

Enduring the Demands of Itinerant Music Teaching

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the personal experiences and daily activities of itinerant music teachers at two or more school placements.



Method

Participants

- Three general music teachers split between two schools
 1. Jennifer – first-year teacher
 2. Molly – second-year teacher
 3. Samantha – second-year teacher

Data Collection

- 5 consecutive days of journaling with focused prompts
- Videoconference 15-minute, semi-structured interview
- In-person 45-minute, semi-structured interview

Themes

- Physical Space and Job Considerations
- Expectations and Relationships
- Teaching Identity Development
- Inward Reflection

Review of Literature

- Benson (2001) stated that itinerant teachers might have difficulty developing a teaching identity due to the constant need for organization and experienced nomadic isolation.
- It is not uncommon for itinerant teachers to have classes in hallways, spare closets, or other common areas that leave them feeling isolated from their colleagues (Meador, 2015; Olmstead, 2005).
- Deaudelin, Dussault, Royer, & Louise (1999) stated that teachers who were not provided with opportunities to engage in dialogue with other music teachers experienced professional isolation.

Conclusions

Isolation

- All three participants described their positions as “supplemental” to their full-time colleague.
- “I’m the last person to know anything.”* – Molly
- Teachers were either physically or emotionally isolated from their peers due to a lack of communication.

Creativity and Flexibility

- All three participants initially struggled with answering questions related to teaching identity, but all eventually settled on needing flexible expectations and the ability to differ content delivery methods between school locations.
- All of the teachers noted being better on-the-spot thinkers and more efficiently organized due to the nature of their positions.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Additional research should be conducted that examines the roles of itinerant general music and instrumental music teachers in elementary and secondary positions.
- Further research should explore job stressors, job satisfaction, and burnout rates for itinerant music teachers.
- Research should also explore what itinerant positions look like nationwide to determine if any aspects of my participants’ experiences, or my own, suggest shared experiences across these types of positions.

