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Music Educators' Experiences Integrating Jazz Studies Into the Music Curriculum

Gail Johnson
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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Gail Denise Johnson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Music Educators' Experiences Integrating Jazz Studies
Into the Music Curriculum

by

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MBA, Southern New Hampshire University–Berklee College of Music 2020

BA, Berklee College of Music 1979

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
Education Leadership & Administration

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

The inclusion of jazz studies in the secondary school curriculum varies widely across the United States. School district personnel could miss opportunities to instruct students about cultural diversity, self-expression, and collaboration. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences of music educators' challenges integrating jazz studies into their curriculum. Elements from constructivism and culturally relevant pedagogy formed the conceptual framework. The research questions focused on how music educators described their challenges and what skills and strategies were needed to integrate jazz studies into the curriculum. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 12 participants across three urban school districts in the Western United States. A combination of a priori and open coding was used to support thematic analysis. Emergent themes included educators' concerns, the role of music, student support, and the quality of education for urban students. Participants emphasized the value of cultural diversity and its relevance to students, parents, administrators, and community involvement. Integrating jazz into the curriculum can be made possible by educators and school administrators supporting an appropriate curriculum design. Educators need to follow up and supervise the plans for a quality jazz program; music programs should be evaluated before, during, and after the inclusion of jazz in the offerings. Jazz is a significant part of U. S. cultural heritage that evolved through various social landscapes, emphasizing improvisation, a hallmark of creativity and imaginative thinking. Implications for positive social change include addressing a gap in practice, potentially advancing music, and improving student learning.

Music Educators' Experiences of Challenges Integrating Jazz Studies

Into the Music Curriculum

by

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation to the numerous music teachers who are working tirelessly to integrate jazz studies into their music classrooms. Your dedication and passion for music education have inspired countless students to explore jazz music's rich and diverse world. Despite the challenges and obstacles, you continue to innovate and adapt your teaching methods to promote cultural diversity and expand students' musical knowledge and skills. Your efforts are crucial in ensuring that jazz music remains a vibrant and vital part of our American cultural heritage. This dissertation honors your commitment to jazz education and serves as a testament to your profound impact on your students' lives. Thank you for your unwavering dedication, and may your work continue to inspire future generations of jazz musicians and music lovers. I would like to dedicate my doctorate in music education to my family and friends, who have been my unwavering source of support throughout this journey. Your unconditional love and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration and motivation. Your belief in me has pushed me to pursue this dream and achieve this significant milestone in my life. I am grateful for your love and encouragement, and I will always treasure this achievement as a symbol of our collective determination and perseverance. This study is also dedicated to my children Aaron and Tamina, and my sisters DeNichole, Donna, Genie, Chrissy, Wanda, Chrissy, Venus & Bernita, who have inspired me in your way, to follow my dreams and reach for the stars. My nieces and nephews who look up to me, I hope I have encouraged you to walk in your path and always do your best. I love you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Jazz music is a significant genre in American music and has significantly contributed to American culture. By omitting the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum, school personnel limit students' opportunities to gain experience about and appreciation of this genre of music (Americans for the Arts, 2019). Moreover, jazz studies offer a unique and diverse perspective on history, culture, and society. Jazz music emerged from enslaved African people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It has roots in African musical traditions, African–American spirituals, work songs, and the blending of various musical styles such as ragtime, blues, and European harmonies. Jazz music began evolving in cities like New Orleans, Louisiana, where African–American musicians gathered and performed in clubs, dance halls, and streets. It gained popularity and spread nationwide, becoming an integral part of African–American culture and later influencing and shaping the broader American musical landscape.

Prominent African–American musicians Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis, and many others played significant roles in the development and popularization of jazz (Great Schools, 2016). Jazz studies can help students understand the history of race relations in America and how music has affected social change. In urban school districts in the Western United States, the problem is that the secondary school curriculum (Grades 9–12) lacks integration of jazz studies. By not incorporating jazz studies, school district personnel are missing an opportunity to instruct students about cultural diversity and the importance of promoting creativity, self–expression, and collaboration with others (Koskela et al., 2021).

In addition, jazz studies can also be a valuable educational tool for students. Jazz music is complex, and studying it requires students to develop critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and creativity. Through jazz studies, students can learn to appreciate different art forms (Goldberg, 2021), and help to foster their ability to work collaboratively with others. By integrating jazz studies into the curriculum, students may better understand American culture, history, and society and develop valuable skills that will serve them well in their future academic and professional endeavors (Take Note, 2021).

Background

The most crucial conceptual issue investigated in this study is the challenge music educators face when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum (McPhail, 2022). The study employed a basic qualitative research design. It sought to explore music educators' experiences who have attempted to integrate Jazz in their teachings and identify the specific challenges they encountered through collecting and analyzing qualitative data (Janakiraman et al., 2019). The participant group to which the study applies is music educators who have had experience teaching music, including jazz studies, in their curriculum. The study sought to capture various experiences from music educators with varying experience levels, backgrounds, and teaching contexts to comprehensively understand the challenges of integrating Jazz in the music curriculum.

This qualitative dissertation identified a gap in practice and the need to integrate jazz studies into the current music curriculum. Because students in urban districts lack exposure to jazz music, a genre with a rich history and cultural significance as part of

their music education curriculum, jazz studies can help students understand American history and how social change may be accomplished through music. The United States educational system is the larger population or educational setting where this problem might be situated. Within this system, there is a growing recognition of the importance of music education and its benefits to students' cognitive and social development (Cohen, 2021). Educators have recognized Jazz as a uniquely American art form, and its inclusion in music education programs can contribute to a well-rounded education for students. Furthermore, one can trace the issue back to equity and educational access. All students, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, should have access to a well-rounded, quality music education (de Bruin, 2022).

The 2018 "Jazz in the Schools" study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts provided supporting data for interested people. This study emphasized the importance of Jazz in public schools. However, only 28 % of high school students in the United States have access to music education (National Arts Education Status Report, 2019; Regier, 2022). Furthermore, schools in urban areas are less likely to offer music education programs (Covalle, 2022) than those in suburban or rural areas, as published by the first-ever national study on student access to music education (de Bruin, 2022). This lack of access to music education disproportionately affects students from low-income families, who may not have the resources to pursue music outside of school (Give A Note Foundation, 2024).

When music educators, school administrators, and curriculum coordinators were interviewed, they expressed concern that jazz studies needed integration in the curriculum

due to its importance in American music history (Abeles et al., 2021). The personal communications with educators pointed out that the lack of integration of jazz studies was partly due to a lack of funding and resources for music education programs (Beveridge, 2022).

Problem Statement

The inclusion of jazz studies in the secondary school curriculum varies widely across the United States. The absence of jazz studies is a problem because it deprives students of a well-rounded education that includes exposure to diverse musical genres (May et al., 2020). If jazz studies are not included, school district personnel miss an opportunity to instruct students about cultural diversity and the importance of promoting creativity, self-expression, and collaboration with others. Jazz music is a uniquely American art form contributing significantly to the country's cultural heritage. It has influenced other musical styles, including rock, pop, country, gospel, soul, and hip-hop, making it a crucial component of music education.

According to the assessment conducted at an urban school district in the Western United States, educators and students reported a lack of exposure to jazz music's rich tradition in the school's music curriculum (Mark & Madura, 2021). Many students expressed interest in learning about and playing Jazz music. Additionally, observations and informal interviews with music educators revealed that they require more training in incorporating jazz studies into their teaching (Music Teacher, personal communication, 2023).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences of music educators' challenges integrating jazz studies into their curriculum. The study sought to understand their experiences in this process and the skills and strategies necessary to integrate jazz studies in the curriculum effectively. The urban school environment offered unique experiences that influenced students and teachers. The needs and issues that impacted musical learning were explored, which may inform future school practices, policies, and curriculum integration. Jazz studies' diverse musical vocabulary, ear training, improvisation, and cultural exchange may promote creativity, self-expression, academic and social well-being. This research study aimed to gain insights from educators who faced challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum of urban schools.

Research Questions

RQ1. How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

RQ2. What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

Conceptual Framework

Elements from constructivism and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) formed the conceptual framework for understanding the students' learning process, support for an appropriate curriculum design, teacher expertise, and exploring jazz music's educational and social benefits in urban schools. The conceptual framework presented in this study

included the constructivist approach, which an instructor may apply to various issues, including cultural relevance, teaching expertise, curriculum evaluation, student involvement, and resource accessibility (Saleem et al., 2021; Siebert, 2019). Educators can apply constructivism principles when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum to guide instructional strategies and learning environments. This approach prioritizes active, meaningful, and learner-centered experiences, offering a more specific and comprehensive framework for exploring the challenges and potential solutions related to the integration of studies about music education.

Additionally, the conceptual framework consists of CRP, which contributes to students' academic achievement. Cultural relevance in jazz studies involves incorporating different perspectives and cultures into the music curriculum, particularly emphasizing Jazz as a significant American art form. The involvement of educators attuned to the student population's backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles is crucial for diversified, equitable experience, whereby student see themselves reflected in, and part of the learning process.

Curriculum assessment is foundational to the conceptual framework. The evaluation of the music curriculum that educators are presently using is necessary to ensure student interest, motivation, and alignment with the integration of jazz studies in the curriculum.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study is a basic qualitative study design where rich data were collected from semistructured interviews with secondary educators in urban schools.

Twelve educators from three school districts served as participants. In qualitative research, semistructured interviews are designed to compare the responses of the participants. Interview questions related to the research questions were presented with additional probing questions to gain further insight into the phenomena (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Definitions

These terms are associated with jazz studies to develop a deeper understanding of jazz history, theory, performance, and appreciation for implementation into the curriculum.

Curriculum design: The process of designing and organizing a structured educational program that outlines the content, learning objectives, instructional methods, and assessment strategies for jazz studies (Isbell, 2022).

The genre of jazz history: The exploration and examination of the evolution, styles, influential artists, and significant eras of jazz music, including the study of critical recordings, compositions, and historical events (National Association for Music Education, n.d.).

Improvisation: The art of creating spontaneous and expressive musical ideas to emphasize melodies, solos, and accompaniments within the context of jazz music (Bernhard, 2014.).

Jazz studies: The academic study of jazz music, including its history, theory, performance techniques, improvisation, and culture (National Association for Music Education, n.d.).

Standards-based education: A curriculum approach that aligns with specific educational standards or guidelines, ensuring students achieve specific learning outcomes in jazz studies (McCarthy, 2020).

Urban district: An urban public school district that offers K–12 instruction and learning outcomes to pupils who attend public schools in densely populated regions that frequently have higher rates of community poverty, a high teacher turnover rate, and constrained financial resources (Beveridge, 2022; Bond, 2017).

Assumptions

Assumptions influence research design, the collection process and analysis, and the interpretation of the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). This study centered on participants who are knowledgeable of jazz studies. During this process, it was assumed that the information offered and analyzed was correct and trustworthy. To confirm that all the information given was transparent and truly representative of their experiences, the participants were asked to answer the questions willingly and honestly.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope included music educators for Grade 9–12 and their experiences related to challenges in integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. The study included information from 12 educators in three urban districts. The results of this study may not be of interest to rural districts, to districts where no music program exists, or to districts where music programs focus on other genres of music. It is important to note that the educational benefits of jazz studies may benefit urban and other school districts.

Delimitations assist in defining the boundaries of a research project. This study was limited to the jazz studies of educators in urban school districts in the Western United States. The participants were educators who have attempted to integrate Jazz into their teaching and identified the specific challenges they encountered.

Limitations

Limitations are aspects of the study that the researcher cannot control. Thomas (2017) stated that researchers must "be up-front and critically aware of any limitations or weaknesses" (p. 62) in any research project. Due to the virtual setting of the semistructured interviews, the results of this study were small-scale and limited to three urban school districts. Other weaknesses taken into account in this study included sample size and my role as the researcher.

Twelve participants from three school districts were interviewed. This sample size for my study was small, but was sufficient to analyze jazz educators' experiences, of the impact of jazz studies on student learning outcomes, graduation rates, and college entrances (Hancock Institute of Jazz, n.d.). Additionally, having representation from multiple schools provided a broader range of experiences and perspectives. Educators who are musicians first have subjective experiences that they can share about their journey as budding musicians, performers, and eventually teachers.

Researcher bias was a potential limitation of this study. Previous experiences involved collaborations with jazz musicians and educators over the years. I have not worked in a school district with specific jazz programs; however, my past experiences as a musician and educator might have had an influence my findings. For this reason,

confirmability was critical to maintain objectivity. The findings were interpreted and based solely on the responses of the participants, and not on personal biases.

Another factor that could have potentially impacted the results of this study was the gender of the educators and their overall experiences in music and as educators. Daily journaling was a useful tool, as a reminder of personal thoughts about the study (Lumsden, 2019). Member checking was also implemented, to enable participants the opportunity to confirm the results of the study (Birt et al., 2016).

Significance

The absence of jazz studies in urban school districts in the Western United States is important because it deprives students of exposure to an exclusively American art form, limits their access to cultural education, and impedes the development of their critical thinking skills (Kothari, 2021). Jazz has influenced several musical genres, and the history of American music would not be complete without mention of Jazz. Students may learn about Jazz's philosophy, performing methods, and history by including jazz studies in the curriculum. This history may help them understand the significance of Jazz and its influence on American culture.

Studying this problem can be helpful to urban school district (Grades 9–12) in the Western United States, as well as other educational settings (Holt & Maguire, 2022). First, it can help school administrators and curriculum coordinators identify ways to incorporate jazz studies into the existing music education curriculum. They can work to secure funding for music education programs, including hiring qualified music educators, purchasing instruments and materials, and maintaining facilities. Second, studying this

problem may help educators develop strategies to engage students in learning about Jazz through interactive teaching methods, guest lectures, and performances. Third, integrating jazz studies into the curriculum can enhance students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives. Exposure to jazz music can also help students develop their artistic abilities and encourage them to pursue music careers (NAMM Foundation, 2023). Fourth, integrating jazz studies can contribute to a well-rounded education, providing students with the tools to become culturally literate and informed global citizens.

Summary

In summary, the problem addressed in this basic qualitative dissertation was integrating jazz studies into the secondary music curriculum in the Western United States. I intended to explore music educators' experiences of the challenges they faced in integrating jazz studies in the curriculum. The conceptual framework for this study was rooted in elements from constructivism and from CRP (McKoy & Lind, 2022), which emphasizes the value of experiential learning, practical experiences, and culturally relevant education.

Moving forward, the remaining sections of this qualitative dissertation detail my review of related literature, the research methodology and procedures, including the sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Chapter 2 details the review of literature, including research related to the conceptual framework, to the populations studied via which methodological approaches, and helps illustrate how my study may address the gap in practice. Chapter 3 describes the sample population and

recruitment process, followed by a section on data collection methods, including semistructured interviews and document analysis. I also detail the data analysis procedures involving coding and thematic analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem in the local urban school district is that music educators are not integrating jazz studies into an urban school district (Grades 9–12) in the Western United States. This literature review presents the study's conceptual framework and a comprehensive overview of the current state of jazz education, a historical context (Kratus, 2019), and contemporary practices and research related to integrating jazz studies into school curricula. The literature review also explores the benefits of jazz education, including its influence on student learning (Evans, 2021) outcomes and social and emotional development (Rizzuto et al., 2022). Research in the Walden University Library and other scholarly resources using peer-reviewed journal articles from 2024 were used.

The relevance of this theme to the broader study is significant, as it highlights a critical gap in the music education offered to students in urban school districts. Jazz is a unique and culturally important genre of music that has played an essential role in American history and culture (The Editors at Jazz at Lincoln Center, 2023). However, despite its importance, jazz studies are not being integrated into the curriculum of many urban school districts, depriving students of the opportunity to experience and engage with this crucial musical form (VanTassel-Baska & Little, 2023). By reviewing the existing literature on jazz education in urban schools, this study aimed to identify best practices for integrating jazz studies into the curriculum and highlight the benefits of doing so. This research aimed to contribute to the broader goal of improving the quality

of music education offered to urban school districts, hoping to promote more significant equity and access to music education for all students (Shaw & Auletto, 2022).

Jazz music has been an integral part of American culture for over a century, with a rich history rooted in African–American communities. Despite its importance, music educators of jazz studies are not integrating Jazz into the curriculum of many urban school districts in the Western United States, according to *The Music Curriculum for All Students* (Mark & Madura, 2021). Researchers have found that this gap in music education offers significant educational and social advantages. Without exposure to this essential musical genre, students may miss learning about and engaging with it (Cohen, 2021).

Literature Search Strategy

A minimum of more than 50 peer–reviewed sources within the last 5 years were researched, in addition to framework references and seminal works as needed. Relevant public data, such as school district demographic data and student achievement data, are referenced to provide context and support for the need for popular music education and more diversity in K–12 education (Koskela et al., 2021).

A search was conducted for literature and materials illuminating the current state of jazz education, the benefits of incorporating jazz studies, and strategies into the core music curriculum (Knapp et al., 2022; National Endowment for the Arts, 2018), specifically in the Western United States. Additionally, the study examined the challenges and successful studies of schools that have integrated jazz studies into their core music curriculum. To conduct this literature review, peer–reviewed sources were

comprehensively searched from within the last five years, using academic databases, for instance, JSTOR, ProQuest, EBSCO, SAGE Journals, ERIC, Walden University Library, and Google Scholar. The search included keywords such as "jazz education," "K–12 music education," "core music curriculum," and "music integration" to support the problem, purpose, and research questions in this study.

The searches were restricted to Western American studies with additional references to data from global classrooms and curricula. To ensure relevance to the information I needed to prepare and report the findings for this study, other research studies and dissertations related to music educators and the integration of jazz curriculum provided support for this qualitative research.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in this study includes the constructivist approach, which an instructor may apply to various issues, including cultural relevance, teaching expertise, curriculum evaluation, student involvement, and resource accessibility (Saleem et al., 2021). Educators can apply constructivism principles when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum to guide instructional strategies and learning environments. This approach prioritizes active, meaningful, and learner-centered experiences, offering a more specific and comprehensive framework for exploring the challenges and potential solutions related to the integration of jazz studies.

Constructivism Theory

Constructivism is a learning theory that proposes that students actively create their knowledge and understanding of the world through their experiences, relationships,

and past knowledge. This approach stresses the learner's position as an active participant in the learning process instead of a passive receiver of knowledge. According to constructivism, learners construct mental models and conceptual frameworks by integrating added information with their current knowledge and beliefs. Saleem et al. (2021) supported the application of constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of active, experiential learning in the learner's knowledge construction. The constructivist theory can be justified by including jazz studies in the curriculum.

Constructivism promotes active participation and engagement in the learning process. Students can better understand the complexities of jazz music by actively interacting with it via hands-on activities such as playing instruments, improvising, and participating in ensemble performances. This active learning strategy may help students comprehend and appreciate jazz music more deeply. Prior knowledge and experiences are essential in the learning process, according to constructivism. Students may already be familiar with jazz music theory, classical music, or another genre. Educators may enable linkages and comparisons between Jazz and other musical forms by building on this knowledge, resulting in more meaningful learning results (Saleem et al., 2021).

Constructivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Jazz performed by musicians in bands and students collaborating to produce music improves their teamwork and communication abilities. Constructive comments from peers and educators may also assist students in improving their musical talents while creating a friendly learning atmosphere. The theory also emphasizes problem-solving and critical thinking abilities (Zajda, 2021). For example, jazz improvisation challenges students to

think creatively, make rapid judgments, and adapt to shifting musical circumstances (Phipps & Dilworth, 2021). Incorporating jazz studies into the curriculum can help to develop these higher-order thinking abilities, which are helpful in many aspects of life and learning.

Constructivism acknowledges that each learner has a unique manner of comprehending and processing information. Learning experiences are frequently more memorable and likely to be retained over time. Students are more likely to build lasting connections with jazz music via active involvement, personal significance, and social interactions, making it a significant and enduring element of their musical education.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Unlike Saleem et al., Ladson-Billings's theory on CRP contributes to students' academic achievement and aligns with the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) subject areas (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Ramsey, 2022; Saleem et al., 2021). Cultural relevance in jazz studies involves incorporating different perspectives and cultures into the music curriculum, particularly emphasizing Jazz as a significant American art form (Americans for the Arts, 2004). Responsive pedagogy in music education encourages educators to adjust their instructional approaches to cater to their students' cultural diversity and academic needs (Benatar, 2021). The involvement of educators attuned to the student population's backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles is necessary. Teacher knowledge is crucial in effectively integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. Price (2021) suggested that educators must have a solid

understanding of the subject and equip themselves with the necessary skills and strategies to incorporate jazz studies effectively.

Curriculum Assessment

Curriculum assessment involves evaluating the existing music curriculum to ensure its alignment with the integration of jazz studies. This assessment helps identify areas where adjustments or enhancements are needed to incorporate jazz studies successfully. Student interest is an essential aspect that impacts the success of integrating jazz studies. Educators should consider students' engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm toward jazz studies (Schiavio et al., 2020). By tapping into students' interests and passions, educators can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the integration efforts.

Access to resources is vital for supporting the integration of jazz studies into the music curriculum. Adequate funding, materials availability, and professional development opportunities ensure that educators have the necessary resources and support to teach jazz studies effectively. The framework relates to the study approach and research questions by providing a structure for exploring music educators' experiences of the challenges they face in integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum by highlighting the importance of active, experiential learning and CRP in the integration process (Ladson–Billings, 2021). Researchers use a basic qualitative approach to gain insights into music educators' experiences on this issue (Clauhs & Sanguinetti, 2022). They analyze these insights through the lens of the conceptual framework. The research

questions aimed to identify specific challenges related to each essential element of the framework and potential strategies to address these challenges.

The framework also guided the development of interview questions and provided a structure for analyzing the data collected. By directing the formulation of interview questions and providing a system for interpreting the data acquired, the framework connected to instrument development and data analysis (Morrison et al., 2023). The study used thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns in the data. The research helped to determine the specific challenges and potential strategies for integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum, which can inform future efforts to address this issue in local, urban school districts in the Western United States (Pollard, 2021).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

Music Education

The history of jazz education in schools can be traced back to the mid–20th century, with the creation of jazz programs at institutions such as the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Juilliard School in New York (Monson, 2008). However, the integration of jazz studies into public school curricula has been slow in implementing jazz studies programs in many urban school districts (Bond, 2017; Shaw, 2019; Tuncer–Boon, 2019).

Recent research has highlighted the benefits of jazz education for students in (Grades 9–12). One study suggested that students who participated in jazz programs had higher levels of engagement and motivation in school and increased social and emotional well–being (Hammel & Hourigan, 2022; McKoy & Lind, 2022). Another study found

that jazz education improved students' critical thinking skills (VanTassel–Baska & Little, 2023) and their understanding of cultural and historical contexts (Mellizo & Cabedo–Mas, 2022). To successfully integrate jazz studies into school curricula, it is essential to provide educators with the necessary training and resources (Bond, 2017; Tuncer–Boon, 2019). One effective strategy is incorporating Jazz into existing music programs rather than creating a separate curriculum (McKoy & Lind, 2022). This approach allows students to understand music genres better while introducing them to jazz.

According to the Arts Education Data Project, in July 2023, 3,609,698 pupils did not have access to music education at school. Furthermore, 2,095,538 students need access to arts instruction (dance, music, theatre, or visual arts). The National Arts Education Status Report Summary 2019 (NAMM Foundation, 2022) and other stakeholders may view the challenges of integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum as problematic (Morrison et al., 2023). Here are examples:

1. Music educators may feel that the need for more resources and support for jazz education in the music curriculum limits their ability to provide a well-rounded education to their students. They may also face challenges finding qualified educators to teach Jazz (Music Program Director, personal communication, 2023).
2. Jazz musicians may feel that the lack of exposure to Jazz in the music curriculum limits the potential audience for their music and may make it more difficult for them to find opportunities to perform and collaborate with other musicians (Jazz in America, n.d.).

3. Restricted access to Jazz in the music curriculum may limit music education's cultural and artistic diversity, which, in turn, could prevent jazz enthusiasts from discovering and developing an interest in this genre (Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, 2021).
4. Funding agencies that endorse, sponsor, and support students and music education may view the sparse presence of diversity and richness of music education programs as an insufficient quality of education provided to students and question whether they will lend their resources in the form of sponsored instruments and musical equipment (Endorsement et al., personal communication, 2023).
5. Parents and students interested in Jazz may view the lack of exposure to Jazz in the music curriculum as a problem because it limits their access to quality jazz education, which could affect their ability to pursue a music career or develop an appreciation for the genre. Some parents pointed out that jazz education could help students develop critical thinking skills and increase their appreciation for the arts (Parent, personal communication, 2022).

Critical Review

A critical review of the broader problem suggested the need to integrate jazz studies into the core music curriculum. Hamilton (2021) exemplified the need for more diversity in K–12 music education in the United States by focusing primarily on Western European classical music and neglecting other genres, including Jazz. This lack of diversity limits students' exposure to musical styles and perpetuates racial and cultural

biases in music education (Ho, 2021). Furthermore, a lack of diversity taught in music education could result in a lack of representation for minority students, who may not see themselves reflected in the music. A lack of interest in music education may result in a missed opportunity to engage students in learning (Koskela et al., 2021; Ladson–Billings, 1995).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, almost one in every five children in the United States (19%) lived in poverty in 2016 (NASSP, 2019). Music classes and groups of students do not all start at the same place. They come from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods. In their everyday lives, individuals closely interweave poverty, disability, racial unfairness, and trauma.

Public data are available on music education in schools, including information on the availability and integration of jazz studies into the core music curriculum (Legg, 2021). Here are examples of relevant public data:

- a) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the nation's report card, assesses student achievement in various subjects, including music. The most recent report from 2016 found that only 52% of eighth–grade students had access to music instruction in school, and only 36% reported having music instruction once a week or more. The report did not specifically mention jazz studies, but it provides a general overview of the availability of music education in schools (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).
- b) The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects data on various aspects of education, including music education. According to the most recent

report from 2016, 94% of elementary and 91% of secondary schools offered music education. However, the report needed information on integrating jazz studies into the core music curriculum (Allsup, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

- c) Jazz Education Network (JEN) is an organization dedicated to promoting jazz education at all levels. They conduct surveys and collect data on jazz education in schools. According to their 2020 survey, only 23% of respondents reported having a dedicated jazz program at their school, and 44% reported that they did not integrate Jazz into the core music curriculum. This data provides a more specific picture of the availability and integration of jazz studies in schools (Jazz and the New York School, 2020).

Critical Analysis

A critical analysis of the body of literature related to the problem of the need for integrating jazz studies into the core music curriculum provided a rich and varied picture of the challenges and opportunities facing music educators and students in this area. The 2020 status report from a survey of more than 1,000 jazz educators thoroughly assessed the current state of jazz education in the United States (Washburne, 2020; National Endowment for the Arts 2, 2003). Overall, there is a consensus that jazz education is important and deserves a place in the core music curriculum, as in Allsup's philosophy of music education, *Remixing the Classroom* (Allsup, 2016; Barrett, 2023).

However, there are challenges to achieving this goal, including limited resources, lack of teacher training and expertise, and the pressure to conform to standardized testing

and curriculum requirements. One common theme in the literature is that jazz education may provide students with essential skills and experiences that are unavailable through other forms of music education, as examined in a national profile of teacher experiences of teaching and learning in modern band programs in the United States (Knapp et al., 2022; Popa, 2020). For example, studies have shown that jazz students develop a greater appreciation for diversity, critical thinking skills, and creative problem-solving abilities. Additionally, jazz education can help students better understand the historical and cultural contexts in which jazz music emerged and continues to evolve through the effectiveness of a comprehensive teacher development program and the integration of popular music in urban schools (Abeles et al., 2021).

Challenges to Integration

Despite the benefits of jazz education, there are significant challenges to integrating it into the core music curriculum. One major issue is the lack of resources and teacher training. Many music educators feel unprepared to teach Jazz (Tucker, 2023), and there must be more qualified jazz educators in many schools and districts. Additionally, standardized testing and curriculum requirements often prioritize other areas of music education, leaving little time or resources for Jazz (Shaw & Bernard, 2023a). Another challenge is the need to balance tradition with innovation. Jazz is a dynamic and evolving art form, and there is tension between preserving its rich tradition and promoting new styles and approaches. Educators may worry that excessive emphasis on tradition may limit students' creative expression and innovation. In contrast, others believe that a deep

understanding of jazz history and tradition is essential for developing a solid foundation in the genre.

Many advantages of jazz education are emphasized while acknowledging the problems and barriers to accomplishing this aim in the literature relating to integrating jazz studies into the core music curriculum (Richardson, 2022a; Shaw, 2020). It will require a concerted effort by educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to provide the resources and support needed to ensure that all students have access to high-quality jazz education as part of their core music curriculum. Other frameworks could have been chosen to represent the literature review on integrating jazz studies into the curriculum of urban schools. Here are some examples:

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a framework that emphasizes examining power structures and social injustices and developing critical consciousness among learners. This framework could have been chosen to explore how integrating jazz studies may serve as a tool for promoting social awareness, cultural equity, and critical thinking. It would involve examining jazz music's social and political contexts, addressing issues of representation and cultural appropriation, and empowering students to critically analyze and challenge societal norms and inequities through their engagement with Jazz (Walsh et al., 2014). Dialogue is essential to the learning process in critical pedagogy. Conversations between educators and students occur in an environment that values the information and experiences each party brings to the table, promoting group problem-solving and collaboration. Critical pedagogy has impacted various educational situations,

especially where social justice and fairness are top priorities. Critical pedagogy seeks to build a more just and equitable society by encouraging critical thinking, conscientization, and action (Thomas, 2017).

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, associated with the work of Lev Vygotsky (Newman & Holzman, 2023), focuses on the role of social interaction and cultural tools in learning and development. Sociocultural theory has had a considerable influence on education, particularly in the areas of teaching methods and instructional design. Educators have incorporated Vygotsky's theories into various educational techniques to make learning more dynamic and interesting, including cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and project-based learning. The sociocultural theory has also influenced discussions on technology use in education, emphasizing the value of social interaction and teamwork in online learning settings.

The sociocultural theory emphasizes the zone of proximal development (ZPD), described as the gap between what a student can do independently and what they can achieve with the help of a more experienced person, such as a music instructor or a classmate. According to Vygotsky, learning and growth are most successful when students get direction and assistance inside their ZPD (Newman & Holzman, 2023).

I could have chosen this framework to explore how jazz education may foster collaborative learning, scaffolded instruction, and cultural mediation. It would examine how peer interactions, mentorship, and cultural artifacts like jazz recordings,

performances, and historical documents shape students' understanding and mastery of jazz concepts and skills (Cohen, 2021).

Arts Integration

Arts integration is an approach that seeks to connect the arts, including music, with other subject areas to enhance learning and engagement. Arts integration aims to improve learning and engagement and link the arts, especially music, with other academic disciplines, including language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. Combining the two, students can gain a deeper grasp of the arts and core topics, encouraging creativity and critical thinking in various academic fields. This framework was a viable selection to explore how integrating jazz studies may support interdisciplinary connections and enhance students' understanding of jazz studies (Goldberg, 2021).

By bridging the divide between many disciplines, arts integration encourages interdisciplinary learning. For instance, while studying a particular historical era, students could investigate the historical background of a song or a work of art. By adding artistic aspects to other subject areas, educators may inspire students to think critically and explore ideas in new ways. Individuals may retain and understand information about Jazz more thoroughly. Hands-on and interactive learning opportunities may also inspire students to take an active role in their education when they are encouraged to think creatively and explore ideas in novel ways.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that focuses on the intersections of race, power, and privilege. These factors shape social and educational inequality. This framework could have been used to explore how systemic racism and inequality in education impact the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum of urban schools (Valdes et al., 2002.). CRT is frequently used to criticize diversity and inclusion strategies that ignore more fundamental structural problems and power disparities. It urges substantial structural transformation as opposed to merely cosmetic changes. The theory acknowledges the significance of intersectionality, which studies how many social identities overlap to produce distinct experiences of privilege and oppression, even if it is not a concept that is exclusive to CRT.

This concept suggests that racial advances for marginalized groups are more likely to occur when they align with the interests of those in power. In other words, changes that challenge racism are more likely to happen when they benefit the dominant group. It is crucial to understand that CRT is a complicated and developing field of study that academics and activists are working to broaden its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications (Real Viramontes, 2021). It continues to be a topic of continuous scholarly and popular controversy because, like any theoretical framework, it is subject to various views and interpretations.

Summary and Conclusions

It is possible to enhance the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum, inform instructional practices, and contribute to the overall understanding of the benefits and

implications of jazz education in urban schools by exploring various educational areas.

The research on academic achievement suggested that students engaging in arts education, including jazz studies, improved academic performance, including enhanced cognitive skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities (Scherer & Regier, 2022).

Integrating jazz studies can positively influence academic achievement (Russell & Ciorba, 2022). Social and emotional development are positively supported through collaboration, communication, and self-expression (Froehlich, n.d.). Integrating jazz studies may foster students' sense of belonging, self-confidence, and teamwork and help promote equity and access to quality arts education. Schools can bridge the opportunity gap and ensure a more inclusive learning environment by offering jazz education opportunities to all students, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status (Fullan & Gallagher, 2020.).

The integration of jazz studies into the curriculum of an urban school has practical applications, including curriculum design. Schools can develop comprehensive and sequential jazz education curricula that aligns with national and state music education standards. The implementation of jazz studies includes designing age-appropriate instructional materials, lesson plans, and assessments that facilitate progressive learning in jazz studies. Offering professional development opportunities for music educators in jazz pedagogy and instructional strategies is crucial (Baker-Bell, 2020; Budhathoki, 2022). Workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programs can enhance educators' skills and confidence in delivering effective jazz education. Community partnerships enrich the jazz education experience for students and connect them to the broader jazz

community. Collaboration with local jazz organizations, professional musicians, and arts institutions can provide resources, mentorship, performance opportunities, and access to guest artists (Great Schools, 2016).

Furthermore, there are more areas for future research in the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum of urban schools:

- Long-term impact through longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of jazz education on students' academic, musical, and personal development, career pathways, and lifelong engagement with music (Bowen & Kisida, 2023).
- Research the effectiveness of strategies and approaches for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within jazz education to ensure the representation of diverse voices, cultures, and styles within jazz curriculum and instruction.
- Researchers explore innovative pedagogical approaches, instructional techniques, and assessment methods in jazz education by researching the most effective strategies for teaching improvisation, ensemble playing, and jazz theory to different age groups and skill levels (Baker-Bell, 2020; Budhathoki, 2022).
- Examine the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in equipping music educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate jazz studies into the curriculum and impact the examination of ongoing professional

development on educators' ability to deliver high-quality jazz education (Shahzad et al., 2022).

This investigation focused on the impact of integrating jazz studies on the overall school culture and climate. The inclusion of jazz education influences students' attitudes towards music, arts, and overall school experience, as explored through the experiences of educators who seek to integrate jazz studies into the curricula.

Semistructured interviews were conducted to capture the experiences and insights of educators experienced in jazz studies and those who seek to implement jazz curricula because of the benefits they have witnessed. The codes and themes expose the widest net of information, recommendations, and ideas on integrating jazz studies into the literature, to create a standard for professional development, mentorship, student engagement, and teacher confidence.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In Chapter 3, I present the research design and rationale of this basic qualitative study. My role as the researcher was a factor in relation to the participants requested for the semistructured interviews. The methodology included the number of participants, instrumentation, as well as the procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection and analysis. Issues of trustworthiness are also addressed. The relevance of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability is also shown as critical steps for this study. Transparency and ethical procedures with participants were also exercised and demonstrative for this basic qualitative study.

This research focused on data collected from educators within a musical educational setting from an urban school district. The geographic input supplied insights into the educators' distinct perspectives, making CRP a valuable theory to explore in this context (Ladson–Billings, 2021). Constructivism, where students actively create their knowledge and understanding of the world through their experiences, relationships, and past knowledge, was applied to the research to demonstrate the dynamics in a musical learning environment between educators and students (Saleem et al., 2021).

The research focused on educators' experiences using interviews with open-ended questions to allow the participants to provide in-depth details. I informed each participant of their rights under IRB. Educators who agreed to participate in the study, replied to consent form, 'I consent.' An interview protocol was also provided (Appendix). The educators' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in Grades 9–12 teaching, presented a picture of their journey and expressed the challenges of integrating jazz

studies into the curriculum. The responsibility of the researcher was critical in analyzing these experiences. The results provided recommendations for future implementation of jazz studies in the curriculum.

Research Design and Rationale

This basic qualitative study derived logically from the problem and research questions:

RQ1: How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

RQ2: What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

This research design addressed a gap in practice and was appropriate because the study aimed to explore music educators' experiences of their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum. This design was employed to investigate the issue in depth and to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences (Kruse, 2020). Specifically, this research design approach sought to understand the actual experiences of individuals and the interpretations they gave to those experiences. This qualitative study investigated how music educators perceived challenges while integrating jazz studies into the curriculum.

This design choice was justified because it suits the exploration of complex, real-world phenomena within a specific context. By focusing on urban school districts, the qualitative design allowed for an overarching examination of the challenges and opportunities unique to this setting. Semistructured interviews were used with a sample

of music educators from three urban school districts. I intended these interviews to elicit in-depth accounts of music educators' experiences, viewpoints, and difficulties integrating jazz studies. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to express their ideas, sentiments, and insights, enabling a thorough investigation of the subject. (Bares, 2020). The research results could guide educational policy, curriculum development, and teacher training initiatives to integrate jazz studies and advance more thorough music education for secondary students.

Alternative research designs, such as experimental or quasi-experimental designs, would be less effective in this study because they are more appropriate for investigating cause-and-effect relationships or testing hypotheses. These designs are often used in quantitative research, typically manipulating variables, and using statistical analysis. However, because this study aimed to explore music educators' perceptions and experiences, a basic qualitative research design was more appropriate for capturing the complexity and richness of the participants' perspectives (Reddan, 2022).

Role of the Researcher

I am a piano player, and I have been a music educator, band director, and theatre conductor for over 25 years and have authored curricula for music studies at various learning levels. These experiences in music have allowed me to develop the background to select research methods, collect data through semistructured interviews, and analyze the findings.

Keeping personal biases separate from research was critical in improving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, ensuring the findings'

trustworthiness, validity, and reliability (Stahl & King, 2020.). I informed my participants that they may already know me as a performer, but this study is separate from that role. Maintaining a reflective journal of subjective experiences and assumptions during data collection was a strategy that was implemented daily to enhance the credibility of the research (Lumsden, 2019).

My expertise and experience provided insight into developing recommendations for integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. Based on the results of the study, this research informs educators of effective teaching methods, curriculum design, and resource allocations for jazz education in the Western United States.

Methodology

The study was designed to address the research questions on how music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum, and what skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies. I received formal approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB 02-01-24-1099067) to conduct this basic qualitative study. After I received approval, 12 educators from three different urban schools in the Western United States agreed to participate in a study exploring educators' experiences while integrating jazz studies into the core curriculum. Their valuable insights helped pinpoint the challenges, skills, and strategies required to successfully integrate jazz studies.

Purposeful sampling was implemented to ensure that the participants have at least three years background in music education, and prior experience with jazz music. Educators from urban schools provided the perspective needed to address the specific

experiences and perceived challenges that are highlighted in the interview questions. The semistructured interviews allowed for broad answers on jazz music, musical experience, student engagement, and their viewpoints on resources and school policies. Each participant was free to offer their insight on the value of jazz studies in urban school districts.

Participant Selection

Qualitative data are not complete without gathering information about the context of the participants (Adu, 2016). Using purposeful sampling, I selected participants that were knowledgeable about jazz studies. Twelve participants from three school districts offered their perspectives, experiences, and challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum. The relevance of educators' demographic information and personal musical listening habits, as well as their expertise with musical instruments, was significant in this study for several reasons. The understanding of the participants demographic profile provided insights into their cultural influences and diverse perspectives that may have shaped their approach to music learning and teaching. Additionally, educators' personal musical preferences could have been a factor in their teaching style and choices of instructional materials, impacting the overall musical environment in the educational setting.

Moreover, educators' instrument expertise is crucial in evaluating their ability to effectively convey musical concepts and skills to students. A teacher with a strong background in a particular instrument may bring a specialized perspective to the

classroom, affecting the selection of repertoire and instructional methods, especially when considering jazz studies.

This study used participants in urban schools. I contacted music educators directly through emails, phone calls, professional networks, and referrals. I had access to all of the participants, and there were no restrictions or formal approvals needed in their ability to be a part of the study. Twenty-five music educators were asked to volunteer in the research. The list was narrowed to 13, then down to 12 due to scheduling issues. The criteria for the educators were previous music education teaching experience, with a least three years of jazz instruction. To ensure the participants met the criteria, I conducted an informal screening process, which included questions on their years of experiences, work history, and knowledge in jazz curriculum.

Recognizing and analyzing these aspects contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing music education practices. I used descriptive, focused coding to arrive at the findings to demonstrate the study's transferability (Adu, 2016).

Instrumentation

I served as the primary research instrument for this study, using the Interview Protocol (see Appendix), designed from a Walden University template. This basic qualitative study on the integration of jazz studies into the core music curriculum in (Grades 9–12) in urban schools required a well-planned data-collection process. To facilitate this process, Zoom, an online software application, provided a virtual setting for semistructured interviews. I used the interview protocol to structure the introduction,

questioning of the interviewee and closing comments, which were captured by the audio components of the software. I created the interview questions based on the research questions and the literature sources referenced in the study. The semistructured interviews of the music educators were used to gather the rich data, which would provide insight into the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum, including their experiences and approaches to teaching jazz. The interview protocol was used to share information about the purpose of the study, my role as researcher, and the assurance of confidentiality.

This data collection instrument was created to allow for participant flexibility in answering and recalling experiences. The semistructured interviews also allowed for probing questions to gain further insight into educators intended responses and order of events. The topics that were focused on during the interviews were the number of years of experience the participants had as music educators, and if they themselves were taught jazz studies or did, they learn jazz independently. This was important to assess their commitment and ability to teach jazz. The participants were also asked if they perceived music as a universal language and how important was it to include diverse cultures and genres in the classroom. It was important to understand the educator's perspective on the extent jazz studies should be integrated into the music curriculum and whether they thought music had a positive impact on student well-being. They were also questioned to answer on a scale of 1-5 (1 being low and 5 being high), how comfortable did they feel teaching jazz improvisation to students in an urban school, and probing questions on the

challenges faced when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum within that urban district.

The interviews provided rich data on the educators' knowledge and experiences in jazz studies. The data from the interviews were collected, transcribed, and coded. Coding is intended to capture the experiences, understanding, and perspectives of educators (Saldana, 2015). I identified patterns and emergent themes to provide a comprehensive perspective on the experiences of educators and their challenges integrating jazz studies (De Farias et al., 2020). Triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing the data from interviews and personal notes, reaching saturation in the research's internal validity, and the literature review on jazz studies in urban schools.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The criteria for selecting music educators as participants in this program included:

- **Qualifications:** Educators should have the qualifications and experience to teach jazz music.
- **Teaching experience:** Educators should have previous experience teaching jazz music.
- **Availability:** Educators should be available and willing to participate in the study or program.
- **Diversity:** It may be essential to select educators who represent a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.

Twelve educators from three different school districts were selected as volunteer participants. The justification for choosing music educators was based on the need for a

sufficient sample size to analyze the program's impact on student learning outcomes (Hancock Institute of Jazz, n.d.). Additionally, having representation from multiple districts provided a broader range of experiences and illuminating perspectives, enriching the program. To gain access to music educators as participants, the procedures included (NAfME, 2021):

- a) Discussions with local music schools and institutions that offer jazz music programs to identify potential educators for the study.
- b) Other potential interviewees were sought on social media, music forums, and other online channels.
- c) I contacted music educators directly through emails, phone calls, professional networks, and referrals, to explain the process, and ensure the educators' willingness to participate.
- d) Decided on a mutually agreeable time to meet for the interview and sent consent forms via email for the session.
- e) After the "I consent" reply in the email, the interview was scheduled, with a review of the subject and their willingness to give sincere responses.
- f) Allowed for follow-up questioning and additional time for interviews, if needed.

For the data collection I used the Zoom online app in a 30–45-minute session. The participants were prompted to answer critical questions as they related to the research questions:

RQ1. How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

RQ2. What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

Educators were made aware of their roles and responsibilities and given guidelines before the interview sessions began. Interviewing 12 educators took approximately 2 months to complete. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. All participating in the semistructured interviews received protection for their confidentiality and privacy upon providing consent. The interviews concluded with the opportunity to review, reflect, ask me questions, and amend answers by member checking (Candela, 2019).

Data Analysis Plan

The interviews were held via Zoom, an online audio-conferencing platform, backed by another recording device to ensure capture of the interview. During the semistructured interviews, participants responses were recorded, while notes were taken of their verbal responses. At the end of the interview, a transcription was made available, combined with personal notes before I began coding using NVivo coding software. NVivo helped me to create codes, themes, and patterns, based on the responses of the educators, and their experiences and potential challenges in jazz studies. The 1st cycle of coding was labeled with a broad stroke, or simple label. The 2nd cycle of code was more detailed, so that a clearer picture of themes was presented through phrases and concepts central to the study. Once all the codes were gathered, sorted, and compared, the results

were summarized. NVivo software is a powerful tool to integrate descriptions of the educators' responses, and creation of word clouds for qualitative data.

The patterns revealed through the emergent themes contributed to a deeper understanding of integrating jazz studies into the curriculum, which could potentially inform future decision-making in music education. Researchers from past studies discussed the challenges of music education, such as limited training, time constraints, culture of schools, or resistance to change (Ilari, 2020). I then sought to examine how my findings related to the literature, and how my research may impact social change. The codes, themes, and categories may be used to identify strategies and best practices on the impact of jazz education (Allsup, 2016; Barrett, 2023) on students' musical skills and the broader educational benefits and transferable skills developed through jazz education (Beveridge, 2022).

Trustworthiness

Dedication to transparency, rigor, and reflexivity can improve the accuracy and reliability of the findings of educators' experiences of integrating jazz studies, using rigorous research techniques, and abiding by accepted qualitative research principles (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). A more realistic portrayal of the educators' perspectives may have been achieved through a clear explanation of the research, deliberate sampling of participants with prior teaching experience in jazz, conducting semistructured interviews, and engaging in self-reflection of beliefs, personal biases, and experiences.

The data analysis was shared and reviewed with colleagues (as peer reviewer) experienced in qualitative research to assure objectivity and reliability. The data were

transparently and logically analyzed utilizing qualitative methods such as codes, categories, patterns, and themes. Participants' feedback on the accuracy of their interview responses presented opportunities for correction or unintentionally missing additional information. The research's internal validity shows data saturation alignment with the research questions and include notes on data collection. Moreover, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are external approaches that were exercised to corroborate the findings of this qualitative dissertation.

Demonstrating saturation requires extensive data gathering and analysis to the point where no new themes, patterns, or information emerges from the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). In the data analysis of qualitative research, saturation is an important criterion. Pertinent data were extracted from the chosen sources and coded along with the themes, concepts, and patterns found in the literature. This process helped organize and analyze the data. By comparing data with sources that have already undergone analysis, researchers can use iterative analysis to identify emerging trends. When saturation was attained, emerging themes were validated. An Excel document to develop a literature review matrix to stay organized and demonstrate rigor in the analysis was implemented. The abundance of sources, classifications, and data collection processes improved the data's reliability and trustworthiness.

Credibility

Qualitative research presents two crucial components of research and analysis. They are data analysis and discrepant cases (Madondo, 2021). While data analysis systematically inspects, transforms, and interprets data to uncover meaningful patterns,

insights, and conclusions, discrepant cases are data points or instances that deviate significantly from the overall patterns or themes identified in the data analysis. These cases are outliers compared to most data and did not necessarily apply to this study. Possible discrepant cases are worth mentioning because they could significantly challenge the presented themes or constructivist and CRP theories. Credibility was achieved through sources to corroborate findings, confirm information with participants, reflective journaling, and detailed descriptions of the data.

Transferability

Transferability was achieved by detailing rich descriptions of the collected data provided by the semistructured interviews. Twelve participants from three school districts offered an ample supply of data on the experiences and commonalities of the educators. Their musical background, geographical area, urban school district, and knowledge of music, particularly Jazz, provided transferrable results for the participants. Thick descriptions to demonstrate the findings from the interviews and evidence in the literature demonstrated the transferability of the study (Burkholder et al., 2019).

Dependability

A key element in qualitative research is dependability. It refers to the consistency and trustworthiness of the data collected. Dependability was first established in the data collection, using clear notes and audio transcriptions. A clear account of the collection process and all steps taken to ensure dependability were implemented. Proper techniques and procedures optimized triangulation (Leila, 2018). Triangulation was achieved by

cross-referencing the data from interviews and notes, reducing the possibility of errors and personal biases.

Reviews of the transcripts' accuracy are critical. The participants were able to confirm that their responses were a correct representation of their viewpoints and able to edit in case something was misconstrued in the transcript. Saturation was reached by using the literature from the past 5 years on the experiences of educators in jazz studies.

Confirmability

Confirmability was established by the degree to which the data supported the findings. The data revealed and defined the experiences of the participants. It was essential to keep an open mind and not allow personal biases to interpret what was offered in the findings. Creating a "phenomenological study" (Burkholder et al., 2019, p. 256) by not reading into the data but letting the data speak for itself was critical in avoiding issues of researcher bias.

Confirmability demonstrates that the study was grounded and objective. Researcher reflexivity was critical as well (Lumsden, 2019). By continuously reflecting on the participants' experiences and insights during the research process, the interviewees' intended expressions were disclosed.

Ethical Procedures

It was important to exercise ethical procedures during selection and communication with participants. Ethical guidelines and the conscious decision to be mindful of the rights of the participants are the bedrock of a quality researcher (Butin, 2009). Participants were free to engage in the interviews and make decisions about

disclosing their personal information. The ability to withdraw from the process was open throughout the interviews. During the process, cultural sensitivity was exercised, as well as continuous reflexivity.

A clear and transparent basic qualitative study was conducted, complete with an outline of the goals of this study and the specific research and interview questions. Open-ended answers were allowed. Collaboration with the participants to ensure that the answers represented their intended thoughts was mandatory. Edits and additional feedback were welcome. Member checking with the committee for ethical guidelines was also implemented. A respectful virtual interview was highly anticipated.

Summary

The research methods outlined qualify for a sound qualitative research study on the integration of jazz studies in urban school districts. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore music educators' experiences integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. Elements from constructivism and CRP formed the conceptual framework for understanding the student learning process, supporting an appropriate curriculum design and teacher expertise, and exploring jazz music's educational and social benefits in urban schools (Gage et al., 2020; Siebert, 2019). The review of the research design, my role as researcher, the data collection and analysis process, and demonstrations of ethical procedures were presented.

Chapter 4 outlines the results of the study as they pertain to the research questions and music educators' experiences while addressing the challenges of integrating jazz studies into the curriculum and the strategies needed to do it effectively.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences of music educators' challenges integrating jazz studies into the curriculum. I sought to understand their experiences in this process and the skills and strategies necessary to effectively integrate jazz studies. The urban school environment offered unique experiences that influence students and teachers. The needs and issues that impact musical learning were explored and inform future school practices, policies, and curriculum integration (Mellizo & Cabedo–Mas, 2022). Jazz studies, diversity, improvisation, and cultural exchange help to promote creativity, self–expression, academic and social well–being. This research study proposed to gain insights from educators who faced challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum of urban schools. To guide this basic qualitative study, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

RQ2: What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

In this chapter, I included an analysis of the research questions while addressing the experiences of music educators' challenges associated with integrating jazz studies into the curriculum. Data were collected through semistructured interviews via Zoom online conferencing, which aimed to fulfill the objectives of this basic qualitative study. The background of the educators included their musical experiences as musicians and

educators and the context of their educational status. Adu stated that qualitative data are incomplete without the context of the participants. The themes and quotes aligned to support the findings' transferability (Adu, 2019).

The educators' demographic and personal musical listening and instrument expertise were relevant to this study. Understanding the participants' demographic profiles provided insights into their cultural influences and diverse perspectives that may have shaped their approach to music learning and teaching.

The data collection was based on the number of participants, location, frequency, and duration of data generated from the transcripts and audio records. The codes, categories, and themes aligned with the research questions. The implementation and adjustments to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are factors included in this chapter to measure the evidence of trustworthiness. The results may pinpoint the skills and strategies required to successfully incorporate jazz studies into the music curriculum, which may help educators see an improvement in student achievement by implementing jazz studies. This chapter concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 5.

Setting and Participant Demographics

The setting for this study was in the Western United States within three urban school districts. This study includes the educators' organizational conditions, including teaching positions, career journeys, and past and present challenges. Via Zoom, I interviewed 12 music educators. These educators have a variety of duties, including classroom instruction, band ensemble, department head, and private instruction. These

educators' interface with other educators and faculty regarding classes, school schedules, arts education, curriculum, and community outreach; some still perform professionally. I emailed an invite and consent form, and each participant responded with the day and times they would make themselves available for an interview and the words "I consent." Subsequently, I started scheduling the Zoom meetings. No personnel changes, budget cuts, or other trauma occurred during this study.

The educators' personal musical preferences could have been a factor in their teaching style and choices of instructional materials, impacting the overall musical environment in the educational setting. Moreover, the educators' instrument expertise is crucial in evaluating their ability to effectively convey musical concepts and skills to students. A teacher with a strong background in a particular instrument may bring a specialized perspective to the classroom, affecting repertoire selection and instructional methods for jazz studies.

The participants, all professional musicians, and educators, participated in one-to-one semistructured interviews via Zoom conferencing. The data were audio recorded in the virtual setting, and the participants were allowed 30–60 minutes to answer questions and share their views. Five of the 12 educators were male, and seven were female. Two educators have doctoral degrees, five have master's degrees, four have bachelor's degrees, and one does not have a degree. The teaching experiences of all the participants averaged between 15-30 years. Eight interviewees were African American, two were Caucasian, one was Native American, and one was Asian, and they shared their challenges and educational experiences. All the participants understood the invitation and agreed to the

confidential interview for research purposes only. See participants' demographics in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participants	Gender	Years of experience	Ethnicity	Education	Position
Participant #1	Female	16	African American	Doctorate	Dept. head
Participant #2	Female	34	Asian	Master's	Teacher
Participant #3	Male	20	African American	Master's	Dept. head
Participant #4	Male	19	Caucasian	Doctorate	Dept. head
Participant #5	Male	45	African American	Bachelor's	Teacher
Participant #6	Female	15	African American	Master's	Teacher
Participant #7	Male	20	African American	Bachelor's	Dept. head
Participant #8	Female	19	African American	No Degree	Teacher
Participant #9	Female	30	African American	Master's	Teacher
Participant #10	Female	30	African American	Master's	Dept. head
Participant #11	Male	22	Native American	Bachelor's	Dept. head
Participant #12	Female	20	Caucasian	Master's	Teacher

Data Collection

Twelve educators participated in the study and had access to the same questions. They were all associated with the phenomenon because of the challenge of integrating jazz studies in urban school districts in the Western United States. Semistructured interviews were used in the data collection process. An interview protocol outlining the greeting, preliminaries, and recording procedure was implemented (Appendix). The

interview guide explained the purpose of the interview and served as a reminder that the process could be discontinued at any time. At the same time, pseudonyms and all relevant documentation were used in the audio-recorded interview.

Six open-ended questions, with added probing questions (PQ) related to the research questions (RQ), allowed me to gain further insight and understanding of the participants' experiences (Babbie, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Twenty questions (Appendix) explored the educators' challenges in integrating jazz studies. Interviews, as data collection instruments, enable researchers to collect information, code it, and analyze the concepts for resultant themes and patterns (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) in social research. Having flexibility in the prepared questions, with open-ended answers, allowed the participants to freely share their skills, experiences, and strategies for jazz studies with their students and educational settings, considering both in-person and virtual experiences. All the participants were selected using purposeful sampling.

A series of practice interviews and technical preparation to ensure proper recording ensued over 4 weeks. Ten days of multiple interviews were conducted via Zoom online conferencing. Audio recordings and text transcripts were downloaded and transferred to a secure hard drive, followed by data storage on a DVD. There were no variations in data collection from the plan in Chapter 3, nor any unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection.

In keeping with ethical standards, the data plan in Chapter 3 was followed. After approval from IRB (02-01-24-1099067), data collection began. Twenty-five educators were emailed from a personal network, and invitation letters were sent to explain that

they may know me in other professional circles; however, this inquiry was for an education research study. If they chose to participate, it was necessary to reply, "I consent," so the process could begin. The email invite also requested the best days and times to conduct the interview. Several participants responded within hours, while others took a day or two.

The emailed invitation stated the purpose of the study, the interview process, confidentiality, and an explanation of member checking to ensure their responses were transcribed correctly. After downloading the transcripts, they were edited for errors in the transcription and double wording. The participant's identity was coded, and I individually emailed a summary of the transcribed interview; however, some participants advised they were very busy and were confident in my ability to represent them properly, so there was no need to re-email them their interview summary. Nonetheless, the participants were sent a follow-up email for verification and reliability.

After the interviews, I created a file to identify the participants by numbers one through twelve. All the files, including the audio and transcript from Zoom online conferencing, were downloaded from each interview and placed into folders. All the folders were labeled, sorted, and saved. The transcripts were reviewed, edited for clarity, and copied into a Word document. The first interview was emailed to the committee chair for review. The m4a audio, coded transcripts, and my notes on various Word and Excel documents were saved and stored on a dedicated hard drive and backup DVD, which are stored in a keyed safe in my office. After 5 years, I will permanently delete the data.

The "I consent" emails were screenshots or made into PDF files and were filed in a folder. Similarly, the "I verify" emails for member checking followed the same procedure. I reviewed the Zoom conferencing app transcripts alongside the audio downloads for correctness. After everything was organized, the data analysis could begin.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research uses coding for comparative data analysis to understand concepts, perceptions, and experiences in social research (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Semistructured interviews, incorporating six interview questions and follow-up probing questions, were used to address the research questions for this study:

RQ1. How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

RQ2. What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

I made an overview of the data, exploring general similarities and differences in the participants' responses. Afterward, the analysis coding process was initiated using NVivo coding software. These are the steps followed:

1. The semistructured interviews that were recorded and generated into separate text files were imported into Word and then into NVivo to analyze the data.
2. I made further grammar corrections.
3. NVivo assisted in organizing the interview transcript data for coding into codes and cases, with query capabilities to create graphs, diagrams, and word clouds.

4. Codes were created.
5. Patterns and categories were identified.
5. The emerging themes were named.
6. A summary of the transcript and findings was emailed to participants, and they were requested to respond "I verify" for reliability and verification.
7. Started writing the findings and recommendations for the study.

In coding for the data analysis process, I used an inductive approach, working from the data to make sense of the emerging patterns (Braun et al., 2017). I organized all the data into an Excel spreadsheet, allocating individual columns for codes, with the subsequent column dedicated to notes, ideas, or concerns. More extensive representations of patterns and categories were observed from the participants' responses and documented in another column. Four themes surfaced and were listed in yet another column.

First-Cycle Coding

During the first coding cycle, I downloaded the transcripts from the Zoom conferencing program and then copied them into a Word document. After they were cleaned, the docs were imported into the NVivo software app to assist in the coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Each transcript was read and examined for important or familiar words and phrases. The following terms emerged: practice time, lack of instruments, competent teachers, lack of skills, classroom management, accessibility, remove barriers, new technologies, new curriculum, jazz music history, get student attention, ideas, start early, student well-being, never stop learning, self-expression,

benefits of music, life skills, socialization, DEI, jazz is culturally relevant, know the pioneers, academic achievement, PD credits towards education, resources, support. The first cycle of coding is represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Codes, Categories, and Themes in the Analysis of Music Educators

Codes	Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Practice time · Lack of instruments ·Competent teachers · Lack of skills ·Classroom management 	Educators' Concerns	Challenges in music education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Accessibility ·Remove barriers ·New technologies ·New curriculum ·Jazz music history 	Role of Music	Strategies for Integration of Jazz Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Get student attention ·Ideas ·Start early ·Student well-being ·Never stop learning ·Self-expression ·Benefits of music ·Life skills ·Socialization 	Student Support	Supportive Educational Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·DEI ·Jazz is culturally relevant ·Know the pioneers ·Academic achievement ·PD credits towards education ·Resources ·Support 	Quality education	Successful Jazz Program

Second-Cycle Coding

The second coding cycle aimed to identify related text or patterns in the data. The participants described their challenges and potential strategies in implementing jazz studies. I coded these terms and organized them into categories as the participants' responses were reviewed for similarities and repetitions of words and phrases.

The categories sought to formulate a consensus of the educators' perspectives on their experiences through these words and phrases: the integration of jazz studies, diversity, covering the basics of music, professional development, jazz history, and resources were repeated terms by the participants. I developed these categories to align with the research questions: concerns of educators, the role of music, student support, and quality education.

A theme is an underlying concept or subject shared among recurring ideas (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). NVivo software was used to highlight the responses of the participants, which were organized into codes, classifications, and sets to enable cross-referencing. The emerging themes, derived from the specific words and phrases employed through the interviews, provided a clear picture of the aspects they considered critical in music education, specifically jazz studies. The interview questions sought to investigate the challenges of educators integrating jazz studies into the curriculum of urban high schools. It was important to question participants' subjective experiences in qualitative research to generate a hypothesis from their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The NVivo software assisted in grouping the coded text into sets for referencing;

however, I made independent observations of the transcripts to conduct a thorough analysis.

The categories and themes in the comparative transcripts formed descriptors necessary for alignment with the constructivist theory and CRP. The constructivist theory and CRP were foundational to the conceptual framework of this study. They were expressed through the themes that emerged from the interviews (De Farias et al., 2020). The participants described their learning environments implementing the constructivist theory approach, where students were active in the learner-centered experiences, mainly when motivated. Additional coding revealed broader categorical representations, such as musical learning environment, dynamics between educators, curriculum, motivation, and resource accessibility, as Saleem et al. (2021) explained.

CRP, as defined by Ladson–Billings (1995, 2021), involves acknowledging and addressing students' diverse cultural backgrounds. These educators recognized jazz appreciation and DEI as important elements for a successful jazz program. The female participants also noted gender issues and women's role in music education. Improved access to resources for instruments and guest artists and collaboration with other core subjects were suggested strategies to enhance students' proficiency and improve life skills and academic achievement. CRP in music education encourages educators to adjust their instructional approaches (Benatar, 2021). Students may perform better when teaching is filtered through students' own cultural experiences (Gay, 2010). Promoting jazz studies as cultural expressions involves acknowledging the significance of jazz culture to cultivate an inclusive environment in musical classrooms within urban schools. Students can be

motivated by recognizing the cultural history, musical experiences, and diverse perspectives associated with jazz (Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, 2021). The categories and themes required alignment with the constructivist theory and CRP. I aligned the categories with the principles of the constructivist theory: ZPD, active learning, student involvement, and real-world relevance, and CRP: social issues, cultural recognition, jazz appreciation, and DEI as disaggregated in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes Aligned With Research and Conceptual Framework

Categories	Themes	Constructivist theory	CRP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in music education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators' concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone of proximal development (ZPD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for integration of jazz studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural recognition Jazz Appreciation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive Education Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student involvement 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful jazz program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-world relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI)

The conceptual framework consists of constructivist theory and CRP. To further align the themes to the research question and the conceptual framework, see Table 4.

Table 4*Themes Aligned With Research and Constructivist Theory*

Research question	Probing questions	Themes	Constructivist theory
How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?	Can you share any difficulties you have had while implementing jazz studies with your students or in the music classroom?	Challenges in music education	Active learning
	In your opinion, what is the significance of student engagement and resources for student learning?	Supportive Educational Environment	Zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The alignment of the research to the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is the second part of the conceptual framework in Table 5.

Table 5*Themes Aligned With Research and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)*

Research question	Probing questions	Themes	Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)
How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?	What strategies would you use to support a jazz curriculum for your students?	Strategies for the Integration of Jazz Studies	Cultural recognition
	What would signify a successful jazz studies program?	Successful Jazz Program	Integrating cultural elements

Discrepant Cases

A search of the data for conflicts with the emerging themes was conducted. After analyzing the data, I found no conflicts; thus, there were no discrepant cases. The educators' responses revealed similar experiences yet different perspectives. The participants represented diverse cultures, musical experiences, genders, teaching styles, challenges, strategies, and training. Based on the data analysis, the emerged themes conflicted with no discrepant data. There was no unique insight to reconsider interpreting and analyzing the coded data.

Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore music educators' experiences integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. The data analysis aligned the RQs, the PRs, and the conceptual framework for the codes, categories, and themes.

Elements from constructivism and CRP (CRT) formed the conceptual framework for understanding the student learning process, supporting an appropriate curriculum design, teacher expertise, and exploring jazz music's educational and social benefits in urban schools (Koch, 2020; Siebert, 2019). I aimed to understand how music educators experienced challenges and what skills and strategies were needed to integrate jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum effectively. The codes, themes, and quotes from the participants are included below.

Data for RQ1

RQ1: How do music educators describe their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum for Grades 9–12?

Data were provided to answer this research question based on the results from the semistructured interview responses. The participants shared consistent views and used these words and phrases to describe the challenges and concerns: resources, jazz studies curriculum, cultural diversity, and professional development.

Theme 1: Educators' Concerns

Resources. The participants emphasized a lack of funding and the need for professional development in several areas. Resources were needed to supply an adequate teaching staff for music education. Of the music teachers that would be available, there was concern about having teachers with a strong jazz knowledge. Even if the educator plays jazz, it does not translate into their ability to teach jazz.

Participant #4 stated teachers who lack experience may be afraid to teach it. The reason is the lack of teacher confidence and the absence of an actual jazz curriculum. Participant #2 noted that it was important to communicate with students. Participants #9 and #5 agreed that knowing the history of jazz and the pioneers that created it was critical for student awareness and exposure to jazz studies.

Fundraising was also expressed as a strategy to finance student instruments, music licenses, and software applications. Educators were challenged to find creative ways to get new and functioning instruments. If students do not have quality instruments to play or repair services for them, they can be easily disengaged (McNeill & McPhail, 2020).

Jazz Studies. Obtaining licenses for jazz studies curriculum so students can learn and perform at other schools and in community venues has been problematic, a frustration expressed by participants. The concern of educators is a strong theme that emerged from the data regarding resources, jazz studies curriculum, cultural diversity, and professional development. The decline in available teachers and students in music education is concerning because the losses are disproportionate to other subjects, partly due to budgets and the eliminating of a fine arts coordinator in many schools (Americans for the Arts, 2004). Still, the issue persists, with many school districts failing to offer a full-time art specialist and falling short of goals for arts education (Americans for the Arts, 2019).

Diversity. Cultural diversity and community involvement is a motivational tool for students. Having places to perform in a diverse community to showcase music learned is a strategy for student engagement in urban schools (Mellizo & Cabedo–Mas, 2022; Shaw, 2020).

Participant #10 stated, “that goes back to what I was saying regarding having the music in the community and having the music available for students to hear, which will spark their engagement in it initially.”

Resources are needed for community events to support transportation, travel expenses, and wardrobe costs. Although most of the educators described themselves as life-long learners, they stressed the lack of resources as a primary challenge in music education.

Professional Development. The educators in this study expressed a need for professional development as a strategy to introduce new technologies, present guest artists, and feature pioneers in jazz. Participant #3 stressed the importance of classroom management and teacher confidence for an effective music program and stated, “I just came from a professional development show education, and I learned about funding and new technologies that will help with practice habits.” Participant #12 shared that competent, compassionate teachers who understand jazz and how to teach underscores some challenges of integrating jazz into the curriculum.

The educators interviewed in this study agreed that professional development, commonly called PD, would serve well in remedying music education shortcomings. While PD has tremendous value, the Alsop (2020) broker model takes some of the responsibility of educators and allows stakeholders to share in bridging the gap. When researchers report the issues, stakeholders need to collaborate with educators to address the challenges educators experience. Researchers argue for systemic improvements, and educators charge researchers with being too disconnected from actual teaching and the classroom environment. Both researchers and educators should come together and find practical solutions to improve music education. (Austin, 2019).

The data from this study offer community involvement, fixing the red tape in obtaining licenses, and the integration of jazz studies and other genres in testing, performance, awareness, and practice. Urban schools may benefit from this model and bridge the research-practice gap. (Alsop, 2020).

Data for PQ1

Here is a probing question as a follow-up to *RQ1* to get more in-depth with the participants: To what extent should jazz be integrated into the music core curriculum? The interview responses from the participants provided the data to answer this question, which revealed similar yet different perspectives.

Jazz Integration

The participants shared their thoughts on integrating jazz into the core curriculum. Participant #1 said it (jazz) should be included with other genres, and Participant #3 agreed because it is an American art form. Participant #9 denoted that a third of the curriculum should be dedicated to jazz. Participant #7 stated that teachers needed to have PD and learn how to integrate jazz music into the curriculum. Students must have a commercial-free chance to advance in music without the controls of recording companies. The industry should not splinter jazz: students should be able to create jazz and maintain its historically established quality. The educators agreed that music as a core subject would prepare them for future careers.

Theme 2: Role of Music

The consensus in the data revealed that the participants view music as a universal language. The participants favored diversity in the jazz classroom setting and acknowledged the cultural value of jazz. The participants view jazz as an opportunity to teach from a historical perspective and to share in the preparation and socialization process of learning. Teacher leadership and musicianship must advance through PD to improve pedagogical approaches (Abeles et al., 2021). The participants advocated for

interactive teaching methods, guest artists, diverse genres, and performances to contribute to student learning collectively. Participant #7 said that “(Diversity) is necessary to expand students' worldview in music. It's the last-ditch effort to try and get them to be world-savvy in a world that requires world-savviness.” Participant #11 acknowledged the cultural value of jazz then emphasized that it is incredibly important: “This is all America's music, and it is essential to know how it got here, not just in the past sense, but in the present, it is relevant.” Participant #12 stated, “I try to lead by example. I try to bring people in and connect with many older musicians. It is an intergenerational strategy.” Participant #6 expressed that jazz is about freedom, rebellion, and improvisation: “We are tapping into the foundations of jazz and expanding and evolving that sound. Music saves lives.”

The theme that emerged from the cultural value of jazz, preparation, and the knowledge of jazz is the role of music. The responsibility of music in the classroom is to expand students' worldviews and give a historical perspective of jazz, an American art form. Jazz represents the American values of teamwork, diversity, and listening to one another (Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, 2021).

Data for PQ2

As a follow-up to RQ1, here is another probing question to obtain further information from the participant: How important are diverse genres in assessing musical proficiency?

Proficiency

The participants commented on musical proficiency in more than one genre (classical). Participant #11 stated, “Note reading in the classical approach is limited. I think proficiency needs to be expanded so that music is relevant to a diverse student body.” Participant #12 pointed out that “we tend to emphasize European standards too much. What is relevant is what people will connect with, not a minuet. They will connect with what is relevant in their community.” Participant #4 had another perspective worth mentioning: “I encourage students to stay involved in some way, shape, or form with classical music. You develop good habits regarding your command of your instrument, which obviously can be applied to any kind of music.” I noted that the female Participant #12 agreed with all the men in the interviews on proficiency.

Data for RQ2

RQ2: What skills and strategies do these music educators identify as important when integrating jazz studies?

Strategies

Data were provided to answer this research question based on the results from the semistructured interview responses. The participants expressed various views and used these words and phrases to describe strategies, including student well-being, communication, and student engagement.

Theme 3: Student Support

The data revealed student well-being as a meaningful part of music education. Participant #3 considers music as therapy: “Yes, and music is therapy. Moreover, music

is magic and was a gift from God.” Student quality of life is a concern for educators. Culturally responsive education, a recent development in music education, is essential because demographic shifts in urban schools require teachers to instruct students about cultures other than their own (Bond, 2017).

According to the data, Participant #2 noted that communicating with students is critical:

“Urban school students do not get jazz education or music they can identify with.”

Referencing student engagement, they are listening because music must have a significant impact on their mind or feelings; otherwise, they would not do it. “So yes, I do think that music has a significant effect on student well-being.”

Participant #6 quoted her musician father: “You cannot see music, you cannot see notes, you cannot see those things. One of the things that is true is that it touches us. Moreover, science has shown that music is good for the brain, it is good for the body, it is good for everything. It is imperative that we get music, particularly jazz music, as a priority in the arts in schools. Teachers must find creative ways to support students.” Participant #9 shared that style is significant in the way that teachers use it to impart musical information. Participant #10 stated that “one of music's core values is the sense of community.” The theme of support for students emerged from the data on the participants' student well-being, communication with students, and student engagement.

Data for PQ3

As a follow-up to RQ2, the probing question was to gain a deeper understating of what the educators feel their needs are to instruct their students. They were asked: As an

educator, what skills do you think music teachers need to integrate jazz studies into their curriculum?

Skills

Basic skills include the knowledge of the instrument and how to make sounds and move the fingers properly, followed by the understanding of notes and scales, tempo, and rhythm. Participant #8 stated “they need to have a variety of genres under their belt. They need to know about all the different genres to even elaborate on jazz. I think that has to do with improvisation. So, number one, they would need improvisational skills.”

Although all the participants observed that improvisation is the key to being able to play jazz or teach jazz in the curriculum. Participant #9 stressed that the ability to play jazz rhythmic patterns is critical for teachers to impart to their students. “Individualized instruction is beneficial. I believe it's important for you to have something in person where you're interacting with other musicians because we learn not just from our instructors, but we learn from each other,” said Participant #1. Holding other educators accountable, the participants emphasized that teachers need assessment and engagement and should be involved in one-on-one quality teaching sessions with students.

Theme 4: Quality Education

The data revealed that classroom management, the integration of jazz studies, and a successful jazz program would help sustain a quality education. All the participants agreed that the skills of the teachers and strategies for curriculum integration were meaningful and relevant to students, schools, and communities. Participant #10 noted,

...some students did not have the experience of jazz because it was not available.

If it is made available on a small scale, we could see what kind of attention we could grab. Not just the jazz idiom, but also world music, and Latino music in the community.

It absolutely should be a core subject.

Participant #3 added a program that teaches kids to appreciate other peoples' music and prepares them to create their music. Classroom management is a skill teachers need to have. Participant #3 stated that “just to wrangle the kids and give them the focus, good practice techniques, and knowledge about other instruments sums up good classroom management required for musical study.”

In the book *Remixing the Classroom*, Allsup stated that teachers play a unique role in students' growth and development (Allsup, 2016). Participants #6, #7, and #8 agreed that a successful jazz program would include having an appreciation for jazz, hearing and studying the pros, and understanding and knowledge of jazz.

Data for PQ4

This is a probing question as a follow-up to *RQ2* to get more in-depth with the participant: What strategies would you use to support a jazz curriculum for your students?

Integration of Jazz Studies

The consensus of the educators was that there needs to be a plan. Participant #8 articulated this sentiment:

We would listen to other professionals who are noted as some of the top vocalists and instrumentalists in the genre, including Ella Fitzgerald, number one in my book, Nancy Wilson, who did not scat a lot, but still had a specific style. That is

considered jazz. Then there is Billy Holiday, Miles Davis, and other instrumentalists like Louis Armstrong. Introducing those artists would open their minds and increase their awareness of what is considered top-notch, and then go from there. Dive right in there and let them experience, listen and hear.

Participant #7 suggested a comprehensive library of books, practice materials, and audio/visual devices. This would support a well-rounded education and an expanded worldview (see Siebert, 2019; Take note, 2021).

Support in fighting the commercialized music industry was also important to the participants as a reason to get students exposed to jazz and hungry for jazz. See Table 6 for excerpts taken from the participants' interviews. All twelve participants are represented.

Table 6*Data From Music Educators*

Educator	Excerpts	Themes
• Participant #1	• I think that, like any other form of music, jazz is like a basic foundation that goes across all music. So, it certainly should be at the forefront of any curriculum.	• Concerns of educators
• Participant #2	• You must like to communicate with students	• Support for students
• Participant #3	• I just came from a professional development show education. And I learned about funding and new technologies that that will help with practice habits.	• Concerns of educators
• Participant #4	• I think many secondary school music educators are afraid to teach jazz because they did not have a lot of jazz in college or in high school.	• Role of music
• Participant #5	• It (Jazz) should be integrated with social studies as well as art as well subjects	• Quality education
• Participant #6	• You cannot have most genres of music without jazz. R&B wouldn't exist. Pop wouldn't exist without jazz.	• Role of music
• Participant #7	• (Jazz teaching) is a socialization tool. There is so much for the kids, and what upsets me the most is that it's the first thing that's targeted in terms of budgets!	• Support for students
• Participant #8	• Introducing those artists first of all would just open their minds and increase their awareness of what is considered top-notch, and then go from there	• Role of music
• Participant #9	• I do think it does have an impact on their well-being. Just see a lot of students who are musicians- they really seem happy.	• Support for students
• Participant #10	• So that goes back to what I was saying in terms of having the music in the community and having the music available for students to hear, which will initially spark their engagement with it.	• Concerns of educators
• Participant #11	• Note reading and the classical music approach are limited, and I think it needs to be expanded so music (jazz) is relevant to a diverse student body.	• Concerns of educators
• Participant #12	• Competent, compassionate teachers who not only understand jazz but understand how to teach.	• Quality education

Figure 1 displays the emergent themes from the music educators' interviews, which connect to some of the highlighted key points. In alignment with the research questions, their responses reflect the challenges and strategies foundational to this study.

Figure 1

Themes of Music Educators



Though the experiences of educators are subjective, a common thread connects the challenges and strategies they experienced as educators. The data revealed four critical themes from the participants' responses addressed in the interview questions: *Educators' Concerns, Role of Music, Student Support, and Quality Education*. As a footnote, the gender disparity of female students was a noted issue. The literature indicated many young female musicians drop music studies after elementary school when

they are ready to enroll and are eligible to study music in high school bands (Quinn, 2022; Thompson, 2021). Of the seven female educators, none of them mentioned female jazz instrumentalists as part of their collective listening.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Ethical procedures are required in social research. It was important to capture the data from the transcripts as accurately as possible from educators participating in this study. Music careers and music education can be subjective, with educators having varying experiences in both. When questioned about their beliefs on music being a universal language or diversity in music education, the educators interviewed arrived at similar conclusions. They agreed that professional development, resources, and support from stakeholders were imperative. Moreover, they all shared the joy of teaching, especially jazz music.

Credibility

Research is a process of exploring, documenting, analyzing, and giving meaning to an inquiry. My goal was to be as objective as possible in this study as an educator, musician, and researcher dedicated to improving music education for students in urban schools. I intentionally observed the responses during the interviews without interjecting or leading comments. To establish credibility, I relied on a sound methodology and the efficacy of the data collection process.

Twelve educators from three urban school districts in the Western United States agreed to participate in the study, which explored educators' experiences while integrating jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum. I used an inductive data

analysis process to generate codes placed into categories, resulting in emerging themes from the collected data.

Transferability

Transferability refers to external validity, indicating that the findings can be generalized to the sample population (Burkholder et al., 2019). Transferability was established through participant selection, the consent process, the setting, and a detailed description of data collected from the semistructured interviews. Twelve participants from three school districts offered data on the perspectives and experiences of the educators and their challenges in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum. Their training, musical background, demographics, and knowledge of jazz music provided transferrable results for the participants. I used descriptive, focused coding to arrive at the findings and demonstrate the study's transferability (Adu, 2016).

Dependability

In qualitative research, dependability is the process of producing consistent results. The data are considered reliable when the data collection process is consistent in the collection, analysis, and findings. Dependability contributes to the trustworthiness of the data collected. All the participants were asked the same questions and given time to respond freely and honestly. The interviews were conducted through the online Zoom platform. In the interviews, I asked six clear and focused questions and two probing questions each to ensure alignment with the study's design. The interview was audio recorded, and a text transcript was generated. Rigor and researcher reflexivity were exercised to ensure the dependability of the processes and findings (Pessoa et al., 2019).

Additionally, the data were cross-referenced to achieve triangulation, reducing the possibility of errors and personal biases. Reviews of the transcripts' accuracy were critical. Member-checking allowed the participants to confirm their responses and were able to make corrections if needed. Saturation was reached by referring to the literature from the past 5 years on the experiences of educators in jazz studies.

Confirmability

Confirmability seeks to remove any researcher bias from the findings of the study. The degree to which the data supports the findings was established, ensuring that the data, analysis, and results are verifiable. Letting the data speak for themselves is a critical component of qualitative research. Given the same data, any other researcher would arrive at similar conclusions (Burkholder et al., 2019). I shared my codes and themes with other music educators to demonstrate that the findings were grounded and objective. Confirmability was achieved based on the analysis of the data. As objective as I tried to be as a researcher, qualitative research does not allow one to be objective but an interpreter of the participants' experiences (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). I acknowledged the educators' experiences and thoughts on jazz education throughout the interviews.

Summary

The absence of jazz studies concerned music educators in urban Western school districts. In this basic qualitative study, I explored the challenges of music educators and their experiences integrating jazz studies into the secondary school music curriculum. Twelve music educators participated in the study. They shared the skills and strategies

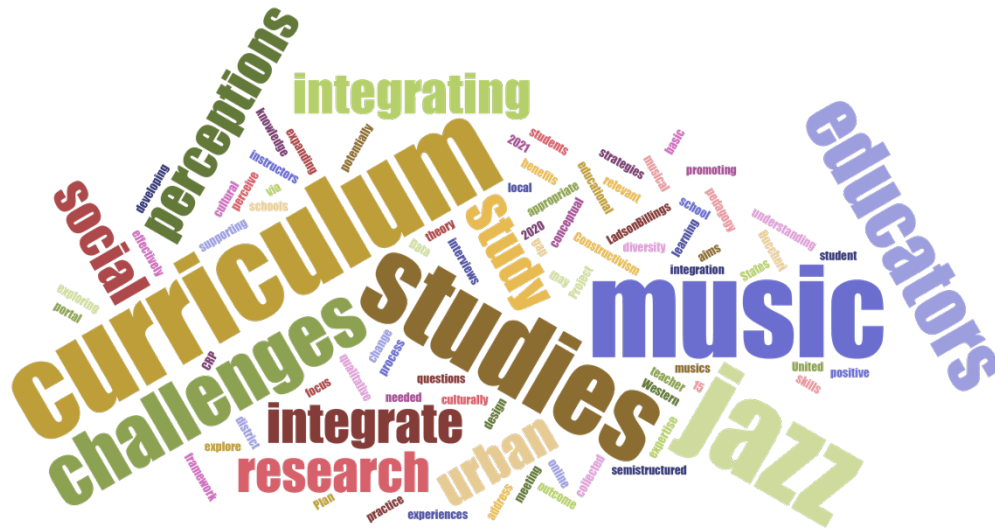
they identified as necessary for integrating jazz studies. The participants' perspectives may be used to assist other music educators in urban districts.

Jazz studies in the curriculum benefits urban school students for several reasons, including student achievement and social-emotional development (Evans, 2021). My research participants and the literature I reviewed support jazz music as central to a well-rounded education and overall student well-being. The participants also made various recommendations to address the challenges and strategies for integrating jazz studies, notably cultural diversity, professional development, and the building of a successful jazz program. The benefits may be long-lasting for educators and students.

These educators are eager to expand their knowledge of jazz theory, history, and its influences on popular music. The participants shared their experiences and expertise that enabled them to become inspiring musicians and educators. The participants acknowledged that the most valued experiences in learning jazz come from independent learning outside of the classroom, and they want to usher in change for an organized and successful jazz program so students can learn the basics through proper instruction.

Figure 2 below illustrates a word cloud of the research questions on the integration of jazz studies into the music curriculum in urban schools.

Figure 2

Research Question Word Cloud

In this basic qualitative study, I researched the experiences of music educators in integrating jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum. Chapter 5 includes a summary, analysis of the findings, insight into the study's limitations, and recommendations for further research and social change as a result of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

My goal in this basic qualitative study was to explore music educators' experiences integrating jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum in urban school districts (Grades 9–12). Twelve participants who had taught or were teaching jazz music participated. I wanted to understand music educators' experiences, the challenges they identified in integrating jazz studies into the curriculum, and strategies they used to find appropriate proficiency levels for students. By better understanding what music educators need to incorporate jazz into the curriculum, a quality jazz program may be realized to enhance teachers' practices, student interest, parental support, and administrative resources.

In this study, the participants discussed their background in music as both instrumentalists and educators. They discussed why jazz studies should be integrated to complete a well-rounded education (see Siebert, 2019). Additionally, they described resources, curriculum design, cultural diversity, and professional development as central to their concern for students' musical education. The interviews revealed the cultural value of jazz, teacher preparation, and knowledge of jazz as factors to consider for integrating a jazz curriculum.

The educators expressed concern over student well-being, how music is therapy, and how music makes students happy. The educators offered strategies to help students purchase instruments, pay for their repairs, and how to seek community involvement to relieve the financial stress on them and their families. The participants also wanted to

prepare students to become music teachers and be equipped to overcome any barriers to attending post-secondary music college (Abramo & Bernard, 2020).

Communication was a significant factor for educators. Their ability to have one-on-one sessions and the importance of jazz appreciation and cultural connections with students were stressed as critical for student engagement. The participants acknowledged that focused student engagement would support their comprehension of music theory so they may understand the music they listen to on digital platforms like iTunes and YouTube. Jazz theory and history can support students in being well-rounded musicians if they choose it as a career. Meeting the students at their level of understanding and helping them improve without using force was a recommended strategy to support students in meeting their goals.

The literature supports music literacy for students, to engage them in meaningful musical collaborations, and expand their musical knowledge. Experiences with new concepts in the music curriculum may encourage and motivate students in their music education. Additionally, music educators have supported the call to diversify the music curriculum in schools (May et al., 2020). Recommendations for reframing civic education through popular and hip-hop music have served to empower urban students through artistic musical practices, which have shown to be a multi-dimensional asset to student learning (Evans, 2021). Jazz has the same potential.

All the jazz music educators agreed that classroom management was central to a successful jazz studies program. Strategies for getting students to focus include acquiring knowledge of music creation, production, and performance technologies to compete in a

global market, as well as showing the educators' dedication to their students' musical growth. Access to software, devices for digital music, and instruments with cases in good working order, are necessary in the musical classroom environment to support students and their family's resources. Teachers are applauded for delivering quality music education with zeal and passion. They are encouraged to continue advocating for the resources and commitment from administrators in changing policies and strategies for musical excellence for students and their communities (Take Note, 2021).

Professional development must prepare teachers to integrate strategies to instruct one group while another is working on their section of music. Control of the class is a challenge that most educators experience. Initiative-taking leadership can assist teachers in developing a rigorous program that students can benefit from and respect. These participants stressed that teachers must be resourceful, creative, resilient, and determined to make a successful program for their students.

For quality education, educators shared that bringing awareness about jazz history, including knowledge of the pioneers and recognition of rhythms that distinctly exemplify various genres, was necessary. Pedagogical methods employed by successful high school jazz ensembles' directors can inform educators on the positive experiences jazz education brings to students, through their warm-up and rhythmic exercises (Koch, 2020).

The participants all understood the importance of testing and goal setting to improve musical proficiency. There was substantial evidence from the educators that covering the basics of music can be accomplished through jazz studies. Learning scales

and jazz theory will support their improvisational skills and professional career efforts later. The jazz curriculum can foster encouragement and motivation by including an intergenerational group of musicians to play with them and discuss various nuances of jazz music and other genres. This engagement would be a profound catalyst to increase student proficiency. The integration of jazz studies can prepare students to listen and see what is possible in music when in-person workshops and live-performance field trips are part of the curriculum. Students can benefit from open-minded educators and participate in non-formal learning philosophies in alternative educational settings. New music curricula can increase student motivation and engagement. (Gage et al., 2020).

The participants shared illuminating perspectives on the integration of a jazz curriculum for a successful jazz program. The emergent themes of educators' concerns, the role of music, student support, and quality education, identified challenges and essential strategies for implementing jazz studies. A major factor the educators deemed critical was DEI in the curriculum, the teaching pool, and access to resources. Educators regard music as a universal language and encourage the integration of jazz studies to help urban students embrace a diverse cultural education. Participant #10 noted that music is the language that allows one to communicate with anyone in any corner of the world.

Music teachers incorporated two primary approaches when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum. Stressing the value of cultural diversity, jazz, follow-up, and supervision are the two main approaches used by music educators. A quality jazz program would include jazz appreciation, the history of the pioneers in jazz, and their cultural contributions to the genre. The program would allow students to understand jazz

more deeply, realizing it as a universal language and how it has influenced other genres, including popular music today.

Endorsing musical instruments or acquiring instruments through fundraising or community events would benefit music programs. Providing musical field trips to see live performances of jazz musicians in context could help students in multiple ways. Meeting local artists could have a meaningful impact. Instructing students about diversity and the importance of promoting creativity, self-expression, and collaboration with others can help students be more equipped in their musicianship and vision of the global community. Visiting guest artists is an intergenerational strategy for students to connect with musicians who are professionals through touring, recording, or teaching at other well-known music schools and universities.

Follow-up and supervision practices can provide professional development workshops in creating or implementing the proper curriculum design for student use based on their skill set and readiness. PD may also support teachers with limited jazz experience yet find themselves teaching jazz in the classroom. Teachers can share the benefits of jazz education, including its influence on student achievement and social-emotional development (Evans, 2021).

Interpretation of the Findings

In this chapter, I interpret the findings of this basic qualitative study in the context of the conceptual framework, along with a comparison to what has been found in peer-reviewed literature, as described in Chapter 2. The conceptual framework for this study was created using the constructivist theory and Ladon's CRP.

Key Finding 1. Value of Cultural Diversity

Stressing the value of cultural diversity was identified as an approach to support the integration of jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum at urban schools. Music educators have had national conferences over the years and developed standards that teachers should teach, from general music choral music, or instrumental music, but not necessarily jazz (Shaw, 2020). Restricted access to jazz in the music curriculum may limit the richness of student education. Furthermore, this lack of diversity limits students' exposure to musical styles and perpetuates racial and cultural biases in music education (Tuncer-Boon, 2019). The participants emphasized diversity to demonstrate musical representation. Otherwise, students may not see themselves reflected, resulting in a lack of interest and a missed opportunity to engage students in learning (Koskela et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

All participants stressed jazz as an umbrella for all kinds of music. They concurred that students need a diverse musical palette to enhance their musical focus. The educators themselves were asked what was on their playlist. It represented a broad spectrum of genres, with jazz as the thread tying their educational, professional, and personal listening.

The participants emphasized the value of cultural diversity and its relevance to students, parents, administrators, and community involvement. As an American art form, students and educators in urban schools could benefit from the universal language of music, a concept that all participants fully acknowledged.

Key Finding 2. Follow-up and Supervision

To overcome challenges in integrating jazz studies into the secondary school curriculum, educators can follow up and supervise the plans for a quality jazz program. Music teachers can begin by securing the needed resources, generating fundraising ideas, and meeting stakeholders to fulfill the vision and goals for a diverse, quality program that can help students on the global music stage. To improve student achievement, the proper contents for the curriculum must be proposed, whether written by staff or other professionals.

Musical field trips to see live performances can be part of the learning experience, offering awareness and exposure. Visiting educators or experienced professionals in the community can provide students with a close-up, hands-on listening and playing experience. The participants offered all these strategies as a part of a professional development workshop. Providing professional development workshops for music teachers is critical, for improving instruction is still a challenge in music education (Regus et al., 2024).

The music educators in this study indicated that jazz was a vehicle to make students better musicians. Specifically, the women educators pointed out that professional development can improve teacher effectiveness and acknowledged the role of women in music for student well-being. Five of the participants were women of color. All instructors can benefit from Black women teachers' pedagogy's much-needed insights (Regus et al., 2024).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are aspects of the study that the researcher cannot control. Thomas (2017) stated that researchers must exercise honesty and be acutely aware of any weaknesses or limitations in any research project. The limitations of this study were the sample size and the risk of researcher bias (see Thomas, 2017).

My roles as the researcher, an educator, and a musician may have played a part. I ensured that I did not interview participants I had a direct relationship with as an educator to confirm that previous interactions did not create a bias about the interview data gathered. I have not taught school for 10 years, am presently unemployed, and explained they may know me as a performer, but I was a student researcher for this experience.

Due to the virtual setting of the semistructured interviews, the results of this study were small-scale and limited to personnel from three urban school districts, which may have presented limitations in the study. Although the sample size was small, it was sufficient to collect, analyze, and present the findings of this study.

Educators who are musicians and educators have additional insights into the themes presented here, specifically educators' concerns, the role of music, student support, and the quality of education for urban students and jazz studies. The participants shared personal experiences about their journey as budding musicians, performers, and eventually teachers and leaders of jazz studies. The findings were interpreted and based solely on the responses of the participants and not on personal biases. Member checking was also implemented, enabling the participants to confirm the study results (Candela, 2019).

Recommendations for Research and Practice

Due to the importance of music education and the usefulness of quality jazz programs in schools, further research on the benefits of jazz and the positive results from its study is warranted. I am interested in a follow-up study using focus group discussions in addition to the individual interviews. Others might want to study the integration of jazz in different regions of the country or even around the world. I was intrigued by how jazz has grown across different countries.

As a result of the information derived from this study, these recommendations may have the potential to add to the body of research on this subject and have practical implications for school districts and music schools that implement jazz studies or are considering and planning a jazz program for its students. It is recommended that the present music program be evaluated by collecting data on its strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness.

A music program that values cultural diversity in the music curriculum is important because it recognizes the musical expressions of other cultures, honors the artistic contributions of individuals, and provides a worldview of rhythms and sounds. Music can usher in positive diversity experiences for teachers and students. Jazz curricula can support collaboration by adding it to the core instruction of music learning. Using the constructivist model, student interactions in bands, ensembles, or as soloists, with the application of improvisation, are taught to communicate with each other and, in the process, acquire life skills like tenacity, teamwork, practice, and personal discipline.

Cultural diversity will also require diversity with educators who teach and implement jazz studies. Enhanced preparation and professional development for educators is a critical secondary recommendation to ensure that good teachers are in place to execute a successful jazz program and integrate jazz studies into the curriculum. Teachers must know about jazz, including its pioneers and celebrated academicians of jazz. Additionally, music educators should be able to pilot a new curriculum and collaborate with peers to test and organize the new design before implementation.

Music educators should be prepared and updated with musical devices that aid their instructional practices. Furthermore, guest artists can be invited to offer students mentorship and sound instruction, accompanied by musical field trips to expose music students to live jazz performances and potential career paths. Creativity and the gratification of playing music are recommended for the well-being of students. Including these data is meant to motivate schools to integrate jazz studies into their music curriculum to improve academic achievement.

Implications

This basic qualitative study may lead to positive social change through the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum in Western urban schools. Jazz studies integrated into the curriculum can be made possible by educators and school administrators supporting an appropriate curriculum design, appreciating the value of cultural diversity, and exploring jazz music's educational and social benefits. Jazz is a significant part of America's cultural heritage that evolved through various social landscapes, emphasizing improvisation, a hallmark of creativity and imaginative

thinking. Students, schools, and communities may benefit and become enriched by a diverse jazz education experience. Follow-up and supervision practices can provide professional development clinics and workshops for educators to reinforce their knowledge of jazz, hone their musical skills, and push toward a quality jazz program. Their efforts to increase the quality of music instruction are essential.

The organizational change that this study could support is the improvement of the achievement gap of urban students by spawning creativity and developing an improved self-image, making positive social change for future generations. Moreover, schools can promote equity and access to quality arts education, bridge the opportunity gap, and ensure a more inclusive learning environment by offering jazz education opportunities to all students, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status.

The qualitative research design selected for this study incorporated semistructured interviews of music educators, documenting their musical journey, listening experiences, and how they inspired their students in jazz studies. Thus far, research indicates that the most valued experiences in learning jazz come from independent learning outside the classroom, as the participants exemplify. This study's results suggest that music teachers support jazz in the curriculum and a successful jazz studies program, where students' musicianship is guided in jazz theory and harmonic structures. Jazz teaches us that everyone has a voice and that inspiration is derived from teacher enthusiasm, best practices, and the joy of learning. Positive social change implications might include improving urban schools by supporting jazz studies in the music curriculum and

collaborating with educators on the resources needed to support a quality jazz education program.

Conclusion

My role as a researcher and a practicing musician has allowed me the window to peer through, and gain insight into the challenges of educators in the integration of jazz studies. I have not worked in a district with a dedicated jazz program. I wanted to address the research-practice gap in music education, particularly jazz studies. The literature shows that this gap has been discussed for decades with numerous recommendations. It was argued that stakeholders still need to implement the research recommendations because music education needs more remedies.

Constructivism and Ladon's CRP provided the basis for this study. The four themes generated were educators' concerns, the role of music, support for students, and a quality jazz program. The findings in this study can assist in active learning, teacher expertise, and the integration of jazz studies into the curriculum design for a successful jazz program and a well-rounded education for students. Improvements in test scores, communication abilities, teamwork, and discipline are examples of the potential outcomes and influence jazz music can offer. As a researcher and an educator, I am glad I conducted this study and agree that these and similar steps can improve music education.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Date:
 Time:
 Interviewee Code:
 Location of the interview:

Parts of the Interview	Interview Questions and Notes
Introduction	<p>Hello, my name is Gail Johnson. Thank you for consenting to interview for this educational study today. As you know, this interview aims to understand the experiences and challenges of music teachers regarding the integration of jazz studies in the curriculum at local urban school districts (Grades 9-12).</p> <p>I am also seeking insight into what skills and strategies music educators identify as important. Feel free to speak openly and share your honest thoughts and experiences. Please keep in mind that participation is voluntary. All replies will be kept confidential and used exclusively for research. Your demographic and your position in your musical educational setting will be documented as a pseudonym to protect your personal and professional information in this 45–60-minute interview.</p> <p>After the interview I will examine your answers for data analysis purposes. You can stop this interview process at any time. This interview will be recorded via audio for transcription purposes only.</p> <p>Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?</p>
Question 1	<p>How many years of experience do you have as a music educator?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your preferred genre of music? 2. What is on your playlist? 3. Were you taught Jazz, or did you learn it independently?
Question 2	<p>How important is it to include music from diverse cultures and genres, such as world music, Latin music, or Jazz, in the classroom?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In assessments of musical proficiency?

	2. Do you consider music as a universal language?
Question 3	<p>How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of jazz theory and history on a scale of 1-5 (1 being low and 5 being high)?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What skills do you think music teachers need to integrate jazz studies into their curriculum effectively? 2. What strategies would you use to support a jazz curriculum for your students? 3. What Professional Development would support educators in music preparation?
Question 4	<p>To what extent should jazz studies be integrated into the music curriculum?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your thoughts on the integration of music as a core subject in urban schools? 2. Do you think music has a positive impact on student well-being?
Question 5	<p>What challenges have you faced as a jazz musician or jazz educator?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you share any difficulties you have had while implementing jazz studies with your students or in your music classroom? 2. In your opinion, what is the significance of student engagement and resources for student learning?
Question 6	<p>On a scale of 1-5 (1 being low and 5 being high), how comfortable do you feel teaching jazz improvisation to your students in an urban school?</p> <p>Probing Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the challenges you face when integrating jazz studies into the music curriculum within your school district? 2. Have you experienced pushback from the admin, parents, or the students? 3. What would signify a successful jazz studies program?
Question 7	<p>I appreciate your responses. Do you have anything else you would like to share?</p> <p>Do you have any questions for me?</p>

Closing	<p>The time taken to respond to these inquiries is greatly appreciated. You may review a typed transcript of your interview to make corrections if needed (email option available) (10 minutes).</p> <p>You may also speak with me one more time after the interview to hear the interpretations and share your feedback (this is called memberchecking and it takes 20-30 minutes, phone option available)</p> <p>These shared insights will aid in understanding music teachers' experiences and challenges regarding integrating jazz studies in the curriculum at an urban school district (Grades 9-12). This knowledge will help pinpoint the skills and strategies required to incorporate jazz studies into the music curricula successfully. The information shared may also help educators see a significant improvement in student achievement by implementing jazz studies.</p>
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