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Music Education and the Mobile Student: A Qualitative Interview Case Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore experiences of two music educators working with mobile students. Mobile students, who may frequently transfer schools due to unstable home conditions or be newly arrived in a community, encounter unique challenges, including class placement, language barriers, and social integration. These challenges impact not only the mobile students, but also the students who are already established in the school community. This study addresses a gap in music education research by focusing on music teacher experiences with mobile student populations. I conducted interviews with two music educators from a large urban school district to gather their perspectives on teaching mobile learners. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes within the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Early findings indicate themes of Active Engagement, Supportive Classrooms and Learning Communities. Findings from this study could inform teaching strategies to foster engagement and contribute to meaningful musical learning experiences in an inclusive environment, benefitting both mobile and established students.

Research Questions

- Why is music education important for mobile students?
- What can music educators offer mobile students?

Applications to Music Education

The findings of this study could:

- Inform teaching strategies to
 - foster engagement
 - contribute to meaningful musical learning experiences in an inclusive environment
 - benefit mobile and non-mobile music students
- Provide information to school administrators and guidance counselors to support access to music programs
- Highlight the importance of music education for mobile students as part of their general education experience