

WHY I STAY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING TEACHER LONGEVITY IN AN URBAN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Rachel Jorgensen

Abstract

Teacher shortages have become a critical issue in various educational settings, with urban schools experiencing disproportionate levels of teacher attrition (Lamboy, 2023; Wiggan et al., 2021). This study investigated the philosophical and pedagogical perspectives of teachers who demonstrated longevity in urban educational settings. The research focused on the question: how do teachers who sustain long-term careers in urban schools approach their work? Sub-questions explored the relationship between teacher beliefs, preparation, and perspectives in fostering job satisfaction and career commitment in these settings. The study used a qualitative approach, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to explore the lived experiences of teachers with five or more years of service in one urban educational setting. An appreciative inquiry framework guided the methodology. A key finding was that teachers with longevity believed their work made a positive difference in students' lives, demonstrating care for student well-being, passion for their content, and innovative pedagogy.

KEY WORDS: appreciative inquiry, pedagogical approaches to urban education, philosophical approaches to urban education, teacher attrition, teacher retention, urban education.

Anotacija

Mokytojų trūkumas tapo labai opia problema įvairiose švietimo įstaigose, o miesto mokyklose mokytojų mažėjimas neproporcingas (Lamboy, 2023; Wiggan ir kt., 2021). Šis tyrimas analizuoja mokytojų, kurių profesinė karjera miesto švietimo įstaigose ilgalaikė, filosofines ir pedagogines perspektyvas. Pagrindinis tyrimo klausimas apėmė mokytojų požiūrį į ilgalaikę karjerą miesto mokyklose. Papildomi klausimai atskleidė miesto mokyklų mokytojų vertybių, profesinio pasirengimo ir perspektyvų, skatinančių pasitenkinimą profesine karjera miestuose, tarpusavio ryšį. Atliekant tyrimą, siekiant ištirti mokytojų, išdirbusių penkerius ar daugiau metų vienoje miesto švietimo įstaigoje patirtį, taikytas kokybinis metodas, kaip instrumentą pasitelkiant pusiau struktūruotą interviu ir teminę analizę. Tyrimo metodologija remiasi vertinamojo tyrimo prieigomis. Svarbiausias tyrimo radinys atskleidė, kad ilgalaikę darbo patirtį turintys mokytojai, išlaikydami aistrą savo darbui, rūpinasi mokinių gerove, diegia inovatyvius pedagoginius metodus ir tai lemia teigiamus mokinių gyvenimo pokyčius.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: vertinamasis tyrimas, pedagoginis požiūris į švietimą miesto mokyklose, filosofinis požiūris į švietimą miesto mokyklose, mokytojų kadrų nutekėjimas, mokytojų išsaugojimas, švietimas miesto mokyklose.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15181/tbb.v94i1.2711>

Rachel Jorgensen – dr, programme director, instructor, Bethel University, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 317 5th St. NW, Osseo, MN, USA, 55369. E-mail: ra35368@bethel.edu

Received 07/05/2025. Accepted 18/05/2025

Copyright © 2025 Rachel Jorgensen. Published by Klaipėda University Press.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction

The problems facing urban schools are plentiful, and teacher turnover is certainly a predominant item on this list. Teacher turnover in urban schools occurs at a higher rate than in suburban and rural environments in the United States, which has persisted over decades in education (Herman, 2023; Wronowski, 2018). The problem has been exacerbated since the Covid-19 pandemic, which created a teacher shortage across a wide variety of settings on a global level (Bill et al., 2022; Hinrichs, 2023). Teacher attrition is a growing problem, particularly in settings where students present higher levels of need, such as special education environments and areas with lower financial resources where teacher pay is not competitive with wealthier communities (Will, 2024). This qualitative study explored the philosophical and pedagogical approaches used by teachers with five years of service or more in an urban educational setting.

1. Research context and theoretical framework

Several factors influence teacher retention, including personal characteristics and mindsets. Teachers who possess a strong sense of patience and fairness, as well as the ability to accept the challenges of working in urban classrooms, are more likely to persist in these settings (He et al., 2015). Teachers who can view challenges through this lens of acceptance may experience greater emotional resilience and less burnout (Hughes et al., 2019). Another critical factor contributing to teacher retention is emotional resilience, which refers to a teacher's ability to manage stress, connect with students, and stay motivated despite difficulties. In urban classrooms, where students often face significant academic and behavioural challenges, emotional resilience is particularly important (Day, Hong, 2016). Additionally, teachers who embrace the diversity of their students and value persistence, patience, and a commitment to helping all children succeed, are more likely to stay in urban schools (Wadell, Marszalek, 2018).

Innovative pedagogical practices may serve to engage students and inspire educators. One such approach is the Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) method, which is inquiry-based and activity-driven. POGIL has been shown to increase academic outcomes, foster critical thinking, and encourage students to engage in meaningful academic discourse (Soltis et al., 2015; Fateh et al., 2024). Another valuable pedagogical approach is the concept of a growth mindset, which encourages students to believe in the malleability of their abilities and their potential for improvement through hard work and perseverance (Dweck, 1999; Limeri et al., 2020). This mindset can be particularly beneficial in urban settings,

where students often face significant personal and academic challenges. Teachers in urban schools may also benefit from strategies that promote instructional clarity, student autonomy, and cooperative learning, which enhance both student engagement and inclusivity (Chan et al., 2023).

The theoretical framework which informed this study included evidence-based practices such as Culturally Responsive Teaching, Trauma-Informed Pedagogy, and Restorative Justice (Abacioglu et al., 2020; Aronson, Laughter, Augustine et al., 2020; 2016; Blitz et al., 2020; Gay, 2010; González, 2016; Hammond, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching is an approach in which students' cultural references and perspectives make learning experiences more relevant, resulting in increased engagement and achievement among historically marginalised students (Abacioglu et al., 2020; Aronson, Laughter, 2016; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2017). Trauma-informed pedagogy is an approach to education which emphasises a safe space and supportive practices that account for the impact of traumatic experiences such as poverty, family stressors and loss of loved ones (Blitz et al., 2020). Restorative justice is an approach to student discipline which focuses on sustaining the health of the learning community and restoring relationships, proven to support the needs of children in urban settings (González, 2016).

Purpose. Based on the identified problem, this qualitative study aimed to examine the philosophical and pedagogical approaches utilised by educators who report a high level of job satisfaction in urban educational settings. Specifically, this study focused on the relationship between teacher beliefs, preparation, and perspectives and their longevity and job satisfaction in urban teaching.

Definition of terms

Philosophical perspective: The participant's philosophical perspectives included the way they applied and interpreted comprehensive approaches to their work, such as realism, idealism, pragmatism, and/or postmodernism (Alemdar, Aytaç, 2022).

Pedagogical perspective: The participant's pedagogical perspective referred to the teaching practices they selected as they instructed their students, which included constructivism, behaviourism, knowledge domain, and learner mastery (Aylward, Cronjé, 2022). This refers to the principles that guide the instructional decisions the participant makes in day-to-day teaching practice.

Urban educational setting: The setting in this study qualifies as an urban educational setting, defined by the US Census Bureau (2022) as a densely populated area inside an urbanised area. The common characteristics of an urban educational setting include a lower socioeconomic status among residents, an elevated crime rate, and a higher rate of racial and/or ethnic diversity (Mela, 2014).

Teacher longevity: For the purposes of this study, a teacher demonstrating longevity has been a staff member in the urban educational setting for at least five consecutive years.

Research questions

The aim of this study was to investigate the following research question: How do teachers who have sustained lasting careers in urban educational settings approach their work? A subset of questions include: How do teachers philosophically approach their work in urban educational settings? In addition, what are some pedagogical approaches teachers select to sustain themselves in urban educational environments?

2. Methods

The study used semi-structured interviews to explore the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings driving the work of nine participants. The interview protocol was designed with an appreciative inquiry lens to elicit information on what is working well for these individuals in the hope that this may be replicated by other teachers in similar environments. Participants represented an array of subject areas at varying grade levels ranging from grades 6 to 12, and all participants had five or more years of consecutive service in an urban educational setting. These educators were invited to participate in the study for the purposes of appreciative inquiry, which seeks to study the perspectives of those experiencing success in the organisation (Stavros et al., 2016). In light of the small sample size, member checking was utilised to verify the validity, accuracy and credibility of the results. Member checking is a process in which study participants review their own data and clarify any key points, review conclusions, provide feedback, and review a draft of the composed results prior to finalisation (Birt et al., 2016). Ethical considerations included a thorough consent procedure prior to each interview, the opportunity for participants to withdraw from participation at any time, and a careful data analysis process. This included axial coding using NVivo software to organise data, resulting in 15 codes. The standard for validity was 77.77% (seven out of nine participants), which is a reasonable criterion for code saturation for further analysis. Seven of the 15 codes aligned to more than one theme, demonstrating teachers' complex experience in urban educational settings. See Table 1 for Code Definitions.

Table 1. Code titles with definitions based on the researcher's analysis of participant data

Commitment to Student Success	This code was used when a participant discussed the teacher's efforts to ensure that all students, regardless of their challenges or circumstances, have the opportunity to achieve academic and personal success. It includes actions and strategies aimed at supporting students in reaching their potential.
Building Relationships and Trust	This code was used when a participant discussed the importance of establishing strong, positive relationships with students. It focuses on the role of trust, mutual respect, and understanding in fostering a supportive classroom environment conducive to student success.
Equity and Advocacy for Historically Marginalized Students	This code was used when a participant discussed efforts to promote fairness and advocate for students who have been historically marginalized or underrepresented. It includes actions aimed at ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
Personal Connection to Education	This code was used when a participant discussed a personal attachment to education, often based on prior experiences as a student or a passion for the field. It reflects a teacher's connection to the school or district and their motivation to contribute to the community's educational environment.
Philosophy of Growth and Flexibility	This code was used when a participant discussed the importance of adaptability and continuous development in teaching. It highlights the teacher's approach to responding to changing student needs, evolving classroom dynamics, and ongoing professional growth.
Creating a Safe, Supportive Environment	This code was used when a participant discussed the teacher's efforts to establish an inclusive, respectful, and secure classroom environment. It includes creating spaces where students feel emotionally and academically supported, allowing them to thrive.
Passion for Their Subject	This code was used when a participant discussed the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject they teach. It emphasizes the role of the teacher's deep interest in their subject area in motivating students and sparking curiosity and engagement in the content.
Instructional Strategies Rooted in Collaboration	This code was used when a participant discussed teaching strategies that emphasize collaboration among students and teachers. It includes approaches that encourage teamwork, shared problem-solving, and peer learning to enhance the educational experience.
Creative and Engaging Pedagogical Practices	This code was used when a participant discussed the use of creative, interactive, and innovative teaching methods to engage students. It includes strategies that make learning more relevant, interesting, and enjoyable by connecting lessons to real-world contexts and student interests.

WHY I STAY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING TEACHER LONGEVITY IN...

Support for Urban Education and Community Schools	This code was used when a participant discussed their commitment to working in urban or community schools, particularly those serving diverse student populations. It includes recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities in these settings and the importance of community involvement in education.
Overcoming Challenges:	This code was used when a participant discussed the challenges teachers face in their classrooms and how they address them. It includes strategies for overcoming obstacles such as disengaged students, resource limitations, or other difficulties, and emphasizes resilience and adaptability.
Joy of Teaching and Watching Students Grow	This code was used when a participant discussed the satisfaction derived from observing students' academic and personal growth. It includes the teacher's enjoyment in seeing students progress, achieve milestones, and develop over time.
Highlighting Transformative Student Moments	This code was used when a participant discussed significant moments in a student's development that had a lasting impact. It includes instances where students experience academic breakthroughs or personal growth that contribute to their overall transformation.
Valuing Diversity and Representation	This code was used when a participant discussed the importance of embracing and respecting students' diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It includes efforts to ensure that all students feel represented and valued in the classroom, contributing to a more inclusive learning environment.
Lifelong Passion for Teaching	This code was used when a participant discussed their ongoing commitment and dedication to the teaching profession. It includes a focus on long-term involvement in education, driven by a belief in the transformative power of teaching and the desire to make a lasting impact on future generations.

Results

The data yielded four themes related to the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings that influence teacher longevity in urban educational settings. Theme 1 was deep care and concern for students' well-being. This theme was developed by examining codes including commitment to student success, building relationships and trust, equity and advocacy for historically marginalised students, joy of teaching and watching students grow, and highlighting transformative student moments. The theme is defined in common areas of focus, which include a forward-thinking approach to long-term student outcomes, a belief in the ability to improve equity and access through relational teaching, and joy in the successes and transformative experiences of students. One participant shared: 'I like that I feel like I can make a difference to kids that aren't given as many opportunities as others.' Another stated: 'I believe every student can succeed if they want to and are motivated to be successful. They need cheerleaders along the way to guide them

on their journey to success. I love being that cheerleader for my students.’ A desire to make a difference and a disposition of personal investment in student success related to teacher longevity and job satisfaction.

Theme 2 was passion for content area and innovative pedagogy. This theme was developed by examining codes: passion for their subject, instructional strategies rooted in collaboration, creative and engaging pedagogical practices, and lifelong passion for teaching. The theme was defined in common areas of focus, such as the lasting impact of one’s teaching, the ability to be creative and innovative, the use of engaging instructional strategies, and a commitment to the profession. One participant shared: ‘I really enjoy getting kids to relate to my subjects and get excited about them!’ Another shared: ‘I like the autonomy to self-select the material and the curriculum. I need autonomy over what I teach and how students are assessed.’

The ability to teach in their preferred content area and the freedom to practise innovative approaches to instruction helped teachers enjoy their work in an urban educational setting. This enjoyment resulted in participants’ longevity of five years or more.

Theme 3 related to both philosophical and pedagogical approaches to create learning spaces for students. This theme was developed by examining codes. This theme was developed by examining codes: building relationships and trust, creating a safe, supportive environment, instructional strategies rooted in collaboration, support for urban education and community schools, overcoming challenges, and valuing diversity and representation. Participants hoped to create spaces of social, emotional, and physical safety to set the stage for academic learning. One stated: ‘Put so much love and goodness into the students’ souls so that the potential stress of the academic content doesn’t destroy their confidence. Be the teacher who believes in them so that their inner voice is strengthened.’ They highlighted the need to cultivate trust with students and to assuage fears and lack of confidence to encourage readiness to learn and grow. Teachers valued discussion and student-centered learning as a means to increase engagement and create a classroom climate of productive learning. They also shared that the challenges presented by urban education do not outweigh the rewards. Teachers’ personal histories influenced their relationship with urban education. Some find their motivation to teach in urban schools because they attended urban schools, while others attended schools in other settings and found them lacking in richness and perspective.

Themes 2 and 3 intersected in the importance of collaborative learning as a positive element of their work. This served to energise teachers to implement innovative pedagogy (Theme 2), and it contributed to the sense of an emotionally safe and supportive learning environment (Theme 3). Teachers described their classrooms as spaces for interactive learning, and many felt that a supportive learning envi-

ronment demanded a collaborative and reflective atmosphere. Collaborative and reflective teaching methods stood out as effective ways to engage students in meaningful learning experiences. The role of the teacher in the supportive classroom was not a dictator, but rather a facilitator of learning. One participant stated: ‘My philosophy of education includes the idea that the best classroom is one of balance between being student and teacher-centered. I see myself as a facilitator to learning and growing with students.’ The words *conversation*, *discussion*, *facilitator* and *collaborative* arose across the data. Another participant shared: ‘My style is not to lecture but to create conversations and show connections to real life.’ This participant identified a specific strategy she frequently used to create an interactive atmosphere in her classroom, stating: ‘I often use a “POGIL” strategy where student groups can self-pace and move from one activity to another with brief check-ins.’ POGIL, or Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning, has been proven to increase academic outcomes for students, including higher test scores, improved critical thinking, and an increased ability to engage in meaningful academic discourse (Soltis et al., 2015; Fateh et al., 2024). Educators placed a high value on collaborative learning environments when discussing their motivation for longevity in their urban classrooms.

Theme 4 pulled together common characteristics reflected in the data which indicate personal characteristics making educators uniquely attuned to urban educational settings. This theme was developed by examining codes. The codes nested under this theme include commitment to student success, personal connection to urban education, philosophy of growth and flexibility, overcoming challenges, joy of teaching and watching students grow, valuing diversity and representation, and lifelong passion for teaching. These seven codes align with personal characteristics, which include results-orientation, dedication, adaptability, perseverance, optimism, advocacy, inclusivity and passion for the profession. One participant summed up his affinity for his work in the statement: ‘We get to laugh, have fun, and facilitate a learning environment where students get to grow, make mistakes, and build community with each other. It is a genuinely fun, meaningful job.’ Teachers demonstrated commonality in their responses, which relate to the personal attributes, characteristics and perspectives they brought to their classrooms. Helpful qualities included focusing on student outcomes, the ability to exercise flexibility, and relentless hope in the face of challenges. The ability to self-encourage and self-affirm was also important. One participant stated: ‘The message I always say to myself is: I’m doing what I know is right. I’m doing what is best for students. I’m doing what I know is best for students. I’m doing what will get them ready for what’s next.’

Discussion

Nine participants provided data on their lived experiences in an urban educational setting. All participants worked in the setting for five years or more upon the date of their engagement in the study. A careful process of data analysis was followed to identify potential answers to the research questions. Data was read and reread, grouped by consistent categories, and coded for specific themes according to best practices in qualitative analysis (Creswell, Cresswell, 2018; Merriam, Tisdell, 2016). NVivo Software assisted in the data analysis process as it was used to compile and organise the data. Through this process, 15 codes emerged which were nested into four themes, as well as the central conclusion: ‘My work will make a difference.’ Member checking was used to verify the accuracy of the codes prior to in-depth data analysis. Fifteen codes aligned to the research questions as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Research questions and related codes based on the researcher’s data analysis of participant responses

Research Question	Related Codes
How do teachers who have sustained lasting careers in urban educational settings approach their work?	Teachers adhered to the belief ‘My work will make a difference’
How do teachers philosophically approach their work in urban educational settings?	Commitment to student success Relationships and trust Equity and advocacy Joy of teaching and watching students grow Transformative student moments Personal connection to urban education Philosophy of growth and flexibility Overcoming challenges Valuing diversity and representation
What are some pedagogical approaches teachers select to sustain themselves in urban educational environments?	Passion for their subject Instructional strategies rooted in collaboration Creative and engaging pedagogical practices Lifelong passion for teaching Safe, supportive environment

Influential factors on teacher longevity in urban educational settings

The data yielded one central idea across all of the participants. This was present in numerous codes analysed in the data analysis process. The central idea was the

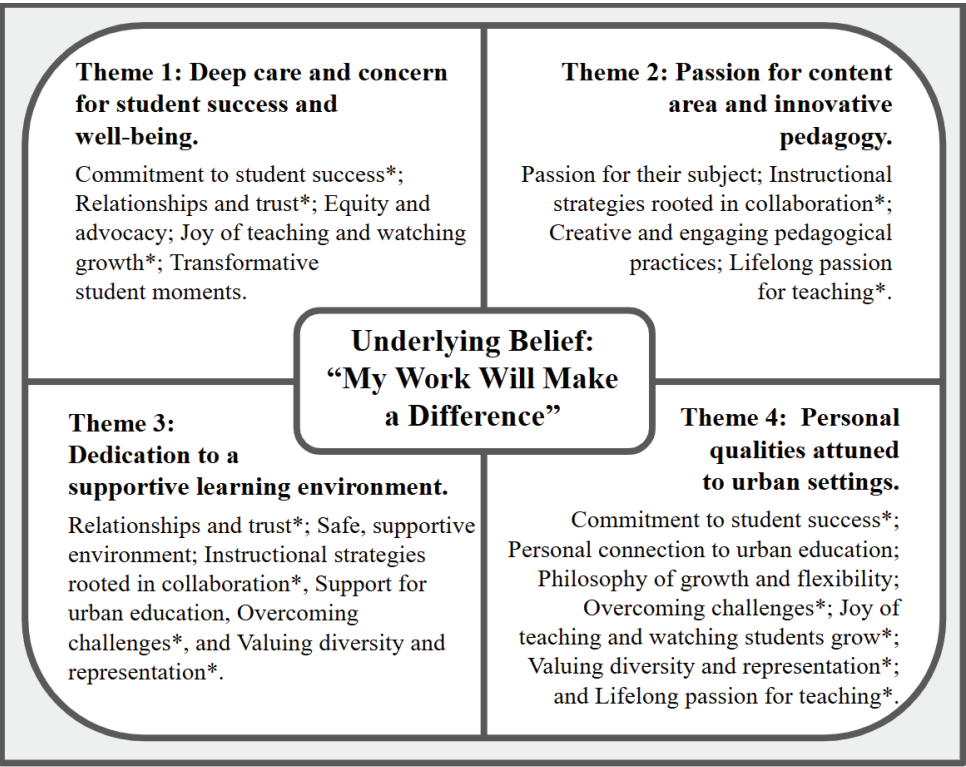


Figure 1. Influential factors on teacher longevity in urban educational settings

teacher’s personal belief in the premise ‘My work will make a difference.’ The 15 codes and four themes support this ultimate premise and speak to the key motivation for teachers who choose to teach in urban educational settings. While this may be an important motivator for all teachers (Onyefulu et al., 2023), it may be more salient to educators who choose to engage in teaching in an urban educational setting. The data yielded in this study create a framework which pulls together the four themes yielded in this study, as well as this central, overarching motivator for teacher longevity, entitled ‘Influential Factors on Teacher Longevity in Urban Educational Settings’ (Fig. 1).

Conclusions

This study investigated the lived experiences of teachers who demonstrate longevity in an urban educational setting to identify common positive practices. An

additional approach to instructional design and pedagogy emerged from participant data. The concept of a Growth Mindset emerged from the data as an important body of research for numerous participants. Growth mindset refers to the extent to which students view their intelligence as improvable, which is directly related to student perseverance through learning challenges (Dweck, 1999; Limeri et al., 2020). Growth mindset purports that the ability to engage in difficulty and overcome challenges relates to a student's belief in their potential efficacy (Sisk et al., 2018). Based on participant references to the concept of growth mindset, it may provide an additional framework to support study results. Another strategy that arose from the data offered by one participant cited the POGIL strategy as a helpful tool in an urban educational setting. POGIL stands for Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning and involves a student-centered approach in which the teacher guides students to take steps on their own and check their learning with their instructor along the way (Soltis et al., 2015; Fateh et al., 2024). POGIL may be another strategy of interest to educators in urban settings as they seek strategies to support their lasting classroom success and job satisfaction.

Appreciative inquiry is a process that begins with an examination of what is working well in a system (Stavros et al., 2016). The four themes identified through the research process may inform the appreciative inquiry process in the urban educational setting. The lived experiences of individuals who are finding success within the organisation may help determine the next steps for replication (Fileborn et al., 2022). Influential factors on teacher longevity in urban educational settings (Fig. 1) may be shared with the broader organisation and utilised as a focus area in the professional development process. Those in the position to hire educators may seek out the philosophies, pedagogical ideas and characteristics detailed in the results of the study. The participants in this study may take the results and utilise them to bolster their leadership as they work with less seasoned colleagues. New teachers in the urban educational setting may be encouraged to focus on meeting student needs, developing a passion for their content area, cultivating a supportive learning environment, and developing personal qualities attuned to success in urban educational settings. Perhaps the most salient and repeatedly evident sentiment across the data of all participants is the importance of an orientation toward hope and the belief that one's work will make a lasting positive impact on the lives of students.

The research shows that teacher attrition negatively impacts student outcomes and that this is a more pronounced issue in urban settings (Goldhaber, Theobald, 2022; Sims, Jerrim, 2020; Wiggan et al., 2021). When teachers adopt the idea that 'My work will make a difference' they may demonstrate less frequent attrition and commit to longevity in their work. The themes of this study suggest that teachers

thrive when they hold deep care and concern for their students, cultivate a passion for their content area and innovative pedagogy, dedicate themselves to a supportive learning environment, and demonstrate qualities attuned to success in urban educational settings. Educators in urban educational settings face a plethora of unique challenges. They may best succeed through a relentless belief in the potential positive impact of their diligent efforts.

Implications for future research

This study offers a small contribution of data about teacher longevity in urban educational settings. The data captured a moment in time in a specific urban educational setting by exploring the lived perspectives of teachers possessing five years of service or more. Studies of a broader scale may improve the validity, credibility and transferability of the data across urban educational settings. Of particular interest would be a study to investigate whether the themes and overarching central idea have salience and relevance in other urban settings. Additional data sources may further answer the study's research questions, including the voices of administration and students. Schools with a more seasoned body of educators may be studied to explore success metrics such as student GPAs, graduation rates, attendance trends, office referrals and college acceptance rates. These data points may confirm the belief educators hold regarding the impact of their work. Longitudinal data may further illustrate outcomes related to teacher longevity.

Specific topics for further research emerged from the data. This speaks to the iterative nature of qualitative research (Ravitch, Carl, 2019). Future research may investigate specific evidence-based teaching practices, such as POGIL, which may have a positive impact in urban educational settings. The urban educational setting involved in this study followed a community school model. The community school model was mentioned by participants as a positive element of their work. Further research may explore the relationship between the community school model and teacher longevity in urban educational settings. Another area mentioned by numerous educators was the concept of growth mindset and its influence on their teaching. Future studies may explore the relationship between growth mindset, hope and teacher longevity in urban educational settings.

Limitations and delimitations

The constructivist nature of this study presents limitations to general applicability. This study was designed to learn about the specific worldview of teachers who experience lasting job satisfaction in an urban educational setting. The conclusions from this study were derived from one urban educational setting and a small sample size of participants. The results of this study may be different in a

different setting, a broader setting, or with a larger sample size. This study focused on a public school serving students in grades 6 to 12. The results may be different in an online or virtual school, a private school, an alternative school, a school for students who have been adjudicated, a charter school, or a school for students with special education services. The characteristics of the urban educational setting may also influence results, including a small student population, a high concentration of students living below the poverty line, a high crime rate in the community, and a 'community school' approach to learning. The timeline for the study was limited to one semester, and the results offered a snapshot of the participants' perspectives at that time. Future research may involve a longer period and a wider variety of measures to provide answers to similar research questions.

Delimitations of this study relate to its potential use in an appreciative inquiry process for the urban educational setting. Appreciative inquiry begins with a discovery phase which involves an in-depth investigation of what is going well within an organisation (Scott, Armstrong, 2019; Stavros et al., 2016). The content of the study may serve to inform the discovery stage in the appreciative inquiry process. The discovery phase leads to dreaming or imagining, a phase in which all staff members review the data and develop a list of possibilities for generalisation throughout the organization (Scott, Armstrong, 2019; Stavros et al., 2016). The final two stages, innovate and implement, invite members of the organisation to determine specific steps to replicate the data gleaned in the discovery phase and implement action steps to put them in place (Scott, Armstrong, 2019; Stavros et al., 2016).

The results of this study may inform school improvement across the urban educational setting and school district in which it takes place. It may also become a critical element in the appreciative inquiry process which is gaining popularity in the landscape of educational reform. This study may provide helpful insights to inform the appreciative inquiry approach within the urban educational setting. Appreciative inquiry involves an initial 'discovery phase' during which researchers collect data and draw conclusions on what is already working well in the organisation, and this may support generalisation across other classrooms and buildings within the district (Busche, 2013).

References

- Abacioglu, C. S., Volman, M., Fischer, A. H. (2020). Teachers' multicultural attitudes and perspective taking abilities as factors in culturally responsive teaching. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90 (3), 736–752. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12328>.

WHY I STAY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING TEACHER LONGEVITY IN...

- Alemdar, M., Aytaç, A. (2022). The impact of teachers' educational philosophy tendencies on their curriculum autonomy. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 6 (1), 270–284. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2022.166>.
- Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 86 (1), 163–2016. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>.
- Aylward, R. C., & Cronjé, J. C. (2022). Paradigms extended: how to integrate behaviorism, constructivism, knowledge domain, and learner mastery in instructional design. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 70 (2), 503–529. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-022-10089-w>.
- Bill, K., Bowsher, A., Malen, B., Rice, J. K., Saltmarsh, J. E. (2022). Making matters worse? COVID-19 and teacher recruitment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (6), 36–40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217221082808>.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative health research*, 26 (13), 1802–1811. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>.
- Blitz, L. V., Yull, D., Clauhs, M. (2020). Bringing Sanctuary to School: Assessing School Climate as a Foundation for Culturally Responsive Trauma-Informed Approaches for Urban Schools. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.)*, 55 (1), 95–124. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916651323>.
- Chan, S., Maneevan, S., Koul, R. (2023). Teacher educators' teaching styles: Relation with learning motivation and academic engagement in pre-service teachers. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28 (8), 2044–2065. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1947226>.
- Day, C., Hong, J. (2016). Influences on the capacities for emotional resilience of teachers in schools serving disadvantaged urban communities: Challenges of living on the edge. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 115–125. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.015>.
- Fateh, S., Kirbulut Gunes, Z. D., Malone, A., Cote, G., Phelps, A. J., Porter, R. N., Rushton, G. T. (2024). Bridging the Gap: Examining Student Engagement in a Hybrid POGIL General Chemistry Class. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 101 (12), 5147–5159. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.3c00791>.
- Fileborn, B., Wood, M., Loughnan, C. (2022). Peer reviews of teaching as appreciative inquiry : learning from “the best” of our colleagues. *Higher Education*, 83 (1), 103–117. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00637-9>.
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Goldhaber, D., Theobald, R. (2022). Teacher Attrition and Mobility Over Time. *Educational Researcher*, 51 (3), 235–237. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X211060840>.
- González, T. (2016). Restorative justice from the margins to the center: The emergence of the new norm in school discipline. *Howard Law Journal*, 60 (1), 267–308. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2901108>.
- Hammond, Z. (2017). *We all can be authentic merchants of hope*. Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain. <https://crtandthebrain.com/we-all-can-be-authentic-merchants-of-hope/>.
- He, Y., Cooper, J. E., Tangredi, C. (2015). Why Do I Stay? A Case Study of a Secondary English Teacher in an Urban High School. *Teacher Education Quarterly (Claremont, Calif.)*, 42 (1), 49–66.
- Herman, K. (2023). What we know now: Urban teacher residency models, teacher shortages, and equity. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 32 (1), 56–73.
- Hinrichs, P. (2023). COVID-19 and education: an updated survey of the research. *Economic Commentary*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26509/frbc-ec-202315>.
- Hughes, R., Kinder A., Cooper, C. (2019). *The Wellbeing Workout*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org.ezproxy.bethel.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-92552-3_60.
- Lamboy, E. M. (2023). Introduction: On teacher shortage. *The New Educator*, 19 (3), 169–174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2023.2236383>.
- Limeri, L. B., Carter, N. T., Choe, J., et al. (2020). Growing a growth mindset: characterizing how and why undergraduate students' mindsets change. *IJ STEM Ed* 7, 35. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-020-00227-2>.
- Mela, A. (2014). Urban Areas. In: A. C. Michalos (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Springer, Dordrecht. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_3122.
- Merriam, S. B., Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ravitch, S. M., Carl, N. M. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.
- Scott, J. T., Armstrong, A. C. (2019). Disrupting the deficit discourse: reframing metaphors for professional learning in the context of appreciative inquiry. *Professional Development in Education*, 45 (1), 114–124.

- Sisk, V. F., Burgoyne, A. P., Sun, J., Butler, J. L., Macnamara, B. N. (2018). To what extent and under which circumstances are growth mind-sets important to academic achievement? Two meta-analyses. *Psychological Science*, 29 (4), 549–571. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797617739704>.
- Soltis, R., Verlinden, N., Kruger, N., Carroll, A., Trumbo, T. (2015). Process-oriented guided inquiry learning strategy enhances students' higher-level thinking skills in a pharmaceutical sciences course. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 79 (1), Article 11. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe79111>.
- United States Census Bureau. (2022, October 3). *Urban and rural*. Census.gov. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>.
- Wiggan, G., Smith, D., Watson-Vandiver, M. (2021). The national teacher shortage, urban education and the cognitive sociology of labor. *The Urban Review*, 53 (1), 43–75. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-020-00565-z>.
- Wronowski, M. L. (2018). Filling the void: A grounded theory approach to addressing teacher recruitment and retention in urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 50 (6), 548–574. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/001312451771360>