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*The purpose of this study was to evaluate the preservice music teacher preparation program at a large midwestern university (in this article called "BTU" for "Big Ten University") through an examination of the perceptions of beginning teachers and their mentors and administrators. Primary research participants included seven first-year teachers from BTU's class of 1999 and seven first-year teachers from the class of 2000. Data from these participants included individual interviews, focus group interviews, teacher journals, classroom observations by the researcher, mentor interviews, administrator interviews, and responses on an open-ended "End-of-Year Questionnaire." In addition, secondary participants (n = 11) completed the End-of-Year Questionnaire regarding their first-year experiences and the teacher preparation program. Results and discussion include descriptions of the perceptions regarding the most valuable parts of preparation and the least valuable parts of preparation, as well as suggestions for preservice teacher preparation made by teachers, mentors, administrators, and the researcher. Issues of validity of results and transferability of findings to other settings are discussed in addition to possible implications for teacher education and music education program evaluation research.*

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# Perceptions of Beginning Teachers, Their Mentors, and Administrators Regarding Preservice Music Teacher Preparation

Program evaluation of music teacher preparation programs is an important research strand within music education (Colwell, 1985; Leglar, 1993; Lehman, 1992). In a recent discussion that connects program evaluation to music teacher preparation reform, Bidner (2001) suggests that there is a "need to document the impact that our programs are having on the ability of our teacher candidates to teach" (p. 3). Asmus (2000) supports this need: "Music teacher education has never before needed a base of substantive information

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about how to best prepare music teachers as it does now" (p. 5).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the preservice music teacher preparation program at a large midwestern university (in this article called "BTU" for "Big Ten University") through an examination of the perceptions of beginning teachers and their mentors and administrators. Research questions included: (a) What were the perceptions of beginning teacher participants regarding the most valuable and the least valuable parts of their teacher preparation? (b) What were the perceptions of building administrators and assigned mentors regarding the preservice preparation provided by BTU? (c) What suggestions did participants have for the music teacher preparation program at BTU?

### Relevant Literature in Program Evaluation

Other scholars in music education have provided comprehensive syntheses of past research in program evaluation in music (Colwell, 1985; Leglar, 1993; Lehman, 1992). These reviews are described briefly in addition to one survey study by Bridges, published in 1993. Other relevant research includes case studies of beginning teachers undertaken by researchers in general education to evaluate general teacher education programs.

Bridges (1993) collected survey responses from 37 general music teachers in Tennessee regarding what the teachers wish they had learned in preservice education. In addition, as one of three music coordinators for the state of Tennessee, she spent considerable time observing music teachers and talking with them about their work. Although her results are neither statistically significant nor generalizable, her work represents one of the few published articles on program evaluation in recent decades. In her conclusion, Bridges states: "What do our graduates wish we had told them? They wish to be told the truth about the real world of teaching, they wish to be given tools to be successful, and they wish to be inspired in the process" (p. 72).

Colwell (1985) and Leglar (1993) each provided syntheses of research in music teacher program evaluation and thoughts regarding this avenue of research. Colwell (1985) reviewed the history of program evaluation in music teacher education and suggested that there were many challenges to comprehensive music teacher education program evaluation research. He was critical of program evaluation projects in which investigators examine only the survey response perceptions of graduates of one institution. I have made an effort to address his concerns in the present study by examining perceptions of graduates through individual and focus-group interviews, and to also examine the perceptions of experienced mentors, building administrators, and my own teacher educator observations.

Leglar (1993) reviewed dissertations completed at U.S. universities between 1960 and 1991 in order to provide a profile of research in music teacher education. Program evaluation studies constituted 23% of the dissertations reviewed. However, these were most com-

mon in the 1960s. The number of program evaluation studies dropped by more than 50% in the 1970s and has remained at that level. Leglar states:

Perhaps the most noteworthy impression gained from this survey is that very few institutions seem to be philosophically committed to research in music teacher education. ... Ironically, music education researchers regularly lament the reluctance of classroom teachers to base practice on research, yet very few of them are actively engaged in the rigorous examination of their own practices. (p. 67)

Lehman (1992) focused on the broad topic of curriculum and program evaluation in music. He devoted an entire section of his literature review to "models, paradigms, and approaches" (p. 283) in program evaluation, and he offers some information regarding the controversy between quantitative and qualitative evaluation models: "Fundamentally, the controversy reflects a disagreement over whether the laboratory or the real world provides the more useful source of information to guide decision making" (p. 285). For the present study, I used a qualitative approach because I value naturalistic inquiry and context sensitivity and believe that the perceptions of this specific group of beginning teachers regarding their preservice preparation could best be examined by means of open-ended and free-response interviews and questionnaires.

Leglar (1993) suggested that researchers outside music education are beginning to explore a variety of assessment and evaluation models: "In general, researchers in music education could profit from a closer study of advances in other fields" (p. 67). Several recent models of general education preservice preparation program evaluation provide a piece of the framework for the study described here (Breidenstein, 1999; Davis, 1999; Fields, 1999; and Stewart-Wells, 2000). In these four studies researchers examined the perceptions of beginning teachers through a case-study design. None of these studies included music-teacher participants. In some studies (Fields, 1999; Stewart-Wells, 2000), all participants were from the same teacher education program. In others (Breidenstein, 1999; Davis, 1999), all participants were beginning teachers in the same school district who were graduates from several teacher education programs. Breidenstein (1999) examined perceptions of second-year teachers through surveys, individual interviews, and focus-group interviews. Davis (1999) conducted one focus-group interview with six groups of beginning teachers ( $N = 25$ , defined as being in their first, second, or third year) concerning their views of their preservice preparation. Fields (1999) examined four first-year teachers from one institution through researcher observations of teaching, individual interviews, and focus-group discussions. Although the participants in the Stewart-Wells (2000) study were student teachers and not beginning teachers, this study provided methodological guidelines as well, because he examined the perceptions of student teachers and teacher educators through a qualitative interview design. All these researchers provide suggestions for teacher education in general

based on their case-study findings, although they are careful to remind readers that, in qualitative work, one cannot generalize in the traditional understanding of the term.

As is common in qualitative evaluation research (Patton, 1990), the extensive review of literature for this study was not performed until after data were being gathered for the study. Thus, the recent projects referenced here were happening concurrently with research for the present study, which began in the fall of 1999.

## METHOD

A qualitative formative program evaluation model was used in this investigation. Patton (1990) suggests: "The purpose of formative evaluation is to improve human intervention within a specific set of activities at a specific time for a specific group of people" (p. 156). I sought to improve the preservice music teacher education program at BTU for the students and faculty involved in that program. In addition, I attempted to gather information about preservice music teacher education that might have relevance for preservice preparation programs that are similar to the one provided by BTU.

The teacher preparation program at BTU is a 5-year bachelor of music program in the School of Music. In all other content areas of BTU, the teacher preparation program follows a Holmes Group (Holmes, 1996, 2001) model in which students graduate from a content area after 4 years and return for a 1-year, 12-credit postbaccalaureate internship taken concurrently with 12 credits of graduate course work in education. However, in music the students still completed a traditional 1-semester, 9-credit, student-teaching segment. The degree program for the classes of 1999 and 2000 included a general university course load of 35 credits. Music and music education requirements met the standards set forth by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM, 1999). In addition to course work in music and music education, students took 15 credits of course work in the College of Education including 6 credits at the undergraduate level (a 3-credit course on diversity in education and a 3-credit course titled "Learners and Learning in Context"). Nine of the College of Education credits were taken at the graduate level—one course in graduate educational psychology and two courses in teacher education.

Core music education courses in the program included a sophomore-level, 2-credit "Introduction to Music Education" course, a junior-level general teaching methods course, and two senior-level specific methods courses (Elementary Instrumental Methods and Secondary Instrumental Methods for instrumental students and Elementary General Music Methods and Secondary Choral Methods for vocal/general students). In addition, students were required to choose four music education course electives from topics such as "Secondary General Music Methods," "Marching Band Techniques," "Suzuki Method," etc. All the core music education courses and most

of the electives included a fieldwork component. The program culminated in a 9-credit, 14-week student teaching experience accompanied by a biweekly student teaching seminar.

### **Research Participants**

Participants were from the BTU music education graduating classes of 1999 and 2000. Primary research participants for the study included seven first-year teachers from the class of 1999 and seven first-year teachers from the class of 2000. One criterion for selection as a primary participant was distance from campus. All primary participants were teaching within 40 miles of BTU. In addition, the primary participants represented a mix of genders (four women and three men from 1999 and four women and three men from 2000), a variety of teaching content areas (collectively including: two elementary general, five middle school band, three high school band, and two high school choral in 1999; and one elementary general, four middle school band, three high school band, two middle school strings, one high school strings, and one high school choral in 2000), and a variety of school district sizes and demographics (two urban, two suburban, and three rural in 1999 and one urban, three suburban, and three rural in 2000). In addition, secondary participants ( $n = 11$ ) completed the End-of-Year Questionnaire regarding their first-year experiences and the BTU teacher preparation program.

### **Rapport**

All the participants in the study had graduated from BTU during the 1998–99 or the 1999–2000 school year. As director of the music student-teaching program, I had previously established relationships with all of the teacher participants in this study because I had observed all of them at least once during their student teaching semester. This previously established relationship made it easier for me to maintain the necessary rapport for in-depth observation and interviewing. Seidman (1991) discusses issues of rapport in interviewing at length and suggests that “too much or too little rapport can lead to distortion of what the participant reconstructs in the interview” (p. 72). I believe my previous relationships with these participants allowed me to maintain the balance to which Seidman refers. All of the participants were aware of the purpose and research questions of the investigation, so we were working toward a group understanding of their perceptions of the preservice preparation program at BTU.

### **Data Collection Devices**

*Individual interviews and classroom observations.* The 1999 beginning teachers were interviewed in their school environments once in the fall of 1999 and again in the spring of 2000. In the fall interview, I

observed the teachers as they taught one of their classes, and then interviewed them for approximately 1 hour at the end of the observation. In the spring, I spent a complete day with each of the seven teachers. Interviews occurred throughout the day, between classes, at lunch, and after school. Although the observations did not serve as data for the program-evaluation focus of this study, the observations provided me a context in which to interpret the interviews of the teachers. All interviews were guided by the research questions and included an unstructured, open-ended interview. I recorded each interview on an audiocassette recorder. Transcripts of these interviews provided the primary data source. I repeated this process with the additional seven beginning teachers who joined the study in the fall of 2000.

*Focus-group interviews.* The first focus group was held in August 1999 on the night before school started. The seven beginning teachers from the class of 1999 got together with me for dinner, signed the release paperwork for participation in the study, and had the opportunity to discuss issues pertinent to the study. This meeting served as the starting point for data collection. The focus group met again at my home in November and in February. All participants met again in June to celebrate the end of the school year. These focus-group experiences were repeated with the 2000 teachers during the 2000–2001 school year. Focus-group discussions were guided by the research questions and recorded on a small audiocassette recorder.

*Teacher journals.* Each of the 14 teachers was encouraged to keep a journal of personal perceptions of his or her BTU preparation throughout the school year. One of the teacher participants in the 1999–2000 group recorded two to three handwritten pages regarding each day of her first year of teaching. Three of the teacher participants in the 2000–2001 group kept weekly journals. This data included information about teachers' perceptions of BTU's preparation for their first year of teaching.

*Mentor and administrator interviews.* Interviews were held in spring 2000 and again in spring 2001 with the 14 mentor teachers who had been assigned by the school districts to work with the first-year music teachers. Interviews were also held with 14 principals who had observed the beginning teachers and were responsible for that teacher's beginning teacher induction paperwork. Mentor and administrator interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes and were open-ended and unstructured.

*Researcher's log.* I maintained a personal log of all interactions with study participants. The log included classroom observation field notes, e-mail communication, phone conversations, and discussions during focus-group meetings.

*End-of-Year Questionnaire.* In June 2000 and again in June 2001, all primary and secondary participants were asked to complete an open-ended End-of-Year Questionnaire that included the following questions: (a) As you look back on your BTU preparation for this first year of teaching, what was most valuable about BTU? (b) As you look

back on your BTU preparation for this first year of teaching, what was least valuable about BTU? (c) What would you change about the BTU teacher preparation program that might better prepare future teachers for the experiences you faced this year? (d) Do you have any additional comments regarding your BTU preparation for teaching?

Participants attended an end-of-the-year dinner, during which they completed the questionnaire as part of the evening's activities. All 14 beginning teachers completed the questionnaire. Most wrote several paragraphs in response to each question. In addition, questionnaire responses were obtained from five additional first-year teachers from the class of 1999 and six additional first-year teachers from the class of 2000. These 11 secondary participants included four men and seven women, and they taught in three band, two general music, two string, and three choral settings.

### **Schedule/Procedures**

The following schedule outlines when the various components of this research occurred:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| August 1999/August 2000       | Initial focus-group meeting  |
| October/November 1999/2000    | Observe first-year teachers in the classroom<br>Conduct first interview with teachers  |
| November 1999 & November 2000 | Focus-group meetings   |
| February 2000 & February 2001 | Focus-group meetings   |
| March/April 2000/2001         | Full-day observation of first-year teachers<br>Second interview of first-year teachers |
| April 2000 & April 2001       | Mentor interviews<br>Principal interviews  |
| June 2000 and June 2001       | End-of-year focus group/complete questionnaire   |

### **Validity**

The primary techniques used to address the trustworthiness (validity) of this study were data-collection triangulation (Patton, 1990), member checks (Stake, 1995), and attention to investigator expertise (Patton, 1990; Seidman, 1991). The variety of data-collection measures described above constitute data triangulation for this study. Member checking refers to the verification of information with

research participants. In this study, teacher participants reviewed the results and discussion sections of this paper to correct any information in the generalizations or the supporting evidence. Careful attention to the expertise of the researcher was relied upon throughout data collection and analysis. I had enough background in the content area and association with the participants to be empathetic in my interview approach and to establish the necessary rapport.

### **Analysis**

Interview transcripts from all participants (first-year teachers, mentors, and administrators), focus-group transcripts, teacher journals, my personal research log, and responses from all questionnaire respondents were reviewed and coded. I searched for themes common to all data, as well as those within individual data sets. The three research questions guided this coding process as I searched for answers to each of the research questions across all the data sets. After initial readings, it seemed that the written questionnaire responses and teacher interview transcripts provided information that was most relevant to the research questions, and thus, they were coded first.

The codes that emerged through this interpretive process regarding the most valuable preservice experiences included the following categories: student teaching, fieldwork, ensembles, and applied lessons. Codes used to identify least-valuable preservice experiences included the following categories: teacher education courses, early observations without context, and some instrument methods courses. Codes representing the improvement suggestions made by beginning teachers included the categories of adding requirements to take courses outside the required "track," combining of instrument methods courses, and extended student teaching. Mentor and administrator interviews, the teacher journal data, and my personal log were coded after teacher data were completed. Codes that emerged included support for a "detracked program," the need for extended student teaching, the need for better preparation for administrative duties, and desire for better preparation for working with beginners.

Although the results of this study may not be generalizable to all preservice music programs in the commonly understood use of the word, the reader may use "logical situational generalizability" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 7) to transfer findings to other populations. If the reader can logically assume that participants in another population are in a situation similar to the one described in this study, it may be possible that results from this study are relevant in other contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Most Valuable Aspects of the Teacher Preparation Program**

*Student teaching.* I began the first interviews in most cases with the question, "As you look back on your BTU preparation for the posi-



tion you are now in, what part of that experience stands out as most valuable?" In all 14 interviews the first-year teacher's response was "student teaching." Responses included comments such as: "No offense to you guys in methods and stuff, but I don't think I really learned anything about how to be a teacher until I hit student teaching." "I loved all the classes and everything, but student teaching is where it really all came together for me." "Student teaching was really an amazing experience. I learned so much from my cooperating teacher."

*Preservice fieldwork.* Graduates mentioned getting out to schools before student teaching as a powerful part of their preparation: "It was great that we observed in so many different schools in the area." "I felt like by the time I was looking for a job I had a good handle on what the different districts were like because I had done so many of the little internships." "I learned a lot in the once-a-week internship things. It was good to sort of start slowly into teaching."

*Growth of musicianship (ensembles and applied lessons).* Graduates were very supportive of their musical growth as provided in applied lessons and ensembles. Many of them missed those musical experiences in the first few months of teaching: "What I wouldn't do to sing in Chorale again!" "I am finding myself really missing playing in a large ensemble." "I really learned everything I know about music from my studio teacher."

## Discussion

The most valuable aspects of the teacher education program cited by the graduates were the parts of the teacher education program that we in music education really have the least control over. Although we place and supervise student teachers, it is difficult to really maintain much control over that experience in many settings. In many music education programs, fieldwork is a primary component in the music education courses. The results of this study would suggest that graduates view this as important. However, fieldwork surfaced in both the most valuable and least valuable categories. The quality of this component makes a big difference in graduates' perceptions of its value.

Applied faculty and ensemble conductors are the most important role models for music education students. Thus, music teacher educators must work to foster relationships with applied faculty and ensemble conductors so that the entire department of music can share the dialogue regarding the music teacher education program.

### Least Valuable Aspects of the Teacher Preparation Program

*Teacher education courses.* All of the interviewees began their response to my prompt regarding the least valuable aspects of the program with discussion of the course work in the College of Education. Although some of them said that one or two of these

courses were exceptionally good courses, the opinion overall was that the 15 credits taken in the College of Education were not useful for preparation for the first year of teaching: "I'm sorry, but the classes in the College of Ed. were really a waste of time." "I enjoyed some of the College of Education classes, but do I use any of that stuff?" "You really need to do something about the College of Ed. classes. I hated taking graduate level courses as the only undergraduate in the class. And we can't even use those credits as graduate courses. What a rip-off."

*Early observations without context.* Although preservice fieldwork surfaced as one of the most valuable aspects of preparation, participants also discussed observations without context as a least valuable experience: "It seems like we did a lot of observing in the schools and I did not really know what I was supposed to be looking at." "I wish I could go back now and do all those observations we had to do in the methods classes. I think I was just going through the motions back then. Now I'd know what to look for."

*Some instrument methods courses.* Participants were concerned about the lack of consistency in the secondary instrument courses. Vocal general students commented that although they knew they needed some instrument methods for certification, those classes were not useful for their current position. Instrumental music students expressed concern that knowledge of secondary instruments appeared to be the content base most needed in their current jobs and yet some instrument methods courses did not provide the necessary content: "I need to know more about how to teach all the instruments. Just playing them is not enough." "I wish instrument methods courses had focused more on repair. I spend a lot of my time doing repair, and I don't really know what I'm doing." "Why are the BTU instrument classes taught by performance people? They don't really know what we need to know."

## Discussion

Some of the concerns expressed by the graduates about the College of Education are specific to the BTU curriculum configuration. As mentioned previously, music students were required to take graduate-level courses in educational psychology and teacher education. However, in talking with colleagues at other institutions in an MENC forum (Conway, 2001), I have heard similar concerns from students and faculty at other institutions regarding courses in teacher education. I recommend that music teacher educators take a more active role in communicating with teacher education faculty and sharing the dialogue regarding music teacher preparation across campus. The needs of preservice music teachers may be different from the needs of general teacher education students. However, general teacher education faculty cannot be expected to address these needs if they are not aware of them.

Preservice fieldwork is useful only if it is organized in a way that allows students to learn something specific from the context. Just

going out to a school to look was not perceived by graduates as a useful teacher-education experience. Of course, any methods course can be valuable or not depending on the teacher. In the case of preservice fieldwork, the variables of the classroom, school, and teacher visited play a part as well.

The teaching of secondary instruments is a common concern in the instrumental music education field. As teachers who are still in "survival" mode, it is logical that first-year graduates would focus concerns about the program on a particular knowledge base. However, this was an area of this specific study that led to some changes in the BTU program. Data from this evaluation gave me some evidence to share with applied faculty and administrators regarding the need for more music education monitoring of the secondary instrument courses.

### **Suggestions for Improvement Provided by Beginning Teachers**

*Requirements to take methods courses out of "track."* Four of the 14 teachers were in teaching positions which included teaching at least one course outside their track (i.e. band, orchestra, vocal, or general music). All of these teachers commented that more course work outside of the track should be required. "I wish BTU had made me sing in an ensemble"; "Everyone should be required to take some course in teaching general music." Several of the teachers who were teaching all within their track expressed interest in requirements outside the track as well: "I use a lot of the materials I got in my general music methods course with my ensemble. Everyone should be required to take some things in general music."

*Combining instrument methods courses.* Graduates suggested that there was some repetition in instrument methods courses that might be avoided if classes were combined: "Why don't we just have brass methods all in one semester? It seems crazy to talk about each brass instrument separately when they have so much in common." "I really like the way we have a string methods course where we study all the strings. Why don't we do this for woodwinds and brass? Understanding the connections between all the instruments really seems to get lost."

*Extended student teaching experience.* Several graduates expressed concern that student teaching was such a short experience in the School of Music as compared to friends that these graduates had who were in other teacher education programs in the university: "I just don't get why we student teach for only a semester. It seems like the longer you are out in the field, the more you would learn." "I would not want the program to be longer than 5 years, but if we are going to have to do 5 years anyway, why not get us out to see the real world for longer?" "I student-taught in the spring and was totally lost during marching band season this year. I just had never done it." "I never had time in student teaching to learn all the administrative stuff of the job. I think if I had been in one site longer, I [might] have asked more questions about all the administrative stuff."

## Discussion

I think most teacher educators agree that requiring students to take course work in broad areas of music education is desirable. However, the implementation of this idea within university, music department, NASM, and "general faculty concern" requirements is challenging. Another challenge is in communicating the goals of instrument methods courses to applied faculty. At BTU, it was primarily doctoral candidates in performance who taught the secondary instruments. These instructors rarely had public-school experience and were not usually able to make connections for students between the instruments. However, faculty loads and available graduate scholarships dictate who will teach these courses. This is a common problem in larger schools of music. Music teacher educators must work to foster communication regarding this issue.

There was support in my data for consideration of a longer student-teaching experience. This issue was discussed by administrators and mentors as well and will be addressed in that section of the Results.

### Information Provided by Administrators, Mentors, and the Researcher

*Support for a "detracked" preservice program.* Several of the administrators made comments about the need for a comprehensively prepared music educator who would have some experience in all areas of our state's teacher certification (music K-12). These comments were most common from administrators in smaller schools who needed a music teacher to perform diverse duties in the school (e.g., band and choral instruction at the high school). Typical comments included: "We really need a band director who can also build the choral program. In a small school like this we will never have enough students to have a separate choral teacher, so if we are going to have something, the band director really has to do it. I know from talking to our director that most band directors don't want this responsibility, but the state certification is for K-12 music."

Comments on this issue were also found in the mentor interviews: "He really seemed to struggle with the choral and general music classes. I guess BTU could have prepared him better for that," said one mentor who was not a music teacher. Another mentor, who was a music teacher, stated, "I know when I came out of school a million years ago I was not ready for teaching general music or choral. But, the reality here is that many of the jobs, particularly the ones for new teachers will include a variety of teaching areas. I think universities should really work to prepare teachers for many things."

My own observation log made note of the number of beginning teachers in the present study who were struggling with teaching outside of the content area in which they specialized. I also believe that the teachers working in secondary ensembles would be better prepared for class activities other than conducting and rehearsing if they

had a stronger background in techniques for general music instruction.

*Need for extended student teaching.* All the building administrators interviewed were familiar with the general teacher education program at BTU. When asked about improvements to the music teacher education program, all of these principals made comments regarding the shorter student teaching experience in the music program compared to the year-long internship model found in the rest of the university: "I guess it does not really make sense to me why music would be in the field for a shorter amount of time than the other content areas. Why do you do that?" "If you want to improve your program, get those teachers out for a full year. I really see a difference with the general classroom teachers who have that experience." "It seems that by only student teaching for a semester the music teacher must miss some important aspects of the teaching year, for example marching band in the fall or festival in the spring."

When asked about general improvements for the BTU teacher preparation program many of the non-music-teacher mentors suggested that an extended student teaching experience might better prepare the music teachers: "It seems that you really learn on the job in this business. A longer student teaching allows you to learn more." However, there seemed to be a discrepancy between the music mentors and the nonmusic mentors with regard to this issue. The non-music mentors were usually familiar with the general teacher education programs' year-long internship and thus, they suggested this as an improvement. Some of the music mentors suggested that a longer field experience might be valuable, particularly if the preservice teacher were placed in two settings (e.g., elementary for a semester and secondary for a semester). However, many of them were unfamiliar with the concept of extended field experience and thus, without my inquiring about it in the interview, it did not surface.

My perception as a teacher educator on this issue was that it is something that should be explored. I believe that many of the issues that I observed beginning teachers struggling with may have been worked out before the first year if they had been in a field placement for a longer period of time.

*Better preparation for administrative duties.* Many of the administrators and mentors suggested that preservice teachers needed better preparation for the administrative part of the position. Comments included: "I wish there were some way for these new teachers to know more about budgets and dealing with parents," and "He is a good teacher, but he really struggled with the administrative piece of the job." I noted administrative struggles in my research log as well. However, my perceptions were different from the administrators and mentors in that I was feeling that the school districts themselves needed to provide more for the beginning teachers with regards to the administrative piece of the job. I am not sure that a course in "administration" would really prepare teachers for the context-specific challenges of a music education position.

*Better preparation for working with beginners.* Although this issue did not surface in the administrator interviews, it was apparent in the music mentor interviews and throughout my researcher's log. Several mentors commented that the beginning teachers struggled with the younger students: "He seemed to be real comfortable with the marching band and with the conducting at the high school. But, he seemed a lot less sure of himself when working with the beginners." "These kids come out of school knowing a lot about the secondary stuff. The reality is, most of their day is spent with beginners and I'm not sure they know as much here." These comments came from the mentors of the band and orchestra teachers. There were no discussions of this issue with regards to the general music teachers.

In my observation field notes and communication notes, the code of "working with beginners" was the most often cited code in the data. When I visited these first-year teachers in their teaching setting it seemed to me that they were struggling with how to work with the beginning students. The exception to this was the general music teachers who seemed to experience almost the opposite. Several of the general music teachers said that they found it most difficult to plan lessons for their upper elementary students (fourth- and fifth-graders).

## Discussion

The information provided in this study by administrators, mentors, and my personal log highlights some of the most pressing issues in music teacher education. Regarding "detracking," I know that many other states have a K-12 music certification. Preparing teachers for a broad spectrum of positions in music is a daunting task. All types of participants commented that a system of teacher education which does not "track" students would be valuable.

There are relatively few 5-year undergraduate programs in music education in the country and even fewer programs which follow a year-long internship model. However, I believe this model is something the music teacher education community should explore. Our colleagues in general teacher education have been documenting positive results from this model for several years now (Griffin, 1999) and especially when we consider our broad certification area, extended field work may offer some solutions. I believe the reason that this issue surfaced considerably in my data is that BTU already follows this model in other content areas. All participants were familiar with the year-long internship model and thus, were curious about its use in music. I do not think that this issue would surface in a replication of my work in a setting without that previous association with the year-long internship concept.

The result which suggests that beginning teachers need more preparation for the administrative challenges of the position is not surprising. However, the issue is who should be responsible for providing this preparation. As I looked across my data sets at the variety

of administrative challenges faced by the 14 teachers, I do not believe that an undergraduate course which is "out of a context" can address what teachers need to know. Music teacher educators need to inform district administrators of this need so that school districts can provide context specific administrative training as part of induction.

The result that suggests that ensemble teachers need better preparation for working with beginners highlights another issue in music teacher education. Most of our students come to us as freshmen wanting to "become" their high school band, orchestra, or choral teacher. Many students spend their time in methods courses thinking "Well, that has to do with beginners, and I won't be doing that." Many of the beginning teachers end up working in positions where they teach beginners. More accountability for working with beginners may be necessary to insist that students develop these skills. The teachers themselves had suggestions regarding changes in the configuration for instrument methods. The solution to this problem may be tied in with those suggestions.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The music education faculty at BTU was working throughout the 1998–2001 period to revise the undergraduate curriculum that was evaluated in this project. The data from this program evaluation provided support for many of the changes being implemented in the program. The primary change being made at the University was that beginning in fall 2001, the school offered a bachelor of music in music education with no "tracked" specialization. All students are now required to take a general music methods course in addition to instrumental or choral methods. The school has considerably revised the College of Education sequence so that students will no longer take graduate-level course work in the College of Education. In addition, as of fall 2001, the instrument methods courses are coordinated by a music education faculty member.

In my new position at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, I have found that the results of this study from another Big Ten University provide relevant data for the current revision of the undergraduate curriculum here in Ann Arbor. Concerns regarding tracked specialization, extended student teaching fieldwork, 5-year programs, organization of secondary instrument courses, development of appropriate preservice fieldwork, communication with conductors and applied faculty, preparation for the administrative duties of a music education position, and preparation for working with beginners are timely here as well.

Some of the comments made by the beginning music teachers in this study and the generalizations drawn through my interpretations of the variety of data sets will provide other teacher educators with a forum for discussion of these important issues in teacher education. The qualitative evaluation model provided by Patton (1990) and used in this study has provided BTU with valuable information

regarding their program and it is hoped that this report, although not generalizable to other settings, may be useful for others who are interested in what graduates have to say about music teacher preparation.

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