend to teach, compared to a lot of the classes I've observed, more preps in one class than others (**E.3.a**). What I mean by that

is that when we're teaching a normal choir class, we're actually teaching music theory, music literacy, performance, vocal pedagogy, score analysis... I mean, there's a whole list of things we're teaching and trying to get done in one class, as opposed to another discipline that may be able to pare it down into smaller skill sets. Or more specific skill sets, I guess. Does that make sense?

**Yeah, that makes perfect sense, thank you. What do you believe are the most valuable professional development experiences, and why?**

So, that's a very good question, because I'm thinking of a lot of different scenarios that I think are very important. For what we do, for specific choral teachers, especially in the public school—I would say private school also, but I know public school—I really believe that one of the most important things we can do is be together as a community for an extended amount of time (**F.1.a, F.1.b**). When I say *extended*, [I mean] more than a day away from our classrooms. And the reason I say it's importance is because we are... the vast majority of us are singletons in our schools—and sometimes even in our systems. You know, of course there's social media, and there's professional webinars and those kinds of things, and those are great, and I've used those, and you can pick up some good things, but that's just different from when you have time to marinate with people who do what you do over two or three days and share ideas, share frustrations, brainstorm over solutions. I just think, for what we do, I think that's the most important. It has to be backed up, I mean, it has to be subsidized with more classroom-type professional developments where you're getting specific skills you're working on or exploring more in-depth (**F.2**). But I don't think any of that is going to help as much. All that can be synthesized and really amplified when you are around a community of people that know exactly

what you do and you can share those ideas. And those are really the only times we have to do that. So, I guess conferences (F.1.b). If you need a word, I guess conferences.

**Okay. Well, that's wonderful. Thank you. That's very helpful. What do you believe are the least valuable professional development experiences for choir teachers?**

Many of the school-level professional development offerings—and it's not because they're not of good quality—it's just not always directly applicable to what happens in our classrooms

(F.2). I'm just thinking of a lot of times, the technology professional developments we go to, we do our best to find ways to incorporate whatever we're learning into what we're doing, but... and, you know, I think all that's valuable. I'm not a teacher that tends to complain a lot about those things, because I believe that anything you learn, you can find a way to use that to make your classroom more productive or your teaching more efficient. It's just, sometimes, you have to work harder to make it fit. So, I wish that—and I understand the limitations of school systems, and the accountability, and those kinds of things, but—I do find myself being in professional development on the local level that is not... I don't feel they're getting their money's worth, where is if teachers were allowed... certain teachers... and I think it's true for a lot of curriculums [sic]. I think a lot of the physical education teachers find themselves in the same position, whereas if they were given, "Hey, you come up with what you need to do," it would be more applicable and more important. So, does that make sense?

**Yes, sir, absolutely. Do you believe that your administration understands what you do?**

Oh, that's a good question. So, we have a large administration, so I'm going to answer that in a few different ways. I've had many administrators over the years. Overall, I think they're open to what we do (E.4.c). I think very few of them *really* understand what we do (E.4.b). The good ones are able to make parallels and connections to things they do know really well, and at least

say, "Okay, it's like this," and they can make comparisons and kind of understand, you know, empirically. But actually knowing what happens and why we do what we do, and what happens inside the--over the course of not just one year, but over three or four years... Oh, that's another difference between our teaching and other people's teaching. We get to see a little bit longer with the students' development and our goals (E.3.c). You know, what happens over three or four years. I don't think they always quite get that. Now, we're very fortunate in that, regardless of whether they know what we're doing or not, they support what we're doing. I don't think... I've never had an administrator that did not at least know that something good was happening, even if they didn't know what that good was.

**Right. Well, that's great. Very good. Now, describe your involvement in extra-curricular school functions, such as parent nights or athletic events.**

Okay. So, not counting within our programs. You're talking basically outside.

**Unless your programs are involved in things like that.**

So, our program... we sing the National Anthem at multiple sporting events (E.1). You know, some are easier than other. Like, basketball season, I think we've probably sung it maybe six or seven different basketball games this year. But the we also branched out and sang it at baseball games, and tennis matches, and wrestling. We didn't make a volleyball one this year. We tried to reach out, to branch out and do other things. So I'll attend those events if we participate. Actually, some of those, I do not, because we have a small group that's pretty self-sufficient, and once I've done it once with them and they kind of know what to do, I don't always attend those functions. We're not expected to be at athletic events as teachers. I, of course, love going to those, but right now, with two young children of my own, it's very difficult to carve out enough time to do all that.

**Of course.**

What else. Other extra-curriculars, I do think it's important to be visible. I worked the prom this year. Not just as a chaperone, but I kind of was a character in one of their backdrops. I don't know what else to call it. They did different scenes. I try to do those things whenever I can, you know, if they need help with any of that stuff. But a lot of that has been cut back in the past couple of years, just because my children are at the age where they still need rides everywhere, and we need time just to be together.

**Understood.**

So, yeah. And of course, I want to answer as fully as I can, because I don't just want this answer to be based on now in this experience, but when I did not have a family, when I was single and teaching, I went to everything, as much as I could, which I believe--as a choir teacher--is very important, not only for recruitment, to get a varied group of students into your program, but also for relationships within the school system on a colleague-to-colleague level and also on an administrative level. If they see that you are supporting as many things as you can, either consciously or subconsciously, a lot of times, that support is returned. And it also gives you some leverage; when you do need things, it also gives you some intangible leverage points.

**That's excellent, thank you. What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music?**

I would say that has to be that you are able to... Situations are created that you and the students can be very vulnerable with each other, to the point of really understanding, well, individuals for sure, on the individual level, but also just on a human level **(D.2)**. There are other classes that can do that, as well, but in other classes, there is not that environment, and even that teaching tool that allows that or facilitates that, and I think music--especially choral music--I think is one

of those that automatically opens those situations or create those situations. You already know this, but your voice for one already is unique to you. So, to share that at all is sharing something that you usually don't share in another class. And then, you're working with another group of people trying to accomplish something. If you picked the right music and you have text that is meaningful and challenging, then it also opens up, you know, opportunities for trust to be built, and people just to be open, to be vulnerable, to take chances. And this is just me speaking, but that's the most rewarding part about teaching choral music is the relationship side that can be built through that.

**Excellent. Thank you. And what would you say is the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

That's pretty easy. The most frustrating thing for me is always having to validate your program and what you do with others (C.1). I mean, that's a daily—hourly—frustration that we're constantly trying to come up with new, and creative, and different ways of showing that we need the support, and the time, and the resources that other programs receive. And, again, that becomes... I was going to go into a whole other thing, but I don't need to. That's the most frustrating thing to me. And not just with your administration, but also with the student body and even with your parents. Some of the parents you're actually teaching their students, but many of them have not realized the value of that yet. So, yeah.

**I understand. And the final question--and this is a sort of broad question--is there a single aspect, or if you had to pick one single aspect of music that you value most, what would it be?**

[Pause] One single aspect of music. I'm having to think. There's a lot of different things in my head.

**I understand.**

I think it's the ability to offer multiple perspectives, and not just worldviews, but responses to emotion and responses to events. I think that would be it.

**Interview 2**

**So first, what experience was most important in your choice of music education as a career?**

Can you repeat the question?

**Yeah. What experience was most important in your choice of music education as a career?**

I guess before deciding on music education as a career, the most important experience I had was being a member of a high school choir (A.1).

**Excellent. Whom do you consider to be your professional role models or influential figures, both in deciding to enter the field of music education and in your development as a practitioner? So who do you consider to be your professional role models?**

Sure. Professional role models that kind of got me started on this path would be my choir director, Mr. Scott Thorn, in high school (A.3), when I was attending Eufala high school. And studying for music, I would say Dr. Marvin Latimer (A.4) and Dr. John Ratledge (A.4) at the University of Alabama. But probably had the biggest effect on me was my cooperating teacher, Dr. Meagan Rudolph (A.6) at Vestavia Hills High School. She continues to be an influence as does my colleague at Hoover High School, Mr. John Kincaid (A.7).

**Excellent. When and how did you decide to teach the grade levels you teach?**

I always preferred to teach high school level, and I have taught at a high school level. But I did interview for middle school as well as elementary level jobs that did not pan out. But my first job

was a high school level. And since taking my first job at high school level, I've only applied to other jobs at this level.

**Okay. So would you consider teaching other grade levels at some point in the future, or do you perceive yourself as staying in high school for the foreseeable ...**

Yeah.

**I mean-**

I've got to say, I do perceive myself staying at the high school level. If any level did change, I think it would be that I would work at a collegiate level, and that's mostly due to ... I don't know if this is your next question or not, but that's mostly due to the high quality output that we're able to produce at the high school level, which-

**In terms of ...**

In terms of performance **(B.1)**.

**Excellent. So higher quality performance standards and I assume, or I probably shouldn't assume anything, but would the literature standards change then, I would imagine?**

Yes, it's the higher quality literature and then, more that we are able to do at the high school level as far as musicality and technical accuracy.

**Yeah, that's great. What do you enjoy most about teaching high school?**

What we just touched on is something I find joy a lot, is producing a really great product that our students can be proud of **(B.1)**. Yeah, I'll stick with that, I think that's a good enough answer.

**That sounds great. And what do you find most challenging about teaching high school?**

One thing that I found to be most challenging is the wide variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities that the students will bring to a single classroom. We'll have some students who have

taken voice lessons for years, that are members of other community choirs in the same class as a senior who is taking music for the very first time (C.2.a).

**All right, I understand. Let's see. What would you change, if anything, about your job?**

About my what?

**About your job? And that's intentionally vague. It could be related to classroom duties or extracurricular things or anything. If you would change anything, what would it be?**

Yeah. I guess this would be a pipe dream, but if I were to change anything, there would be very few electives for which students to choose. Here in turn, have there be a high enrollment of students. I find that my current school, although there are very many, it's a large number of students, upwards of 1,650. There are so many elective choices from which to choose from for these students, where you think some of these students would just trip and fall over into the choir room, with as many electives as they have to choose from. It's very difficult to recruit against these other programs and opportunities and electives that are so great at what they do as well, that the students want to be a part of. (C.3)

**Right. I understand. I think I've fought those same battles. Let's see. What do you believe is the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

I heard your question, I'm just thinking.

**Okay.**

You say on a daily basis so I'm trying to think a little more minuscule. But I guess I should think kind of the big picture, which is where my brain is kind of focusing.

**And that's fine.**

Is that the students can ... In the bigger picture, it's that they leave my classroom and being able to take the lessons they've learned and also the general or specific aspects of music with them,

such as reading music, that they can take with them elsewhere and apply that knowledge to music and other areas of life **(B.3)**. So I find that music literacy is a really big part of what I do.

**(D.1)**

**So you would say that teaching music literacy is one of the most important things you do?**

Yes.

**Am I understanding you correctly?**

Yes it is. And your question was on a daily basis. So I guess that students are improving their knowledge of music literacy.

**Okay, that's great. Let's see. In what ways do you believe your job is similar or different compared to other teachers in your school?**

The first difference I think of is that the students in my class, for the large part, if not 100%, choose to be in this class each day. They might rather be at home on the couch playing Xbox, but they have to be at school, then they prefer to be in this classroom, which makes a lot of things more challenging for me as a teacher. Because if I want to continue to recruit and retain students, it needs to be a place that they enjoy, I need to create goals and expectations for the students that are lofty yet attainable, yet still allow them to leave the classroom with a good grade. Because if the students aren't making a great grade in my choir class, it may be something that they will consider not taking in the future, because we're a very academic-heavy school and GPA is very important to a large majority of our students. **(E.3.c)**

**Okay.**

So the main difference between me and other teachers is they will just have students that are signed up to their classroom, which means a different set of challenges for them. **(E.3.a)**

**Right. And so you feel as you were saying, you feel a little more pressure to make it worth their while to choose to take your class and for you to keep them engaged in the program.**

Yes. I don't think there's gonna be math teachers that select an idea or unit of study where they have to think, okay, the students have to enjoy this. Whereas when I'm selecting repertoire, that's one of the first things I think of. Or are the students going to be able to get through a series of weeks rehearsing this music and enjoy performing it for others? **(E.3.b)**

**All right. What do you believe are the most valuable development experiences and why?**

I'd say the more local conferences that we attend are, even though they may not be as in-depth and those who are leading them may not have as much knowledge or being paid as much as someone on the national or regional level, there are so many opportunities to get involved with other teachers or colleagues in our state or our area who have more of the same challenges. And reaching out to them for assistance with those challenges, those teachers in our area can relate a bit more. So, I would say the top of that is attending conferences at the local or state level.

**(F.1.b)**

**Okay. And do you believe that there are particular... Any particular types of professional development experiences stick out as least valuable?**

Yes, those conferences/meetings that are specific to other subjects or just not as specific to choral music. ACDA is choral directors, and if you would attend just a general AMEA, music educators, then you're getting a wider variety of things that may not relate as specific to you. And then even broader than that, just a general teacher's conference or like a county-wide meeting of teachers may be non-specific. So, any type of conference that is not specific isn't beneficial. **(F.2)**

**Okay, great. So, do you believe that your administration understands what you do professionally? Why or why not?**

I think they have a good idea (E.4.a). I think the reason why they do have a good idea is my administration attends my concerts, so they know what the final product is (E.4.c). And then I'll often say that our concerts are just an extension of our rehearsals, so although we're not stopping and starting as much, our concerts generally are similar to the way that our rehearsals work. And then if at any time they wanted to come to my classroom, the administration is welcome to do so. I think I only had one assistant principal in my classroom this year. So, what specifically I do on a daily basis, I don't think my administration is very aware of that (E.4.b). Do they need to be? I don't feel like they need to be with me. Do they need to be with their teachers and have a better idea of what's going on? Yes (E.3.a). I know some of the administrators might be a little bit too hands-on, but the fact that the administrators, the head principal attends each of my concerts (E.4.a). I think that gives him enough that he needs to know about what's going on.

**All right, well good. I'm sorry, I am in a boot and I was stepping across my floor and slid. And I'm still alive, so let's move on to the next question.**

Okay.

**So can you describe your involvement in extracurricular school functions, such as athletic events or parent nights?**

Yes. Our parent nights are required for all teachers, so I'm there. At athletic events, I'm not involved personally but I do attend them if it's something that... If there's a couple times where our students are involved, where they either participate in the sport or we have someone singing the national anthem, I attend those. I always attend our performing arts performances like dance and band concerts, and I'm involved directing the orchestra of our spring musical. I've been a

chaperone for our prom, and I've helped set up music at a lot of our school events, including Relay for Life. That's about it. **(E.1)**

**Okay, so you would consider yourself pretty involved in all those things, whether it's volunteering or supporting your students or things like that.**

Yeah, anything... I'm not the sponsor of any type of school organization other than our choir.

**Okay. What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music?**

I love teaching choral music, and specifically teaching choral music in a school setting, that I'm able to select the repertoire that we sing, and that it changes so often. So, we rarely repeat a piece from year to year, and then we have goals that we work towards. Like, if it's a fall concert or winter concert, we work towards those goals. We start at the beginning. We perform. And then we get to start all over, but it's different. Unlike other teachers, where they might be reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* every year and have done so their whole career **(E.3.b)**. We get to really mix it up. And then, right when things get really strenuous, we get to have a spring concert and then have a summer break and start all over again. So, no year is the same, no class, no group of choir is the same, so it's a different set of challenges that can be met. And in meeting those challenges, are the rewards. **(D.1)**

**Okay. Wonderful. And is there one particular thing you find most frustrating about teaching choral music?**

There's... I've been the director of some choirs where the level of commitment in the room is very broad **(C.2.b)**. Where the level of, I already said, skill and ability **(C.2.a)**... But there are times where I've struggled with some students who really, really want to do what it takes to take the group to the next level, and then others in the class who are just okay with being mediocre. I

think a lot of that has to do with them not knowing the potential of getting better that we have, or maybe them feeling that what in my head is mediocre, to them is great. **(C.2.b)**

**Right, understood. All right, one more question for you. What specific aspect of music do you value most? Music in general. What specific aspects do you value most?**

Let's go back to music literacy for that. In myself, I really, really appreciate that I can take a piece of music and look at it and be able to audiate or sit down at the piano and play it or grab my starting pitch from the air and be able to sing it. It's something that I really value and I appreciate those skills that have been taught to me.

### **Interview 3**

**So, the first question I have for you is what experience was most important in your choice of music education as a career?**

What experience? Probably my student teaching. (A.5)

**Okay. Would you mind elaborating on that? What kinds of school did you student teach?**

**Was it middle school, high school?**

I student taught in two places. One was an elementary school, one was a high school. I think I did 10 weeks in each school or it might have been five. I can't remember, it's been so long ago. I think it was five. I don't remember. The only thing I wish that they had done was let me spend some time in a middle school because that's where I ended up getting my first job.

**Okay. And so, that kind of leads into... Well, let me ask for clarification on something else first. You had... I'm sorry, you had, at this point in your student teaching, you had already nearly completed a degree in music ed.?**

Yes.

**And, your student teaching, was that what sort of pushed you towards definitely doing that versus doing something else or was it just an affirming ...**

Are you talking about, you're talking before, like when I decided to study music ed.?

**When you decided that you wanted to be a music teacher?**

Oh, I decided I wanted to be a music teacher, oh my gosh, probably in the ninth grade.

**Probably in the ninth grade, okay.**

Uh huh. Yeah, I sat in choir with Diana Mayhall (A.3) and I thought to myself, "I can do that. I want to do that. That's really cool." In ninth grade is when I said I wanted to be a choir teacher.

(A.1)

**Excellent. So, who do you consider to be your professional role models or influential figures both in deciding to enter the field of music education and in your development as a practitioner?**

Who? Was that the question?

**Yes. And, you could give me ... you can give names if you want or you can just give specific...**

Yeah, Amanda Klimko. Amanda Klimko was my choir director in middle school (A.3) at Simmons Middle School. And then, Diana Mayhall was my choir director in high school (A.3) and both of them are the reasons why. Amanda kind of made me fall in love with choral music and then Diana just took that and went with it.

**Okay. And, since becoming a teacher, do you have any other professional role models that you look up to?**

Oh gosh, yes.

**Or influence you.**

I have a ton. I mean like Allen Gillespie (A.7), and Diana (A.3), of course, and then Dianne Johnson (A.7), and let's see. I can't think of anybody else... Oh, Dr. Wright at Montevallo (A.4). Mike Meeks from college (A.4).

**All right. Well, if you... That's wonderful. That's very helpful. Let's see, when and how did you decide to teach the grade levels that you currently teach?**

Okay, I graduated in December with my bachelor's degree, and there was a maternity leave position open in Jefferson County. And so, it was a middle school position and I always wanted to do high school. I never really wanted to do elementary school. And so, I started off my career there and I was there for six years. And then, I went to a high school. I went to Shades Valley

High School for seven years, I think. And, while I was at the high school, while I absolutely loved it, and I loved the literature that I could do, and the advanced nature of that **(B.1)**, I always said I'd go back to middle school. I always wanted... there's just something about middle school kids. I just fell in love with them when I first started teaching **(B.2)**. So, I always knew while I was teaching high school that I would go back to middle school. So, it just kind of evolved throughout the years of teaching high school and middle school.

**Yeah. Well, great. What do you enjoy most about teaching middle school?**

I love the beginners. I love teaching them like just how to make that really pretty unified choral sound in 6<sup>th</sup> grade **(B.1)**. Hold on. Go, I am on the phone call. It's very important. I can't talk to you right now. Sorry. Okay, beginners I love. And then, I just like their quirkiness. I like the fact that they're different every single day when they walk in the door and you just never really know what you're going to get. I just like the middle school kid. **(B.2)**

**Okay, and do you ... what do you find most challenging about teaching middle school?**

Changing voices. **(C.2.a)**

**Yeah.**

And, scheduling.

**Okay. Could you elaborate on that?**

Well, you know all the research says that the best thing to do is to put all the girls in one ... like middle school, seventh and eighth grade girls in one class and separate the boys. And, I've done it, I've taught it that way. It's awesome that way. But, scheduling that way is very hard for just numerous reasons you know? Because, it creates a class where only this grade, this sex kid can be in this class. And so, it makes it more limited as far as where they can put them for all their other classes. So, if they're taking like an advanced English class and eighth grade boys choir and

an advanced math class, it's really hard to make a master schedule where there's enough slots that they can do that. Does that make sense? **(C.3)**

**Oh yeah, I know exactly what you mean.**

Yeah.

**Okay, well thank you. So, is there anything you would change about your current position if you could?**

I'd have an assistant. **(C.4)**

**Yeah.**

Is that something to change? I don't know if that's something to change or add to.

**Yeah, that's perfectly fine. Would you care to ...**

I would have a male assistant because I think, especially with teaching those boys, although I know everything, not everything there is to know, but I know a lot about the changing boys voice and I feel like I'm pretty good at teaching those boys. I think, I know that having a male model in the classroom makes so much of a difference in their overall sound. I mean, you know, I don't sound right singing their part when their voice is changing and they're singing tenor today and base tomorrow and alto the next day. **(C.2.a)**

**Excellent. So, what do you believe is the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

Make relationships with kids. Connect to kids. Like, be an influence in their life. I think that's the most important thing I do. To me, the music and all that comes later, comes after that. **(D.2)**

**Right. In what ways do you believe your job is similar to or different from other teachers in your school?**

Similar to because we all have a curriculum and we all have state guidelines and things like that that we have to teach **(E.2.a)**. But, different in that because we teach music and singing and particularly, we form more of a bond with the kids and because we have them for more than one year most of the time. We have them, usually I have them for three years. And so, you know I get to know them. I get to know their families and their siblings and that's a little different.

**(E.3.c)**

**Right. Okay. Let's see. What do you believe are the most... Sorry, the most valuable professional development experiences and why?**

Oh gosh. That's a hard question.

**Sorry.**

You know what? I think the most valuable... No, it's okay. I think the most valuable professional development is sitting around and talking to other people who do what I do. I learn more from going to dinner or lunch or sitting around chatting with a bunch of other middle school and high school choral directors. Just hearing what they do and how they do things and bouncing off ideas off anybody than any classroom setting or workshop setting or anything like that that I've gone to. And, of course some of them are great but after a while, they all say the same thing and do the same thing really, just in a different way. **(F.1.a)**

**And, do you have any particular professional development experiences that you would consider to be least valuable?**

Least valuable. Yeah, the stuff they make you do like every year like technology crap that doesn't have anything to do with music.

**Yeah.**

You know, the stuff that you're required ...

**Oh yeah.**

To do that doesn't have anything to do with us. So, I would say anything that's not music-related that ... sometimes, we did one about how the middle school brain works and that was really good here. But, most of the stuff that's school-wide doesn't apply to us. **(F.2)**

**All right. And, do you believe that your administration understands what you do in your classroom?**

No. **(E.4.d)**

**Okay. Would you... Why not?**

Say that again?

**I'm sorry. I'm stuttering.**

That's okay.

**So, why do believe they don't understand what you do?**

I think that they think that we just come in here and we just sing a few songs and you know stand up there and look pretty for an assembly or for a concert or for anytime they need somebody to sing. I don't think they realize the technical aspect of what we do. Just because a lot of times we're requested to perform for something at the last minute with no preparation time. And, unless we're working on something for a particular event, you can't just pull something out to sing just anywhere you know what I mean?

**I do. All right. Let's see. Describe your involvement in extracurricular school functions such as athletic events or parent nights?**

I go to a few after school athletic events. I have three of my own children so I'm usually doing their athletic events. But, I try to go to at least one or two a year just to show my face. Let the kids know I support them. **(E.1)**

**All right. Let's see. What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music?**

When they get it. Like, when they look around the room and their eyes light up and they're like, "Oh my gosh, that sounded so good." When they know that they did something well. **(D.1)**

**And, do you have something you would describe as the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

Kids that are just in there just for an easy A or to go on a trip. That's frustrating but I always kind of feel like it's my job to turn those kids into lovers of music you know? But, it's frustrating at first. **(C.2.b)**

**What specific aspect of music do you value most?**

What specific aspect of music do I value most? God, that's a hard one, too.

**I thought so, too.**

I would say... What do I value most? I would say probably... You mean like in a choir setting?

**I just mean music in general.**

Oh gosh. I don't know. I don't know. That's a hard one. I mean, I would say probably in a choir setting it's just learning how to work as a team and learning how everybody's important and everybody's sound changes regardless of... It's not like a football team where you can just put somebody else in you know that kind of thing **(D.2)**. For just music in general, I don't even think there's words to describe that, to me, like the value.

**And that's okay.**

Bigger than us.

#### **Interview 4**

**When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?**

Eleventh grade. (A.1)

**Okay, would you care to elaborate on that any?**

Well, I figure that the performance aspect of loving music is not super realistic. In 11th grade I finally got a teacher (A.3) in choir that taught me something that I didn't already know. I decided that, that's what I wanted to do.

**All right. Who were your professional role models before you became a teacher?**

Ginny Coleman (A.3), and Gary Packwood (A.4), and Glinda Blackshear (A.4).

**Okay, what about after you became a teacher? Which people did you look up to?**

Ginny Hughes, Megan Rudolph, and Ben Cook. (A.7)

**Well, thank you. How did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach? And just so we're clear, you currently teach both middle school and high school?**

Well, I did this past year. You want me to stick with that?

**So how did you--what's that?**

Do you want me to stick with that?

**Since that's the most recent year, whatever you feel comfortable with. How did you decide to teach the levels that you currently teach?**

I like teaching middle school, because I like the introductory level of teaching music. I like being the, "Light going off," if you will, in their heads, when they actually get that what they're doing is more than just singing. I also like teaching high school because I can do more in-depth music and get more into the music theory aspect. (B.1)

**Is there one particular level you prefer over the other?**

Just secondary in general.

**Middle school and high school? You don't have a preference?**

No, no I don't.

**Have you ever taught other grade levels?**

Only student teaching, so no.

**Would you ever consider teaching other grade levels?**

Yes.

**But you said that you prefer secondary over primary?**

I do.

**All right. What do you find most rewarding about the grade levels you teach?**

I'm sorry. Say that again.

**What do you find most rewarding about the grade levels you teach?**

I find that students in the secondary level can be more appreciative of what they accomplish after they hear themselves. In general, high school students tend to care more about the music that they're making. (B.1)

**What do you find most frustrating about the grade levels you teach?**

I don't know. I don't really find anything frustrating about the students.

**Okay, that's great. It doesn't necessarily have to be about students, it could be about the job itself or the environment. If you don't find anything frustrating, that's great.**

Yeah, nothing really.

**Okay. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?**

Higher pay (laughs).

**Higher pay. Okay.**

I would change the lack of technology that I have available to me.

**Okay, what technology do you have available to you?**

An electric piano.

**I see. So, what technology would you like to have?**

I would like to have a smart board or at least a projector and an ELMO that I could use to show the kids things instead of always pulling it up on my computer and passing my laptop around.

**Okay. What do you consider to be the most important thing you do on a daily basis at your job?**

I give the students a place to go and feel at home. I give them a place to go where they can release all of the energy they've built up at the classes that they've been in all day. **(D.2)**

**Okay.**

A safe space.

**What's that?**

I said, I guess like a safe space.

**Okay. Great! What do you consider the similarities and differences between your job and the jobs of the other teachers in your school?**

Well, I feel like... Did you say similarities or differences?

**Similarities or differences.**

Okay. The similarities is we're all teaching the same group of kids. We're all teaching the students something that we feel is important and that they should learn for the future **(E.2.b)**. I feel like the differences are that sometimes students go to math, or social studies, or English because they have to. In my class, they go because they want to. **(E.3.c)**

**Okay, great. Do you believe that your administration understands what you do at your job?**

Can I not answer that?

**You do not have to answer that.**

I could just say no.

**Okay. If you don't want to elaborate that is fine. Again, your responses are confidential.**

That's okay. I can elaborate. If you don't want me to, then I don't have to.

**I'd be happy for you to elaborate.**

Okay. I feel like they don't really understand what I do mainly because they don't ever come and observe what I do. I had—

**So it's a lack of—**

Yeah, I had no observations, really. They don't attend the students' performances. Not one administrator was at our concert at all last year. I feel like it's hard to understand what I do or what the kids worked so hard for if you don't ever come to see the product. **(E.4.b, E.4.d)**

**Thank you. That's very helpful. What do you consider to be the most beneficial professional development experiences?**

I feel like the most beneficial to me are when I'm actually able to go and meet with other choir directors in my district and ask them questions. Not just sit and hear a speaker or watch a video.

**(F.1.a)**

**Okay. What do you feel are the least beneficial experiences?**

When I go watch a video or sit and hear a speaker. **(F.2)**

**That makes sense. Let's see... Describe your involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as parent nights or athletic events.**

I am the junior class sponsor in our school. Essentially, I help organize all of the events at that the juniors put on throughout the school year. I help them with designing their junior spirit shirts and any after school activities that they're gonna take part in. I am the Tri M Honor Society admin. Whatever it is. **(E.1)**

**Yeah, excellent.**

Supervisor, sorry. Couldn't think of the word.

**That is wonderful. What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music? Not specific to the grade levels you teach but choral music in general, teaching it.**

I like opening different worlds of music for the students to hear because generally they're only gonna hear what's on the radio or what they sing at church. I like broadening their horizon to different types of music and letting them know that they can sing things other than pop. **(B.1, B.3, D.1)**

**Okay, what would you consider to be the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

Sometimes, the lack of effort that the students give when I know they can give more, they can achieve more, and they just refuse to do it. **(C.2.b)**

**I have one more question. It's kind of broad. What do you value... Well, let me make sure I'm saying this... Yeah. What do you value most about music in general?**

That is broad. I guess I just value the feeling that it gives me when I listen to it or make it, or teach somebody else to make it. It's like I get to go into a different time and experience something otherworldly.

## **Interview 5**

**When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?**

It was my senior year of high school that I decided I wanted to pursue music education. (A.1)

**Okay, could you elaborate on that a little?**

Sure. It was due to the experience I had in choir myself, being that choir was growing, or music was growing in my life. Music has been a part of my life for a good long time, going back to middle school, and that's when I started singing in choir. And all the way up into high school, I knew that I had a life that was bound to be musical, but I didn't know exactly in what way.

Then, once I got to high school I started realizing how music could be effective in being administered to other people. I enjoy how music was making me feel and I also wanted to offer that ability and that feeling, that joy, to others. And I knew that through music education would be the best way for me to do that.

**Excellent, thank you. So, who were your professional role models before you became a teacher?**

My professional role models would have been my middle school choir teacher, which was Miss Debbie Pizullo (A.3), and my high school choir teacher, Miss Myrna Ross from Ramsey (A.3), middle school choir teacher being from Huffman Middle... For that field, yeah, that was my role model for that field.

**Excellent, thank you. What about as a practitioner? As somebody who is a teacher, who are the people you look up to?**

I'm sorry I missed part of that question, it broke up a little bit.

**I'm sorry. As a practicing teacher, who were your professional role models?**

As a practicing teacher, it would probably be between Dr. Gary Packwood (A.4) and Dr. Robert Wright (A.4). First-hand situation given a chance to be under both of those. They gave me everything I needed.

**Excellent. And how did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach?**

A combination of basically access to the program at the University of Montevallo, getting a chance to sit in and observe different classes, different grade levels. Throughout the years at Montevallo, I started to realize that, especially doing sample teaching sessions, I started realizing that the certain areas or grade levels that I felt myself more apt to teach were the secondary level. I have the ability to teach elementary, but secondary was where I started feeling that I had the ability to be the most effective. So. I guess you'd say through the program, yeah.

**Okay and you teach both middle and high school, is that correct?**

That is correct.

**All right, so, does anything draw you toward one of those or the other?**

At this current point, one draws me to each. Middle school, just the connection I can get with students at middle school level. The flexibility of their thought process, it allows me to feel if they're still malleable, in a sense, they can still be molded a little bit while they're in middle school. (B.2)

In high school, they're kind of raring towards being finished product as a student. But with that being said, the capability of high school students is on a higher level, which does fulfill a lot of my core music wishes, so. That's what draws me to each one individually. (B.1)

**All right, excellent. So what do you find most rewarding, and you sort of answered that, most rewarding about teaching the grade levels you teach?**

Yeah. Yeah, in part exactly what I just said. To elaborate some more, teaching in middle school gives the opportunity for a student to discover something. They still are discovering. I myself find myself being more involved with music in middle school and so it kind of just seems to be that's the ground where they found out, "Okay, this is something I could do. This is not just something that happens. This is something I actually may be able to do." And the foundations that are laid during that time are very important **(B.3)**. They really can give a student a chance to truly prosper.

The polish that comes with high school is something that is very wonderful **(B.1)**, and also gives the students the opportunity, I love being able to talk to the seniors and tell them "Let music take you places," which is pretty much my motto. And giving them the opportunities to say "Hey, you don't have to major in music when you graduate from high school but, you can minor or just be in choir. There are three levels. You obviously enjoy doing what you do, you enjoy singing, you enjoy being involved with music, don't let that fall past, just because you left the school."

So, preparing them for life after high school is also a big thing **(B.3)**. That's something that I really enjoy doing, giving them the first taste of what life outside of their box may be. So, that's two different rewards that I get from teaching both middle school and high school.

**Excellent. Thank you. So, what do you find most frustrating about the grade levels you teach?**

Pretty much the opposite of what I said was good. When it comes to middle school, the spontaneity of their attitudes or their approach to every day can be frustrating at times. Just because you walk in with a great plan, and you're ready to roll with it, and then who knows what happens? They basically come in with a paper shredder and say, "Oh, whatever you had planned

didn't matter. Right now, we have this going on." That's one of the things that's frustrating.

**(C.2.a, C.2.b)**

And that can really be said across both levels. The middle school it's more the kids, the high school it's more the other programs and the other activities. The volleyball team is in a tournament, or volleyball team goes off somewhere I lose half my girls' choir or, when basketball teams are doing their thing I lose part of my concert choir. That's one of the more frustrating things with that but, outside logistics there's not really much. **(C.3)**

As far as the students are concerned, my middle school kids, like I said they just can at a drop of a hat they can go berserk if they want, that's just the way. It's middle school. As the principal put it, "The bread's not all the way browned yet." So, it's just at any moment who knows what's going to happen. **(C.2.b)**

In high school though, they can be so stuck in their ways that there's no way that they want to move. So, they become set and there's so much to be done and unfortunately to open their minds up again and trying for another couple of years, but they get very set in how they think things are going, or should go, and that's it. So, it takes a lot to move those mountains in high school sometimes. **(C.2.b)**

**All right. So, if you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?**

Well one it would be that I would be at one school all day. That would be the biggest change I would make because neither school gets my hundred percent. They get as much as I can give them but, if we've got a big project going on at the high school the middle school seems to get a little less of me and I've got a big project at the middle school the high school gets a little less of me. It's just not really very fair for the students to have me split amongst these two, but that would be the ultimate change that I would make to the job. **(C.3, C.4)**

**All right. Thank you. So, what do you consider to be the most important thing that you do at your job on a daily basis?**

Give my students a chance to communicate. That to me is the most important thing. And music itself is communication so, giving my students the opportunity to actually communicate. If not with me, if not through words, through the music, through some form, they get a chance to communicate with me about what it is that they're doing.

They can express to me in multiple ways with the music and other ways. And even through body language and what not. It's just all different ways. And giving them those tools to make those expressions and be consistent, as well as persistent, with those expressions so that audiences may get a wonderful gift for what they are able to offer. **(D.2)**

**Excellent. What do you consider to be similarities or differences between your job and the jobs of other teachers in your school?**

Okay. Similarities I do have to have some forms of structure, and logistics of class are very similar **(E.2.a)**. In music, as you're well aware, we kind of encompass a large span of different subjects. So, similarities, to be honest with you, is that a lot of the stuff leaks in from outside classes or from other departments that kind of leak into what we do on a daily basis. Structure, discipline, things like that are always similar because that's just how you deal with class.

Classroom management is just, simply put, a similarity that goes across the board. But administration as a curriculum itself is a little more all-encompassing than anything. **(E.3.b)**

And with that similarity is also exactly the same thing as the difference, is the fact that this is a lot more all-encompassing of a curriculum. There's some cross-curricular things that happen in other classes but, you don't get that all-encompassing situation in one lesson as you can with music from time to time.

Not to mention just the overall effectiveness of what music is. I can assess my students Monday through Friday, three or four times a class period and they not have a clue. It's not, "All right guys, let's sit down, pull out a piece of paper, pull out a pencil or pen and let's take this exam, or this quiz, or test." No. I can assess my students point-blank, right there, with no real explanation as to when and why we do it. They just do what they're doing. **(E.3.a, E.3.b)**

And that's a big difference. And a lot of teachers, in having conversations with some other teachers, they've even have come to the point and said they're jealous of that. That I don't have to sit at home and really prepare a full-out test. Sometimes I can just walk in and be like, "Guys, take your sight-reading books out to page six and look up exercise 12 and let's read it to yourselves for 30 seconds and then we'll come back and we'll clap the rhythm and then we'll read it out loud and blah, blah, blah." And giving a full assessment through all of that. That's a big difference to me, that's something that makes me happy that I do in music too. **(E.3.a)**

**Okay. What do you consider to be the most valuable professional development experience?**

Well, for me would probably be conferences. Going out and being amongst the community or conferring with other musicians. We work in a field of borrowed practices. Everything you learn is from someone else, and they learned it from someone else, and then they learned it from someone else. We just borrow all these little intricate things and add them together. We have our personalities, which, no one can give us but us. But a lot of the things we do is just borrowed. And so going to these conferences gives you a chance to grab more and more information. The more you can get, the more you can give. And that's a, to me it's probably one of the biggest things, conferences and festivals. I'll throw festivals in there too because you get the opportunity to hear and see them. **(F.1.b)**

And also, your students get a chance to see those other choirs that are their age or at their level perform as well. And they can see and hear and analyze and understand those things that they do that are as good, things that they do that are better, or things that they do that aren't as good. They can figure those out for themselves and it's a very wonderful building situation or program when you can have both festivals or conferences where students can perform and/or observe others performing.

**Okay. So, the flip side of that: what do you consider to be the least valuable professional development experience?**

General assemblies. Yeah. Don't play this back for [my school system]. General assemblies are basically one of the biggest wastes of time, to me, and is a big loss. Because it's time that, you know, we get together with other choir directors and we spend about 30 to 45 minutes working on some wonderful things and talking about some wonderful things that we can do within or community, within our field but, the other five and a half to six hours is listening to core curricular stuff, core curricular stuff that doesn't pertain to us. **(F.2)**

We're often a world of our own to some degree and it's not really fair that we get to do that, we get time to be in a world to our own when other teachers and other professionals are, they can work a little bit more together, but yeah. It's just putting us all, lumping us together, being lumped in with other classes or other subjects just to give us something to do, probably the least effective professional development.

**Okay. So, do you believe that your administrators understand what you do?**

Umm ...Their understanding of what I do? Is that what you said?

**For instance, do you think your administrators understand what you do in your classroom? As a choir teacher?**

They understand that aspect **(E.4.a)**. I don't think they completely get a hundred percent of what exactly I'm doing all the time, but they do get the aspect of what I'm doing as far as conceptual ideas. For instance, they can tell that I'm administering things, they can tell I have a positive effect on the students, they can tell that the students are learning and are able to perform to a certain caliber, or standard that continues to go up for them. They understand that.

The specifics and intricacies of what it is that I do as a musician, or passing off information to them as a musician, may go over their heads a little bit. But, the general idea of what it is we do in class is understood.

**Do you believe that their expectations of you in your job are in line with what you believe needs to be done?**

I can say that they are. They're in line with what, based on the situation we have, what needs to be done. Now as far as standards are concerned, as far as for my personal standards, it's lower. Because my standards are a little higher but, they do expect a good product in the end, and that's what I think that one of the biggest things they judge on which, some people may say that's unfair but I kind of see it as fair because it's kind of what we do at the same time. **(E.4.c)**

At the same time, that final concert is what we're gearing up for and we finally get to perform it and we'll be okay with the outcome because we know what students can do better or that's the best they've done. We know that. But they do expect that they don't get on stage and act a fool, essentially. So, there is some standard. My personal is a little higher than theirs may be. But we do kind of share some levels of standards that are achieved. **(D.1, D.2)**

**Okay. That's great. So, describe your involvement in extra-curricular activities, such as parent's nights or sporting events, things like that.**

I go to certain numbers of events for support. Football games and things like that, sporting events I do go to support students, especially students that I have that are in my program. ... I create some extracurricular activities myself for my choirs. This past year we went to Six Flags, and that entire choir met after school. So it was... No, they didn't meet during the day, they had to meet after school, so that became a very extra-curricular thing and there were people that were not enrolled in the program that attended and performed and had a great time.

So... between that and being involved with the different end-of-the-year celebrations that come about, I always keep myself busy in those things because I'm a big person on school spirit. It's a lot of support and a lot of school spirit is what I try and give out, try to be infectious with it, with other students. **(E.1)**

**Okay, great. So, what do you consider to be the most—and I asked this earlier about the grade levels you teach—what do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music?**

Wow. Giving students a true opportunity to do something and to express themselves in a way that can benefit themselves and others, those around them, both near and far. Giving the students a chance to learn something and learn a language that is universal. And then them understanding that and finally getting a grasp of that statement. I like to tell them that at the beginning of any school year, that music is a universal language and they don't, sometimes they get it, the students that have been there for a year or so, they understand, but the ones that are new are just looking at me going, "Well, okay, sure." **(D.2)**

But when they get that moment, those light bulb moments is what I call them, is when they finally get it and they go, "Oh my gosh. Yeah. I know what that means; I know what he means by that." B-flat sounds the same in English as it does in Mandarin so, that's giving them the

opportunity to do something that can be heard the world-wide and be understood, as well as opening their eyes and expanding their horizons, that's probably the most rewarding thing. (D.1) As well as, I also mean just giving them a safe place to be. I hear some things from students and they tell me things and I handle them the best that I can, give the information off to the proper powers that be but, I want them to be able to be safe and express themselves. If they can express themselves in their music, they should also be able to express themselves freely in my classroom and know that they're safe to feel and think and use the music to help them sometimes even cope with certain things, so yeah. That's the greatest thing to me. You can't beat that to me. (D.2)

**Excellent. And again, from the flip side of that, what do you consider to be the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

The consistent uphill battle against the status quo, especially in the state. Just the fact that it's almost a constant mode of defense. You know, I gotta defend what I do, because if I don't—  
**I'm sorry. You cut out there for a minute.**

I'm saying you know it's the constant mode of frustration, it's the constant mode of defense that the musician seems to be in, or music teachers seem to be in, is I have to defend my art, or my culture, or what it is that we do. Or we could possibly lose jobs and opportunities for our students. I mean if it came down to it, I can probably get another job somewhere. But my students would never get an opportunity to learn about music and, having to continuously defend to keep students with that opportunity is very frustrating.

Because you would think "Oh, another opportunity for our students to learn and grow" it would be easy to accept but apparently it's not enough. So, that's probably the most, that's easily I shouldn't say probably, that's easily the most frustrating thing about being a choral director is that

we have to defend what it is that we do. I would be more frustrated by other things in my classroom if I didn't have to fight so hard to make sure that my field is still valid. (C.1)

**Right. Okay. And I have one more question for you and it's somewhat broad. What do you value most about music?**

Oh, wow. Hmm... To be honest with you, it's the fact that it's so expansive and never ending would probably be the biggest value. At no point do you just 'have it' you know? There's no point that you just get music, there's no point that at the end of the day you say "All right, I've reached the end, I've reached the edge of existence of what it is that we do, I'm done, I will now go home and sit down and be quiet."

No. There always is more music. There's always more to learn, there's always more to seek. And, not only that, it's a profession that always is expanding and improving, so. You know, we rehearse something that we've sung 45 times and rehearse it again because there's something we can do better, even the 45th time. So, that's the thing, it's ever-growing, it never ceases to exist or ceases to need attention. That's probably the most appreciative thing that I have about music.

## **Interview 6**

### **When did you decided to pursue a career in music education?**

I decided I guess the summer going into my sophomore year of college. Can I give you a little bit of a backstory?

**Oh, please.**

I've always loved music. I had my first solo in second grade, always was very close to my choir teachers, loved singing, but I was kind of going to follow in my father's footsteps and be a pharmacist, because I had grown up working at the pharmacy, you know pretty much since I was a young teen. But anyway, he went to pharmacy school at Samford, that was how I ended up at Samford. I came in undeclared.

I was in the university chorale my first year as an undeclared major, and just met some phenomenal people, I had a wonderful conductor. Decided to declare vocal performance second semester of my freshman year, and because of that I was going to be a year behind and so I continued on that path and started pursuing a performance degree. Then the summer going into my sophomore year I got asked to be a youth intern in a church in Montgomery and fell in love with working with teenagers and I had this idea if I could have a job that allowed me to work with teenagers and utilize my gift in music, that that would be the best job ever. So that was when I decided that I would finish out my performance degree, but that I would do a master's in education. It was at that point I decided I wanted to teach. (A.2, A.4)

**Excellent, thank you. And you've sort of alluded to this in your answer, but who were your professional role models before you became a teacher?**

Oh my gosh. I would have to say Joni Clark, she was my choir director since I was in third grade up through my ninth grade year. I went to a private school and so I actually had the same music

teacher in my elementary, middle and then my first part of my high school year. Not only was she my choir director, but I also took voice lessons and piano lessons with her, and just had a really special relationship with her. I feel like a lot of who I am as a teacher today is because of her. (A.3)

I also look up a lot to Dr. Banks (A.4). I remember being in the university choral with him and him mentioning the joy paycheck and that was what we as singers and musicians got. Everyone that I came into contact with, that year that I was in university choral, felt that they were called to do music, whether it was to be a performer or to be a teacher, and they felt like that was a call in their life and they didn't really look back. So I can't really say that I've looked back either since I've made the decision to become a teacher. I also looked up to Milburn Price (A.4) and I love Margaret Heron (A.6), I did my student teaching with her. I still say I want to be her when I grow up because I think she is a phenomenal teacher.

**Excellent. You've sort of answered this, about Margaret, but who do you consider to be your professional role models as a practitioner, now that you are a teacher, what other people do you look up to in the field?**

Yeah definitely I would say Margaret Heron (A.6). Other people that I look up to, John Kincaid (A.7), Megan Rudolph (A.7). I spent some time after I became a teacher observing Brent Coleman (A.7) at Pizitz. Then I was teaching middle school that first year. I thought it was good to go and see somebody else that had a thriving middle school program since in my internship I had placement at an elementary school and at a high school. I don't know if I need to give you a few more, but those are, I guess, the main ones.

**That is just fine. How did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach?**

I taught middle school my first year ever of teaching and I really enjoyed it. Unfortunately my unit was cut and so after a year of teaching I was thrown back into looking for a job. In working with youth I knew that I wanted to either teach middle school or high school, I just don't do elementary, and so I applied for the job at Pinson Valley High school and I got that and I did that for three years. As I was about to start my fourth year my administration told me that if I wanted to I could start a group at the middle school, at Rudd, because as you're familiar with, they dissolved that.

**Yes.**

I was very excited about that and my husband was saying that that was all I was talking about was getting to start this middle school choir and he had kind of asked me, "Have you thought about just doing just middle school?" He said, "because that just seems to be like what you talk about and what really gets you excited." The job at Berry came open and I decided to go for it and I absolutely feel like that is my niche now. After getting back into that age group, I just love the changing voices, I love their personalities, I just think they're really fun people to work with. I'm happy with that age group, but that's kind of how I settled on middle school. **(B.2)**

**Well that's excellent. You've already answered a couple of my follow up questions.**

Good.

**What do you find the most rewarding thing about teaching middle school?**

Now that I've been at Berry I've seen two classes that I've started in sixth grade and have three years through and just the students that, especially at the end of this year, several of them wrote me letters that said not only do I teach them about how to sing, but I teach them how to be graceful, how to be compassionate, those types of character qualities I think are important to teach. **(D.1, D.2)**

One young lady that stands out to me in particular was so shy as a sixth grader and fast forward three years later she did all state for two years, she had a solo in our show choir this year, she's going to be in chamber choir at Spain Park, and she would just... I mean, several times at the end of the year, like at our concert and at the end of our trip, you know, she would just tear up because she would just tell me how grateful she is to me for what I've done. For me as a teacher to see her confidence grow over the course of the three years, that's what makes it worth to me to see them just blossom as an individual like she has. **(B.3)**

**Excellent. What do you find to be the most frustrating thing about teaching middle school?**

Frustrating thing. Eighth period at the end of the day can be a bugger with my eighth graders. There was fifty of them in there last year and at the end of the day they are fit to be tied **(C.3)**. I don't know that I really have a whole lot of gripes. I wish I guess for me our scheduling is not equal in all of the middle schools in my district as far as some of the opportunity that they have during the day. Like I know the other two middle schools have their show choir meet during the school day and we don't have that capability into our schedule. On the other side of town they can also have two electives as eighth graders and I know that I lose some of my seventh and eighth graders to foreign language, because they have it told to them that you can get high school credit for it if you go ahead and do it in middle school. So I guess the schedule would be the biggest drawback. **(C.3)**

**Okay. Again, that leads very nicely into my next question. What would you change—if you could change one thing about your job—what would it be?**

I'd probably ask for them to be able to have two electives. **(C.3)**

**Yeah. Okay. What do you consider to be the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

Oh gosh, that's hard. I think, if I had to sum it up in two words, being consistent, because I think that crosses into a lot of different areas. Being consistent in the standards that I set for them musically, setting the bar high so that they can achieve great things, but I also think I need to be consistent in how I treat them, how I discipline them, how I am as a person because I think so much of middle school is them trying to find their identity, their sense of belonging. Especially with me I can provide some of that stability because if they start choir in sixth grade, you know they have a familiar face and they have a familiar group of friends that they can stay with for three years, and I think that's a lot to offer them. **(D.2, E.2.a, E.3.c)**

**Okay, great. Thank you. Let's see, what would you consider to be... Comparing your job with that of other teachers in the building at your school, how would you consider your position similar or different compared to other teachers?**

I feel that it's different. Again just from the fact that I have kids that I can either see for all three years or I get some students that just decide to join choir in the eighth grade and I'm expected to kind of catch them up to where they need to be so that they can fit in with the rest of the ensemble **(C.2.a, E.3.c)**. I feel like our classes are different in that when you walk into my classroom if you want to say, "Well what is your objective for the day, Ms. Smith?" We don't have one objective. We're working on several different tasks and many of them are scaffolding to new tasks and so my objectives are going to be my warmups, my sight reading, and my literature. All those pieces of literature are going to be at different stages, and so I think many times when we're observed, you know they walk into a core class and they say, "OK, there is one objective for today, what is the lesson on?" And I don't think ours falls in that category. **(E.3.b)**

I also think there's a tremendous of outside the classroom tasks that we are involved with such as receiving money for trips, receiving money for uniforms, receiving money for other random fees

whether it's for show choir. I'm usually spending the time over the summer planning for next year. I know core teachers do that, but as far as I've arranged music before, I've fixed costumes, I've gone up to the school to paint sets, I've gone up to the school to get things organized for the next year. Really, we need a bookkeeper that goes along with us so we can do our teaching. Then just the staying after school. Again, I know core teachers spend time grading exams after school, but the fact that we stay after for rehearsals and I'm heavily involved with the musical as with my show choir and so there is very few afternoons that I'm not at school, and I'm not one of these teachers that when the 3:15 bells rings I'm out in the parking lot by 3:30. **(C.4, E.1, E.3.a)**

**That's excellent. Do you believe that your administrators understand what you do as a choir teacher?**

Not really. **(E.4.b)**

**Okay.**

I think especially when we go to things like performance assessment and things of that nature I don't think they know how high the stakes are or what it is we're being graded on. They may just hear, "Oh, well the band gets 'superiors,' the choir gets 'superiors,' or, you know, they get 'excellents' whatever," and they don't really know what all that means. Personally I was kind of disheartened that my choir went to AMEA this year and I didn't have an administrator that showed up. I don't think that they knew that that was a big deal that they needed to come and support the kids. I don't think they knew what a big honor that was. **(E.4.b, E.4.d)**

I will say that we performed for the superintendent at one of the board meetings and I got a follow-up email after our performance because the superintendent's daughter happened to be in attendance of the board meeting and she told her mom, who is the superintendent, she said, "You have no idea what a fine middle school program that is that sang tonight." The superintendent

actually reached out to me and told me her daughter had said that. Her daughter is very well versed in opera, because I think she is studying opera in college, and so we got a few lines of other appreciation, but I mean had she not been there again I don't know that anyone would have known. They just think, "Oh, that's the middle school choir and they're here and yay for them."

**Okay. In terms of professional development, what do you consider to be the most valuable professional development experience?**

I love roundtable discussions when I can get with people in my feeder pattern, specifically, the other middle and high school directors in my feeder pattern. I love... I know sometimes when we go to conferences if we all ride together, that can be some of the most beneficial PD because we're all just kind of talking and there's not really an agenda, it's kind of just whatever comes up naturally in conversations. To me it's way more beneficial to talk to somebody who's been there, done that than going to some session of people postulating what might happen or how I need to make my class more like the core classes. So I value that time when I get to dialogue with my colleges. **(F.1.a)**

**Excellent. What do you consider to be the least valuable professional development experiences?**

Most of the time the mandated things that we have to do, whether it's from our district or from the state that everybody has to sit through. Sometimes it's the same thing and you have to sit through year after year. I understand that we need to know that, but rehashing it over and over ... I know some of my colleagues don't have to sit in on data meetings of their schools, like going over different standardized test data. I think I can read that in an email. I don't know that I necessarily need to be part of the faculty meetings where we are dissecting that data because I

don't give a standardized test. I feel like what I'm already doing is reinforcing reading concepts and math concepts. I don't know that that really pertains to me. (F.2)

**Okay. You mentioned this earlier. Describe your involvement in extra-curricular activity, things you do outside the school day, whether it's attending sporting events, parent nights, things like that.**

Okay. We have two parent nights a year and with me being the choir director for the sixth, seventh and eighth grade I am expected to be at both of those. Other core teachers might be their one night, but I have to be there two nights. I usually plan a trip and have a parent meeting about that. I have show choir auditions at the conclusion of one school year and I have a parent meeting with that. Every Monday from 3:15 to 5:30 our show choir rehearses after school. We will start that once school resumes in August and then we go to the end of February.

During show choir season I also have three retreats that are on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The kids don't spend the night, but we go up to the school and we stay up there until about 8:30 or 9:00 Friday night and then Saturday is 9:00 to 3:00 and then Sunday is, I think, 1:00 to 4:00 is what I did for this year. So there is three of those. With show choir season, which spans from January to February, there is competitions. We usually do four competitions and a showcase. So you are looking at four Fridays, five Fridays where I'm wrapped up with show choir stuff from about 2:00 that afternoon to maybe 12:00 am or 1:00 am.

I'm involved with the musical. I co-direct that. I teach all the music for that. We do that in the fall and I usually have rehearsals again from 3:30 to 5:00 or 5:30, September and October and I usually have those two days a week and then we'll do three days of performances in October. I prepare students for All-State. I will typically pull them from a reading class first period to work with them or sometimes I pull them during their P.E. time, so that's my planning time that

I'm using to help prepare them. I help set up the gym for various events, like our multi-cultural day, our Veterans Day program, our spring and winter concerts. So getting the sound set up, getting the risers set up, I'm usually staying after school doing that. I try to come to a few sporting events, at least two in the fall and then maybe one or two in the spring to go support my students who play on athletic teams. I think that sums it all up. **(E.1)**

**That's very comprehensive. Thank you. I asked you earlier about what you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching the grades you teach, what do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music in general?**

Just providing them with those experiences, whether it's a beautiful song that they remember what it felt like to sing it, whether it's a trip together, whether it's going to performance assessment and feeling confident about what they did, I think it's just all about the positive experiences that we provide them with. **(D.2)**

**Okay. What do you consider the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

Probably the different, I guess, ability levels with some that transfer in. Mainly I'm speaking to eighth grade. I had a lot of new eighth grade boys this year, which I was glad to have boys, but because they had not gotten a firm foundation in choir sixth or seventh grade year they had some significant pitch matching difficulties. In a mixed setting it was a little harder. I chose to do something different this year, I separated my seventh grade boys and girls into two separate classes and I really felt like they made a lot of strides vocally because they were able to get some one on one attention. I guess in a class that size with fifty students it was kind of difficult to give some of the boys the one on one attention that they needed when you have several other students that need to continue learning. You can't just stop everything for a few students. **(C.2.a)**

I would love to have an accompanist, so whether that means my skills improve or I have somebody. Then our facilities. We do our concerts in the gym and it's not conducive to singing and the kids work extremely hard and then you can't hear them, so that's frustrating. **(C.4)**

**One more question for you, and this is sort of broad, but what do you value most about music?**

What do I value most about music? Oh gosh, you're making me think, Ben.

**I'm so sorry.**

I've never been one of these conductors that I just felt like it was all about me and this great literature that I'm doing with my middle schoolers. Again, I think it's using the music to give them experiences. Whether it's exposing them to something new, for instance a piece in Latin that when you take it out the first day they're griping, complaining because they don't like it, but then once they learn it, that's the one that they walk away from class singing and that's the one two years later when they're in eighth grade, that's the one they want to sing on the bus. Giving them chances to perform at different venues and I think the music allows us to do that, whether it's take a trip and sing somewhere or sing at an event or teaching them a new technique or something, like I said, expanding their horizons. Getting them to sing and think about something other than the music that they're listening to on the radio. **(D.2)**

## **Interview 7**

**When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?**

In high school, about my junior year. (A.1)

**Okay. Who were your professional role models before you became a teacher?**

Benny Russell (A.3). You want me to name before I became a teacher, like collegiate? He was my high school.

**That would be fine. Just any time before you were a teacher, who influenced you?**

Okay. Glinda Blackshear (A.4), Sandra Willetts (A.4). Let's see, my first guy that I loved so much, Prentice, Fred Prentice (A.4).

**Okay, thank you. What about as a practicing music teacher? Who are your professional role models?**

Benny Russell (A.3).

**Okay.**

Jim Hinton (A.7) as well.

**All right, thank you. How did you decide to teach the grade levels you currently teach?**

How did I decide to teach that? I like the level of music that they are able to succeed with. I like the harmonic quality of upper secondary teaching, the depth of the chords and such. (B.1)

**Excellent. Have you ever taught other grade levels?**

Yes.

**Okay. Would you consider teaching any other grade levels in the future?**

Oh, yes.

**What do you find most rewarding about the grade levels you teach?**

They're young adults, so they're finding themselves and they're about to go to college. I feel like I'm forming their music opinion. It may be their only music opinion, but it may propel them to be a lifelong musician. **(B.3)**

**Okay. What do you find most frustrating about the grade levels you teach?**

The parameters within the state guidelines that we have to teach within.

**Understood. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?**

I really like my job. Let me think. If I could change one thing, I would have an accompanist.

**(C.4)**

**Okay. Let me see, what do you consider to be the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

Teaching kids to cooperate in behaviors through music. **(D.2)**

**Would you care to expound that a little?**

Expound on that? Taking a diverse society and in one class period making them feel as one for just a little while.

**Excellent, excellent. What do you consider to be the similarities or differences between your job and the jobs of other teachers at your school?**

I believe kids are kids as far as that, the similarities. I guess the similarities are we're bound by the same guidelines, and restrictions, and scheduling, and struggle for advocacy. The differences that I have that some others do not have are I'm at one school, which is sometimes very difficult to find. I have complete support from my administrators, very hard to find. I guess the one outstanding thing that I have, I'm the only school in [my] that has a theater.

**Okay. Do you mean a physical space or a program?**

Yes, a physical space.

**Okay. Those are some differences and similarities you see between yourself and other music teachers in your system, is that correct?**

Yes.

**What about similarities and differences between yourself and other teachers of other subjects in your school?**

I am very careful to be inclusive. Some teachers have a top group that they use as their recruiting group and that they use as their place for the others to strive for. I am really careful to make sure the entry level groups feel important and that they have travel opportunities and recruiting opportunities. I don't do as many schedule breakups as others do, I think. I try to make it more homogenous so all levels can sing together at some point. **(E.3.c)**

**Excellent. All right. What do you consider to be the most valuable professional development experiences and why?**

ACDA has been because it has provided for me some mountain top musical experiences that are unattainable in the public system that I teach in. It's a place that inspires me to reach for the same level as I can. **(F.1.b)**

**What is it that inspires you about that?**

I think it's the performance experiences, the professional affiliations with people from all over the United States. The sense of community is really overwhelming. I remember one time you said, "I'm with a whole bunch of people," you said on social media, "And we are all like choir geeks. We all love the same thing." It's calming, which was the big piece last year at ACDA. It's calming. You go back to the experiences that led you to be a music educator.

**Wonderful, thank you. What professional development experiences do you consider to be least valuable?**

I think that the read throughs sometimes at ACDA and things are not realistic. They're a bit unidimensional. I know that they try.

**Do you mean the literature sessions?**

Yes, the literature sessions are a bit unidimensional. I wish they were literature sessions for small groups for beginning groups, for not just young groups but for older choirs that are having their first experiences and such, maybe less accompaniment to help them feel as if they are supported more because they can't manage the harmonies and such instead of a six-part piece that looks like it came from an All-State list. **(F.1.b)**

**I understand that. Let's see, do you believe that your administrators at your school understand what you do? I'm sorry, you cut out there for a second. I'm sorry, I'm losing you. Can you repeat that?**

Yeah, we're having a thunder storm here. I don't know if that's the cause of it. I said absolutely not. They do not understand the depth of what we do, how deep we teach theory, how deep we teach history, how deep we teach community and behavior and things such as that. They understand it when we combine with the special needs group. They see the importance of that in my adaptive ensemble. But in the day to day, they encourage me so much but a lot of what they see, I think they think it's just a bonding experience and entertainment. I don't think they recognize how they are learning so much about different subjects in the other classrooms. **(E.4.b)**

**Okay, excellent. That's an excellent response. I'm not saying it's an excellent situation, sorry. Describe your involvement in extracurricular activities such as parent nights or athletic events.**

I'm very involved in things such as that. I don't sponsor anything, but I always attend whatever my kids are in. I always attend one or two games for everything that they're in but not as far as a dictated responsibility for the school, no. (E.1)

**That's something you elect to do?**

Yes.

**All right, thank you. Let's see, I asked you this earlier about the grade levels you teach.**

**What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music in general?**

Choral music, general. You mean generally?

**Yes, generally. In general, what do you consider to be the...**

Okay. I've already used up my words like community, and encouragement, and value of the subjects. I think it's a raw experience. The aesthetic value is something that you can't create in some other learning situations. The emotion, the unity, the feeling, the sound is in and of itself something beautiful that we create. I guess we're able to create something together, something from nothing. (B.1, D.2)

**Excellent. The reverse of that question: what do you find to be most frustrating about teaching choral music in general?**

Did you say frustrating?

Yes.

Because so much of the learning is in the process, then it's hard to compete with more visible activities such as band, marching band, or some academic benchmarks that the school is trying to provide, which is on a scale, data. It's hard to compete because it's not as visible. (C.1, E.3.a, E.3.b)

**Okay. All right, thank you. Now I have one more question for you. It's sort of broad. What do you value most about music?**

I guess it's just so inspiring, getting back to the music. It's so inspiring.

## **Interview 8**

**When did you decide to pursue a career in music education?**

It was probably senior year of high school. (A.1)

**Did you have any professional role models or people you looked up to before you became a choir teacher?**

Yes. I looked up to a couple of my choir teachers in high school (A.3), and the main one was my youth pastor, or my music minister, past youth pastor (A.9). He went to Samford and studied music there, too.

**What about after you became a choir teacher? Do you currently have any professional role models?**

Yeah, Philip Copeland (A.4) is the main one, and then I talk to John Kincaid (A.7) a lot. He helps me out. Ginny Hughes (A.6) is a huge help.

**You teach both middle and high school, correct?**

Yes.

**How did you decide to teach the grades that you currently teach?**

What do you mean?

**What were the factors that led you to teach the grade level you currently teach?**

The school that I teach at is a 7th through 12th grade school. They used to have one teacher who went to multiple schools but, when I first got there, they made all 7th graders take choir or band so that I would have a full-time job.

**Do you prefer teaching middle school or high school?**

No, I like them both in different ways.

**What do you like about them? What do you find most rewarding about these grade levels?**

In the middle school area, I find how they pick up on theory really rewarding, and how they say that they can't learn in relation to what they actually learn is really rewarding because they're always so self-deprecating. You get to the end, and they're like, "Oh, I know that. I know that."

**(B.1)** My high-schoolers, it's hearing them say things like, "Oh, I kind of want to do this in college," or "What can I do to be better at singing?" Stuff like that. **(B.3)**

**What do you find most challenging about the grade levels you teach?**

With my middle-schoolers, it's because they don't choose to be in my class, but they're in my class. That is really hard. That's the same with my high schoolers, as well. I don't have many kids who are in my program because they want to be. They're in there because they need an art credit or because they just need somewhere to go, and I'm a dumping ground essentially. Not always, but the year before I got there was really hard, so a lot of kids left choir. I'm getting them back slowly, but it's just a dumping ground. That's really challenging. **(C.2.b, C.3)**

**I understand. If you could change one thing about your current job, what would it be?**

It would be to have an auditioned group. I don't have one. **(C.3)**

**What do you consider the most important thing you do at your job on a daily basis?**

I guess it would be pouring into my students and just making them smile, not even in the classroom, in the hallways, at lunch, stuff like that. Just because these kids don't get that anywhere else. I have a few kids who are just awful in other classes, and those teachers tell me that, but they come into my class, and they're great. I think it's just because I care about them.

We go on trips. I see them outside of school, so it's just a different atmosphere. **(D.2, E.3.c)**

**What do you consider to be the similarities and differences between your job and the jobs of other teachers in the school?**

In my school?

**Yes.**

I guess the students... I know that's weird, but similarities because, the majority of the time, they act the same way in all the classes. They have attitudes. They're either funny or quiet in all classes. The differences are, if my kids... they just walk in, and there's a black cloud and they're having a bad day, I can find a way to change that, be it I'm just going to play some pop music, and we're going to run around and dance or I can be so much more flexible than other teachers.

**(E.2.b, E.3.c)**

**Do you believe that your administration understands what you do professionally?**

No. **(E.4.b)**

**Can you expound on that a little bit?**

Yes. My vice principal does **(E.4.a)**. My vice principal is musical. He plays the piano at church. He's the one who comes to my concerts. He knows what I do, but my principal has no idea what my standards are. He has only ever come into my classroom once. It is a completely separate thing. When my vice principal comes in, he gives me great feedback. He knows what I'm teaching and how I should be teaching it essentially, but my principal does not know what I'm doing, and he doesn't understand how it could help the students.

**What do you consider to be the most valuable professional development experiences?**

Like what? Conference or...

**You can list specific conferences or you can say general professional development experiences, however you prefer to answer.**

ACDA brings in great clinicians. I know that's weird because they're the same clinicians, but it's geared differently. ACDA is strictly for choral things, so that and AMEA are just different. You just have a broader span of things you could go to. My favorite PD was at this ACDA National

Conference where a woman came, and she talked about the female changing voice, and it was the best thing I've ever been to. I'll never forget it. **(F.1.b)**

**What about the least beneficial professional development experiences?**

I guess I'd have to say when I sometimes walk into the band part, the band things at AMEA, and I don't know that that's what I've gone to. Everything I've gone to, I've gotten something out of it, be it a resource. I try not to think negatively.

**That's great. So we're clear, I'm not just talking about at the big conferences or anything like that. We also include things like faculty meetings and district level things, as well.**

I didn't know. All faculty meetings, then. When I have to go to things like, we have this thing called "Chance," and it's how we do diversity, and it's really un-beneficial because it's mostly geared towards elementary schools, and we're a high school, and it doesn't really work. **(F.2)**

**So it's not necessarily applicable to you?**

Yeah.

**Please describe your involvement in extracurricular activities, such as parent nights or athletic events.**

I am the drill team sponsor for the band, so I go to all the football games, home and away, and I go to all the band competitions. I am a medical assistant, which means I have to go on field trips if they don't have one, and I'm a diabetic assistant, same as medical assistant. I think that's it.

**(E.1)**

**I already asked this about grade levels, about teaching choral music in general. What do you consider to be the most rewarding thing about teaching choral music?**

When they sing something correctly, my students, and it's a good chord or something, we'll get done, and they'll say, "Hey, that sounded really good," or when they start to hear when they

could've done better and what they messed up on, they just know that they've don't it wrong, so they're going to do it better the next time. I couldn't think of that word, sorry. **(D.1)**

**What do you consider to be the most frustrating thing about teaching choral music?**

I'm thinking specifically about middle-schoolers when they walk in, and they're just in a bad mood, so that's going to go into the singing and how they just don't sing if they're in a bad mood. I say, "Hey, I need you to sing out," and they think it is a personal affront to them, and they get so mad. **(C.2.b)**

**I've got one more question for you, and it's kind of broad. What do you value most about music in general?**

I guess I would say... I'm going to think of choral music here, and I guess I would say how it makes a group of people feel towards each other, like the type of unity that can come when a group sings an amazing song well. I'm thinking of my time in a cappella choir, and I just wish... I want to bring that to my students and how they can feel when they just sing or when they sing any sort of song well. It doesn't have to be a difficult song, either, just when they sing a song well and how it can make them feel. If they can understand that, they can also make the audience feel a certain way. That's an amazing thing, too. **(D.2)**

## APPENDIX E

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA** | Office of the Vice President for  
Research & Economic Development  
Office for Research Compliance

March 6, 2017

John Benjamin Cook  
School of Music  
The University of Alabama  
Box 870366

Re: IRB # 17-OR-095, "Career Identity Development of Secondary Choral Music Teachers in the Alabama Vocal Association"

Dear Mr. Cook:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of written documentation of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.*

Your application will expire on March 5, 2018. If your research will continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP  
Director & Research Compliance Officer  
Office for Research Compliance

358 Rose Administration Building | Box 870127 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127  
205-348-8461 | Fax 205-348-7189 | Toll Free 1-877-820-3066