Examining Cultural Identity in Houston-Area Secondary Music Classrooms: Perceptions

of Teachers and Students

Christopher S. Song

School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, University of Michigan

MUSED 516: Thesis

Dr. Colleen Conway

May 24th, 2021

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of students and teachers regarding their cultural identity in music classrooms. Research questions included: (a) How do teachers describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom teaching practices? and (b) How do students describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom music experiences? Teachers and students recounted their past and present musical and cultural background in order to provide insight into how these are represented in the music classroom. Teachers shared how their cultural background affected pedagogical decisions and how they provided culturally responsive music experiences for their students. Students shared the kinds of musical experiences they expected in their music classroom and how their cultural identities were being acknowledged in their music experiences. Data was collected and analyzed through a phenomenological in-depth interview series where "meaning-making" was studied through recounting the lived human experience. Culturally responsive teaching is discussed as a way to not only acknowledge, but celebrate the cultural identities of students through the opportunity found within music experiences.

Keywords*:* cultural identity, cultural diversity, culturally responsive teaching, social justice

Acknowledgements

This thesis document would not have been possible without the many people in my life that have been on my side rooting for me through this gratifying albeit anxiety inducing process.

Thank you to my advisor, Dr. Colleen Conway, whose guidance and insight continually kept me centered through the process of my final project. You have been unceasingly affirming and encouraging. Thank you for your wisdom. Thank you for being my biggest fan when I needed it most. I feel so blessed to have you in my corner.

To Dr. Kate Fitzpatrick and Professor David Jackson for your time and attention as members of my thesis committee. Your role in this study aided in my understanding in how to care for marginalized people and their voices. Your expertise and experiences were very valuable to this endeavor.

To my U-M cohort that have been my loudest cheerleaders. Thank you for being wonderful friends and delightful people. You all inspire me to pursue knowledge and advocate for the equitable education of music. Thank you for your friendship and love.

To the participants of my study, who had given their time in service to this project. Your words have been extremely valuable, and I appreciate your candidness and vulnerability during our time together. Thank you to the teachers who believe in mindfully creating inclusive experiences for their students. Thank you to the young students who shared their stories. I will continue to strive to make the music classroom a better place for you.

And finally, thank you to my father, mother, and brother who unconditionally supported me financially, spiritually, and emotionally through the pursuit of my Master's degree. I literally could not have accomplished this without you. 사랑해요.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I

Introduction

Growing up as a Korean American child in a suburban community, the differences in culture between myself and my peers were painfully obvious to me. I grew up in an immigrant household where I was first in the entire family to be born in the United States. I looked different from the majority. These differences continued to be apparent when I was invited over to friends' homes. I felt much like a reporter, investigating and observing the remarkable uniqueness of each family's behaviors and customs. The décor of their homes, what they ate, and how they interacted with each other. I had very little understanding of how people come to create their own cultural identity, but my curiosity developed with each interaction. Why do you do this that way? Don't people normally do this? Am I the weird one?

I decided as a teenager that I had aspirations to be a band director. I had and have a deep passion for music and for sharing that passion with others. This initially upset my parents. From their perspective, they worked hard and provided everything that I needed in order to pursue a 'noble' career. Through this conflict, I started engaging in the discourse surrounding cultural expectations of a child of immigrants. This turmoil deeply affected my consciousness. Was being a teacher of music not a legitimate profession? Aren't my parents supposed to support their children's passion whatever it may be? Is it something about my parents' culture that caused them to feel this way?

After much growth and reconciliation, I was blessed and fortunate to purse my career as a middle school band director following the completion of my undergraduate degree. Among the many questions people asked me concerning the campus I began teaching in, the conversation often consisted of the level of diversity present and why it mattered. I took pride in the ethnic

diversity that my campus had a reputation for, but I didn't really understand why. In any

community, diversity in their culture or ethnicity is important, but how and who does it benefit?

My narrative illustrated an understanding that intersected cultural expectations and

musical experiences in order to make up a lived experience. This interplay of connected and

conflicting experiences was something that has now shaped my cultural identity. Hahl and

Löfström (2016) discussed cultural identity as synonymous to interculturality, a perspective

where "each individual belongs to different cultural groups simultaneously and negotiates his/her

identities in interaction with others" (pp. 301-302). Individuals are multicultural people, where

many dimensions shape and make up their specific identities. The definition of cultural identity

that guided this research was as follows:

> Language, behavioral expressions, interpretations of actions, and societal expectations are
>
> all culturally borne and implemented. Culture includes ethnicity and race, as well as
>
> gender, class, language, region, religion, exceptionality, and other diversities that help to
>
> define individuals. Participating as a member of these microcultures makes each
>
> individual a multicultural being. (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 72)

Culture, within the term cultural identity, acts as an inclusion word that encompasses aspects of

people with both their formed identity through lived experiences and natured qualities. Joseph

(2007) recognized "that individuals do not fit easily into discrete cultural groups – the location of

cultural identity is complex and constantly evolving" (p. 31). To pinpoint the exact location or

origin of an individual's identity is complicated, however the study of it could be beneficial to

educational agendas through prolonged and in-depth discussion of their past and present

experiences.

Within the music classroom, I observed a phenomenon that existed in how an individual's cultural identity manifested in their music making experiences. As stated above, people are multicultural beings. Therefore, the teachers and students in these music classrooms experienced this type of negotiation of their identities in their interaction with others. This research examined how teachers responded to this phenomenon and how students recognized how their identities are being acknowledged. In order to understand this phenomenon further, the topic of culturally responsive teaching required exploration.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Gay's (2015) definition of culturally responsive teaching was as follows:

Culturally responsive teaching is an outgrowth of multicultural education. In the United States, it focuses primarily on the instructional aspects of educating ethnic and racial minority groups (or groups of color) such as Indigenous (or Native), African, Asian, and Latino Americans, various biracial groups, and recent immigrants. (Gay, 2015, p. 124)

Gay (2015) encouraged present and future teachers to be aware of the evolution in each educational setting in order to respond genuinely to the increasing ethnically and culturally demographic change of its population. Teacher behaviors, current curriculum, and diverse teaching methods must be culturally relevant in order to benefit the overall educational achievement of diverse students. Ladson-Billings (1995) called this *culturally relevant pedagogy* and provided three criteria for an effective curriculum: (a) academic success; (b) cultural competence; and (c) critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (p. 160). Ladson-Billings (2018) first coined this idea with the intention of reaching out to African-American students, but now has expanded to other marginalized groups of students. Each paradigm shift begged the need for educators to possess the ability to respond

mindfully to the variety of experiences their students bring into the classroom. The cultural knowledge of each child should be incorporated and referenced to contribute to an effective learning experience.

Navigating through the presence of cultural differences and the discourse that surrounds it can be difficult due to the hesitation in understanding who possesses the authority to have a voice in the matter (Housee, 2008). In my own experience, this appeared in situations where one debates matters of diversity but unassumingly offends a marginalized group due to their lack of affinity or experience. Comparably, someone who feels ill-equipped to engage in these conversations falls silent and fails at a chance to defend a marginalized group thus further contributing to potential injustice. It is in classrooms, a setting of mingling diverse backgrounds, that both sides of this conversation inevitably occur. Within music classrooms specifically, Dekaney and Robinson (2014) argued that "music educators should make an effort to get to know their students, who they are, and what they think by creating a safe classroom environment where diversity is respected and accepted" (p. 100). This setting provides students and teachers with an opportunity to shape their identities and find a shared sense of group (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008; Fitzpatrick, 2012). Within music programs, especially within secondary large ensembles, a micro culture develops through students and their relationship with their directors, program, and fellow members. Kelly-McHale (2017) discussed this on the topic of socialization in music classrooms as it relates to social emotional learning and stated:

> …music classrooms afford us the opportunity to not only transmit culture, but to create it. As we work to do this, we must learn to understand the importance of interaction within our classrooms. The interactions that most directly shape the context occur among students, and between teachers and students. (Kelly-McHale, 2017, p. 53)

Students depend on the mentoring from their directors, the comfort of their ensemble rooms, loyalty towards their program, and friendships cultivated with fellow members. Vulnerability derives from these situations and may carry chance for enlightening and worthwhile conversations regarding identity development for students. Whether participants in these situations handle the dialogue gracefully or not is the issue. A discourse exists here surrounding cultural identity that begs the question of how and who possesses the authority to lead these conversations. Social emotional learning that is so closely tied to music education provides practical tools for the modern culturally responsive teacher, however more investigation is required to determine any barriers in place that may prohibit its prevalence. Examining the history behind the structures and systems by which music classrooms were created benefit this conversation.

Historical Perspective

Studies concerned with culturally responsive teaching mention the problematic systems of current music education classrooms that slight or exclude certain groups of people because of its roots in Westernized music traditions (Abril, 2009; Bradley, 2009). This Eurocentric perspective was explained in Drummond's (2005) historical analysis of the expanding cultural diversity within music education starting in the 1960s where changing political, social and demographic patterns, together with the processes of decolonization, brought a new awareness of cultural plurality. The intention in providing students with an educational experience stemmed from the desire to teach individuals about ideals from the dominant culture. Through the continuing decades, it was evident that students in historically marginalized groups were disadvantaged in their experiences compared to those students identified as the dominant culture. A demand for more multicultural elements created little effect towards the established tradition

due to the lack of reform towards the existing curriculum. This brought about a necessity for

institutional change in order to create new educational environments that would celebrate a range

of musical cultures rather than solely on the dominant culture.

        While this paradigm shift has brought about deserved change towards culturally

responsive education, the modern music classroom is still "providing education only in western

classical music, or allowing multicultural elements but privileging the European tradition"

(Drummond, 2005, pg. 1). The professional backgrounds of music educators are often rooted in

Western music traditions and promotes monoculturalism which further aggravates this

perspective (Joseph & Southcott, 2009). For the purposes of progression, teachers ought to

consciously allow discussions and opportunities to learn about differing cultures within the

music classroom. Joseph and Southcott (2009) argued that, "[through] exposing students to other

cultures and particularly their musics, we also explore cross-cultural possibilities more fully,

richly and critically than previously" (p. 458). In order to capture this perspective, I examined

this through an intersectionality lens, where the multiple identities of teachers and students are

placed within the fixed dominant culture of the modern music classroom.

Intersectionality

        The beliefs surrounding *intersectionality*, rooted in feminist theory, analyzed how

identifying characteristics of a person affect "the relationships among multiple dimensions and

modalities of social relations and subject formations" (McCall, 2005). Crenshaw (1989)

introduced the theory of intersectionality with the notion of multiple burdens associated with

previously mentioned varied and interacting identities. Collins (1993) explained the concept of

multiple burdens in this discussion:

Once we realize that there are few pure victims or oppressors, and that each one of us

derives varying amounts of penalty and privilege from the multiple systems of oppression

that frame our lives, then we will be in a position to see the need for new ways of thought

and action. (p. 36)

The term intersectionality and these arguments supported the desire to advance research in its

understanding of people and their backgrounds. By being empathetic toward this information,

systematic pressures have potential to be uncovered that could contribute towards action and just

response.

I included the theory of intersectionality here in order to relate the many dimensions of

identity that exist in the classroom. Educators may become more conscious of validating the

unique experiences of each student when they examine their own identity and how it shapes their

pedagogy and curriculum. Fitzpatrick (2012) discussed behaviors in student identity formation

through how they experience the alignment of their cultural background with their social

environment. This perspective initiates the responsibility for the music teacher to learn of their

students' unique cultural identities and in turn expose those students to the genres and critical

role models associated with them. The music classroom, as a student elected activity, creates an

environment where a student's self-interests can intersect with curriculum. Educators, in their

teaching praxis, must aim to connect with their students on a more critical level on the basis of

identity in order to celebrate them, while also bringing to the fore any hidden instances of

subjugation. While culturally responsive teaching seeks to acknowledge and involve student's

cultural identities in the classroom, my research aimed to examine the dialogue that surrounded

this method of teaching in order to give further reason to its impact.

The Setting

The city of Houston, TX and its surrounding areas have gained a reputation for having rich cultural and ethnic diversity while continuing to attract more ethnic groups into its rapidly growing communities. In 2018, Houston was named the No. 1 destination city according to the U-Haul migration trends report (U-Haul, 2018). This setting provided a fascinating example of multiple identities intersecting with one another. As a practitioner in this context, wonderments of what stakeholders are thinking and discussing about this situation came to mind. When the discourse shifted towards education and how cultural diversity appeared in classrooms, people anecdotally viewed the presence of cultural diversity as beneficial towards their inclusivity agenda. I wondered about what evidence led to this discourse. Are all situations with the presence of cultural diversity positive? As mentioned previously, literature recommended continuing to equip present and future teachers with awareness in how to respond genuinely to the increasingly changing ethnic and cultural demographic of the classroom (Kindall-Smith, 2012). Through the examination of the discourse surrounding cultural identity in music programs, these stakeholders may see the nature of how music motivates these types of environments giving reason to celebrate the perceived diversity.

Within the state of Texas, public school secondary ensembles have gained a reputation to be highly competitive which has been established by a performance driven standards-based culture. These expectations are measured through evaluations that are employed by various entities such as TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) with their Honor group selection process, UIL (University Interscholastic League) with their annual concert performance and sight reading evaluation, and PML (Prescribed Music List) which compiles a list of repertoire coded into performance levels deemed rigorous and suitable for these sorts of contexts. Participation in

standards-based performances are ubiquitous in secondary public school music ensembles, which tends to drive the classroom curriculum implemented by both teachers and administrators.

The Climate

This research was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. COVID-19 was an airborne disease caused by a novel coronavirus previously unseen by humans prior to its discovery in 2019 (CDC, 2021). This fatal disease spread through airborne respiratory droplets and caused a major shift in behavior and interaction, which included protocols such as mask wearing and social distancing. Due to this monumental alteration of regular human life, many established systems including educational settings were forced to pivot toward alternative forms of instruction. Additionally, conversations surrounding race and the systemic oppression of BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) saturated the social climate. This was in part from the occurrence of protests demanding social reform due to events surrounding continuous mistreatment and brutality against these people.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of students and teachers regarding their cultural identity in music classrooms. Research questions included: (a) How do teachers describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom teaching practices? and (b) How do students describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom music experiences?

While the topic of culture is pervasive in the discourse of today, more examination could exist in order to ensure positive paths toward progress. Thus, leading society towards a more developed understanding of the discourse surrounding diversity eliminating uncertainty, fear, or discrimination.

Chapter I served to introduce the phenomenon surrounding cultural identity and the need to examine its present discourse. The topic of culturally responsive teaching was discussed in order to provide means and reason to study teacher and student culturally identity in how it might contribute to the literature base. Chapter II will review relevant sources that explored how cultural identity took various forms in the topics of identity construction, cultural diversity, culturally relevant pedagogy, and social justice in general and music education.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This review of literature examined the role of culture in how it takes many forms and provides a set of discursive practices that may contribute to further research. Selected studies relevant to this project are presented in the following categories: (a) construction of cultural identity, (b) perceptions of cultural diversity, (c) aims of culturally responsive teaching, and (d) authority of social justice.

Construction of Cultural Identity in Music Education

Dekaney and Robinson (2014) recognized the disparity in identities between teachers and students by noticing that the rapid changing cultural shift in students did not reflect in the same way with teachers. On the topic of culturally relevant experiences in the music classroom, this study investigated how students enrolled in world drumming ensembles perceived the intersection of music, culture, and identity. A survey was administered to students ($N = 40$) in world drumming courses at two urban high schools (labeled as School A and School B). Two of the survey items included, "How would you describe your family's cultural and ethnic background?" and "How is your school ethnically diverse?" Students connected cultural and ethnic backgrounds to their racial identity. However, racial identity was also connected to additional aspects of their culture, like religious involvement, music preferences, and cultural heritage. Even though both participating schools were similar in demographics with large Black populations, only School A's students significantly perceived the presence of a diverse environment that had experiences which promote cultural awareness. This was attributed to the existence of ethnically diverse teachers. The most interesting question was, "How does your music choice describe your identity?" Students from School A responded strongly to the notion

that their music choices directly reflect their identity. Emergent themes explained how their musical identity connects to understanding feeling, describes life journeys, is an expression of freedom, and demonstrates a way of life. Students from School B echoed similarly to these statements, but to a lesser extent comparably in terms of depth. Discussion of these responses mainly revolved around the disparities in responses between the two schools. Researchers recognized a supportive administration that supported a diverse population of teachers. These teachers created and implemented activities that connected the student's musical and cultural identities together. "In this process, the music teacher may individualize learning and invite students who have skills and experience in certain areas to share their knowledge" (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014). If music educators accept that all music expressions and styles are welcome in their classroom, then "it is possible the music classroom will become a more relevant place to *all* students" (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014, p. 100).

Natale-Abramo's (2014) multiple case study examined the discourses surrounding the identity construction of three instrumental music teachers. This study applied Foucault's (1980) ideas of discursive fields as a theoretical framework and uncovered four related themes which will be outlined below. In each of the cases, the theme of conflicting pedagogical discourses emerged having to do with conductor-influenced pedagogies intersecting with new and creative approaches to teaching. In other words, these teachers had to navigate the contradiction between traditional teacher-centered instruction and more experimental student-centered instruction. They recognized that while there was a clear expectation to instruct their students with fundamental and skill-based knowledge, it was more fulfilling to themselves and their students to employ more student-led activities.

Another theme that emerged among two of the participants, was the subordination of music as a discipline. Participants from these two cases explained the hierarchy between music and other academic subjects and recognized that this heavily influenced their approaches to teaching. Due to concerns with retention of students relating to job security, participants felt they needed to alter their teaching practices in balancing their educational and musical goals in order to fulfill their student's enjoyment. Relationships between colleagues were also deliberated due to the pressure of competing with other music departments in enrolling students into their classes. The matter of the discourse of class and race emerged for one of the participants working in an urban community with a population of mostly students of color. Due to their low socioeconomic status and the presence of poverty, the role of the teacher was shaped by the problems and various needs of the students in the classroom. Cultural misunderstandings in this situation created conflict and poor communication, influencing how the participant shaped her teaching pedagogy and constructed her identity in the classroom.

The final emergent theme was the performativity of sexual identity. One of the participants divulged how his musical experiences were an avenue to both express and hide his homosexual identity. The act of music making created a safe space where he could express himself musically without divulging what or to whom he was expressing. The practice of negotiation also emerged for the participant as he experienced the multiple facets of being a teacher in its adjacency to power and vulnerability. The teacher identity was shaped by the present discursive practices that caused him to portray only parts of his identity while suppressing what would not align with the heteronormative standards of the classroom. These emergent themes clarified how entering discursive fields and engaging in the discourses present in instrumental music classrooms informed the construction of music teacher identities.

Perceptions of Cultural Diversity

Albertson (2015) examined the lack of diversity within the demographics of music educators who instruct increasingly diverse student populations. This study recognized the issue of access in that music education institutions may be systemically restricting the admission of diverse populations due to social, cultural, or economic limitations. Music education professors at three public universities were interviewed and their enrollment requirements were analyzed in order to determine how diversity was understood and addressed in the classroom. The perspectives of the participants reinforced the notions from the researcher that conversations surrounding diversity can be uncomfortable and can be confusing to speak to diversity when it is unclear as to whom it benefits. With two of the three universities, professors recognized the lack of diversity in both their faculty and student population. They expressed a desire and hopes to have a culturally diverse community, but what was unclear, "was a clear sense of purpose toward this diversification" (Albertson, 2015, p. 145). The remaining university had a large Latino student population, yet professors did not speak to appreciating or recognizing the cultural benefits in the presence of these students. Rather, they critiqued the gaps of content knowledge and performance skills from these students that did not meet their Euro-centric standards of achievement.

Within all three universities, the conversation surrounding diversity was often more relevant in musical and curricular terms rather than having to do with student well-being or human flourishing. The latter required a faster shift towards creating culturally pluralistic spaces. Albertson (2015) placed this responsibility on music teacher educators who have the ability to break down barriers to access and place the needs of their students over the curriculum.

Within general education literature, Civitillo et al (2017) investigated the description of norms surrounding different occurrences of promoting cultural diversity in the organization of campus hallways. Schools used a variety of practices and artifacts in order to promote cultural diversity in the form of *equality* and *cultural pluralism*. Researchers described equality as equal treatment towards all students regardless of immigrant or cultural background presented in the form of cooperation or acceptance of differences. Cultural pluralism was described as interest in student cultural background, learning about intercultural relations, and learning about multicultural topics. The *equality* approach was found to be insufficient when it was represented alone due to its inability to attend to the needs of students of their various backgrounds and may cause the avoidance of talking about cultural differences. However, when combined, the two approaches of *cultural pluralism* and *equality* were able to celebrate differences rather than be fearful of them. Results concluded that the most inclusive school experiences that promoted intergroup social interactions fostered both cultural pluralism partnered with equality (Civitillo et al, 2017).

Aims of Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education

Bradley (2009) investigated the notion of musical moments in specific contexts being advantageous in the development of community. This is explained through a narrative involving a transformative musical performance of a youth choir in which an energetic and profound connection was made between performer and audience through cross-cultural connections. Bradley (2009) discussed this situation by introducing *multicultural human subjectivity* as a form of self-actualization or self-understanding as a response to the discourses that surround a group of people. In this instance, it is the discourse surrounding race, ethnicity, and nationality that may cause one to wonder about their relationship with others and how they understand themselves.

This discussion reasoned that these understandings may lead to an open attitude with others with inherent differences that breaks down polarizing boundaries.

> As such, multicultural human subjectivity suggests resistance to oppressions articulated through socially and discursively constructed identifications of race, ethnicity, nation, gender, ability, and so forth. It also acknowledges the fluidity and dynamism of discursively constituted boundaries, providing potentially more open understandings of what it might mean to be human. (Bradley, 2009, p. 60)

Multicultural human subjectivity can be recognized as a subject derived from the discourse, that implores society to acknowledge the differences between humans as vital to our sense of community.

Abril (2009) studied the disparity that existed in cultural background between student and teacher. More specifically, how one music teacher navigated these tensions in order to uncover what circumstances affect certain change. As music teachers were challenged and made aware of the growing cultural differences that arose in their classrooms, how were they responding to this and how did it inform their practice? Nancy, the single participant in this study of a teacher's experiences, recognized the growing Hispanic population within her school. She felt compelled to implement a Mariachi curriculum in response to have the curriculum of her music program reflect the culture of the students. She identified herself as a White, non-Hispanic teacher, with a Western-centric musical background, which necessitated support and guidance from her community in teaching a style of music from a culture different from her own. "Culturally responsive teaching requires that teachers not only acknowledge and understand diverse cultures, but that they act upon this understanding" (Abril, 2009, p. 89). Nancy experienced a complete shift in her usual approaches in the typical classroom. In order for her students to receive a rich

and enlightened music experience, simply programing and performing music reflecting a particular culture was not sufficient. Shifting towards a more learner centered style of teaching allowed Nancy to receive insightful feedback and guidance from her students and community. In this context, the teacher did not possess all of the content knowledge required for the specific ensemble. Therefore, spaces were created for students to engage in important dialogue surrounding music and culture, revealing tension between ethnic identities and ultimately deepening understanding of the way people relate to the musical experience.

Authority of Social Justice

Housee (2008) examined how both students and teachers perceive teaching and learning about race and found how impactful racial identity was for students. Interviews with lecturers, which were of various ethnic backgrounds, found that when teaching about race and racism, black students specifically viewed white teachers as unqualified to lecture on the topic due to their perceived inability to bring their lived experiences of racism into the classroom. It was confirmed through this research that the identities of both instructor and student shape the classroom environment as well as the teaching and learning experiences. However, simply relating to the students through the connection of similar experiences and backgrounds was not enough to ensure academic success. Conclusions of this study provided a vision towards teaching strategies that are inclusive of Black experiences meant to question structures that may have been systematic in providing power toward whitearchy or patriarchy. In order to effectively teach 'race' and racism, the inclusion of marginalized voice was imperative in the student experience in order to aid in their engagement in critical thinking.

Turner, Sweet, and Fornaro (2019) provided a module in the form of three classroom activities that follow a process for students to engage in productive race talk and have engaging

conversations surrounding injustice. The presence of tension surrounding social and racial injustice within education was examined in this study. The rationale behind this module derived from the current ineffective nature of student conversations surrounding race and diversity issues that appeared in media. Educators must feel empowered to guide such honest conversations in order to allow students to orient themselves toward successful future engagements. The module promoted student engagement through racial and ethnic identity discussion, the exploration of intersectionality, and an understanding of privilege and oppression. The reaction to these activities provided awareness to the presence of systematic structures that pose either opportunities or obstacles depending on the identity of each individual. This module provided "a path for students to go from their own racial formation to understanding their interlocking power imbued identities to finally grasping the enormous driving forces of policies, events, and demographics on both city structures and the way diverse groups and individuals experiences these communities" (Turner, Sweet, & Fornaro, 2019, p. 43).

Within music education, Koza (2008) observed the affluence gap and access issue with university level voice auditions that may be complicit in institutional and systematic racism. This explored the exclusionary practices present in public colleges or universities that could be uncovered by listening for "Whiteness." Ladson-Billings (2018) called this theory the 'full social funding of race.' The discussion also revolved around Foucault's warning to study the discourse by examining the effects of power and knowledge. Koza (2008) summarized these theories:

> Focusing on discourses about bodies and music, I argue that in the auditions, the
> construction of musical difference, which is an effect of power and is accomplished by
> the materialization of categories or styles of music, plays a role in the systematic

inclusion or exclusion of people, whose bodies already have been sorted and ordered

through a process of differencing that materializes bodies as raced (p. 146).

This theory was evident in the presented example of 'othered' music. Koza (2008) observed how

the school of music's audition requirements seemed to discriminate without any explicit

reference to race by expecting applicants to prepare art songs exclusively from the Western

tradition and restricted or othered music from any popular or folk genres. Two emergent themes,

racing bodies and styling music, were created by categorizing the two symbiotic strategies that

were dividing and disqualifying students in their admission process. Koza (2008) recognized

race as a social construct and the "materialization of bodies as raced relies on a discourse of

difference" (p. 151). The discussion revolved around the performative action in the power of

creating divisive categories that led to disqualifying certain groups or races. This materialization

of bodies also existed similarly in the materialization of music style. Critiquing and articulating

differences in musical style was predicated by the criteria established by the dominant power that

shaped these decisions. Thus, creating a hierarchy of ideal musical styles resulted in the higher

potential to favor certain voices while rejecting voices unsupported by the dominant power. Koza

(2008) accepted that these themes contribute to 'affirmations of Whiteness' and urged educators

to carefully listen for its presence. Recognizing its institutional presence and substantively

discussing issues of race may help reveal the explicit or implicit purposes behind school music.

Looking Ahead

In music education, further literature similar to cultural identity and culturally responsive

teaching topics were found in the study of preservice teacher education. Kindall-Smith (2012)

integrated social justice content into the current music education curricula by establishing trust

with students and focusing on learner-centered instruction. Findings indicated that taking time to

discuss topics of diversity affected student learning and teacher assumptions. Cain (2015) explored culturally responsive teacher training in Singapore's pre-service teachers and found that music teacher education and its perspective has been shifting based on the changing culture of its communities. VanDeusen (2019) explored cultural immersion and field experiences in preservice music education in order to explore different cultural communities and challenge music education students in their beliefs and assumptions. The work needed to ensure the equity and fervor of music education may be found in the continued exploration of culturally responsive teaching curriculum in pre-service music teacher education.

Chapter II has provided a literature base focused on the presence of cultural identity in education that draws attention to human experience within identity construction, understanding of diversity, the presence of culturally responsive teaching, and the balance of power in social justice. Examining cultural identity discourses reasons for collective humanity to understand how to navigate conversations surrounding this current social movement, especially with students. Literature that focused on the teacher perspective in their description of these categories is prevalent, whereas the student perspective surrounding these topics was scarce. My research meant to capture not only the lived experience of teachers, but also the narrative of students who are battling to make sense of their identity in its position adjacent to their musical surroundings. Through in-depth phenomenological study of the discourse surrounding teacher and student cultural identity, the lived experience of these voices meant to lead to better understandings of how to cultivate these culturally responsive environments. Chapter III explains the method in which these experiences were examined.

Chapter III

Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of students and teachers regarding their cultural identity in music classrooms. Research questions included: (a) How do teachers describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom teaching practices? and (b) How do students describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom music experiences?

The method of this qualitative study was a phenomenological interview design through a focused, in-depth interview process (Seidman, 2019). Participants were teachers ($n = 3$) and students ($n = 7$) who were selected from secondary public-school music programs located in a culturally diverse Houston-area suburban school district in the state of Texas. This design supported the notion that lived experiences and stories of participants act as valuable research and analytical data (Van Manen, 1990; Barrett, 2014; Hourigan & Edgar, 2014; Seidman, 2019). Hourigan and Edgar (2014) provided the lens of phenomenological research as the study of lived experiences through the perspective of human existence. In music education, they claimed that it was important for researchers in music to understand that meaning cannot always be found from the perspective of an outsider (Hourigan & Edgar, 2014, p. 160). In other words, in order to understand the human perspective within a certain phenomenon, researchers must question the individuals experiencing it.

Seidman (2019) explained this form of interview as "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). For educational contexts, Seidman (2019) made the case for phenomenological interviewing as a necessary design as an avenue of inquiry. This argument relied on the adequacy of research method being relevant to the purpose of research and research questions. This method did not

aim to evaluate a claim or hypothesis, rather it was a means to qualify the subjective

understanding of human subjects within the phenomenon of a music classroom. A fundamental

difference between the study of natural science and social science was that the subjects of the

study in the latter had the ability to talk and think freely. As storytelling had been a major way of

recording history, I found it fitting to utilize it as a method of research and data collection to

deeply appreciate and genuinely recognize the stories of individuals.

Theoretical Framework

I utilized Foucault's (1972) teachings on the socially constructed theory of discourse as a

theoretical framework of this study. This theory initiated my fascination with the act of

conversation surrounding the topic and also guided the notion of the music classroom as a

discursive field. Discourses, in an effort to understand phenomena, shape the way one makes

meaning of the world. In a discussion concerning the conditions necessary for the appearance of

an object of discourse, Foucault (1972) stated that it "exists under the positive conditions of a

complex group of relations" (p, 45). This system of relations is synonymous with being

discursive within the confines of discourse. Meaning, they offer objects or subjects in which to

speak and also determine relationships that discourse must establish in order to speak of them.

Another way I thought about discursive practice was as a parameter that may impose the way

one thinks or assigns particular meanings and effects towards material or object occurrences in

the world (Mills, 2003). This research specifically drew from Mills' definition of discursive

fields in order to determine their role surrounding its agency and affect in secondary music

classrooms. The discursive field that this study has examined is the music classroom, where

multiple discourses are at play with one another. Mills (2003) compiled a list of systems

Foucault would employ to analyze events within this type of discursive field. Some of these

elements informed the way themes were presented in its analysis: (1) Draw on archives, (2) Be skeptical, (3) Don't make second order judgements, (4) Look for contingencies rather than causes, (5) Investigate problems rather than a subject, and (6) Don't overgeneralize from your findings.

<div align="center">

Sampling

</div>

Selection of Participants

Seidman (2019) presented maximum variation as a technique within purposeful sampling. In an effort to achieve transferability, I applied maximum variation in order to "allow the widest possibility for readers of the study to connect to what they are reading" (Seidman, 2019, pg. 58). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described maximum variation sampling as a means to select the greatest amount of variation within a phenomenon. The three research sites were selected to represent both instrumental and choral disciplines. In addition, multiple levels of secondary education campuses were represented (middle and high school). Inciting my position as a teacher and colleague within the selected sites, I purposefully selected teacher participants that I professionally and personally understood to have a rich narrative to share and a voice that deserved to be heard surrounding their experiences with cultural identity.

Of the three teacher participants that were originally selected, only one agreed to participate by replying back from email communication. I therefore reached out to two more additional colleagues by email and confirmed their participation.

Student participants were selected through snowball sampling (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) where each teacher participant was asked to recommend 3-5 students for study within their music programs. Teacher participants were given the *Purposeful Sampling Criteria* (see Table 1) in an effort to exemplify the "larger population" as Seidman (2019) instructed. It was vital that

the characteristics of the criteria "are illustrative but not exhaustive of the range of variations

present in the population whose experience this researcher might want to try to understand"

(Seidman, 2019, pp. 58-59). Due to the intention of studying multiple cultures, it was important

to me that a range of identifying characteristics were represented in the student participant

sample.

For Blue Bayou High School, I received a list of three students from Ms. Turner, who I

contacted through email communication. I was able follow through with the interview process

with two of the three students that successfully connected and were able to schedule meetings

with me. For Green Mountain High School, all five of the students that were recommended to me

by Mr. Yu agreed to participate and were able to take part in the interview process. For Golden

Bend Middle School, I received a list of four students from Mr. Idris, however I was not

successful in connecting with them through my email communication.

Table 1

Purposeful Sampling Criteria

Recommended student sample to include…

1. At least two differing genders.

2. At least two differing grade levels.

3. At least two people of color.

4. At least two differing instrument or voice parts.

The range of variations included gender, age, ethnicity, and instrument or voice part.

However more importantly, I urged teacher participants to select students in a similar manner in

which I selected them for the study. Per my instruction, they selected students that they

professionally and personally understood to have a rich narrative to share and a voice that

deserved attention surrounding their experiences with cultural identity. Purposeful sampling here

was solely meant to be inclusionary and create possible and applicable connections between the

participants and reader.

Description of Participants and Sites

Teacher ($n = 3$) and student ($n = 7$) participants were selected from three campus sites.

Their names and corresponding campus sites are outlined below in Table 2.

Table 2

Campus Sites and Participants

Campus Sites	Teacher Participants	Student Participants
Blue Bayou* High School Choir	Ms. Turner*, *choir director*	Alondra* Anya*
Green Mountain* High School Band	Mr. Yu*, *band director*	Anita* Ravi* Riya* Rock* Victor*
Golden Bend* Middle School Band	Mr. Idris*, *band director*	

*pseudonyms

Campus sites were located in an independent school district in a large suburban area southwest

of the Houston metropolitan area. The county in which campus sites were located had a

population of 683,756 people with people that identify as 34.9% White, 23.4% Hispanic, 20.8%

Black, 18.8% Asian, 1.7% Two or More Races, and .4% Other (StatisticalAtlas.com, 2020).

Blue Bayou High School Choir

The choir at Blue Bayou High School possessed great maturity in their musicianship

while honoring the students' vast cultural and economic diversity. Ms. Turner, along with the

assistance of her colleagues, programed a concert entitled "Sounds of Asia" which featured

inspired and traditional music from East and South Asian cultures. Students were encouraged to dress in traditional attire and were supported in performing songs of their own identified culture. This community was selected due to the presence of leadership toward celebrating student cultural backgrounds while providing opportunities for them to share and experience this with others through musical performance.

Blue Bayou High School had a total population of 2,712 students. Enrollment by race/ethnicity is 35% White, 26% Hispanic, 24% Black, 12% Asian, and 3% Two or more races. 19% of the enrollment were classified as students from low-income families and 2% were Dual Language Learners (GreatSchools.org, 2021). There were approximately 200 students in the choir program.

Green Mountain High School Band

The Green Mountain band program committed to providing a quality music education to all of its members while striving for high musical excellence through performance in their various ensembles. Mr. Yu, in response to the ethnic diversity present in his school's climate, decided to implement a cultural recognition project for all students in the program. Participation in this project entailed students showcasing their ethnic or cultural background through a musical medium of their choice. This program was selected due to the position of its tradition of competitive performance standards alongside the presence of its vast ethnic diversity.

Green Mountain High School had a total population of 2,307 students. Enrollment by race/ethnicity was 34% Black, 33% Asian, 15% White, 15% Hispanic, and 3% Two or more races. 25% of the enrollment were classified as students from low-income families and 3% were Dual Language Learners (GreatSchools.org, 2021). There were approximately 120 students in the band program.

Golden Bend Middle School Band

The Golden Bend Middle School band program was under the direction of Mr. Idris. The majority of his students came from marginalized populations and served families that were economically disadvantaged. Nevertheless, Golden Bend Middle School resided in a school district that provided similar financial and material resources to all schools in its jurisdiction. I selected Golden Bend Middle School in an effort to gauge the perspective of this juxtaposition.

Golden Bend Middle School had a total population of 1,233 students. Enrollment by race/ethnicity was 57% Black, 34% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 2% White, and 2% Two or more races. 55% of the enrollment were classified as students from low-income families and 6% were Dual Language Learners (GreatSchools.org, 2021). There were approximately 150 students in the band program.

Procedure

A proposal for this research was submitted to the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board in order to determine exemptions for continued oversight for the duration of the study. Appendix A provides the letter from the Institutional Review Board which grants approval for research in the study of human subjects and exemption from ongoing review. Interviews were scheduled via email communication between myself and each participant. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were held virtually through the Zoom Video Conference platform. Data collection took place between November 2020 and January 2021 and followed Seidman's (2019) recommendation to allow at least three days between each interview series. This allowed for adequate reflection and preparation of follow up questions prior to each interview (*see Table 3*). The procedure and purpose of each interview is explained following the *Interview Procedure Timeline*.

Table 3

Interview Procedure Timeline

Interview Series	Participants	Date
Teacher Interview 1	Ms. Turner	November 14, 2020
Teacher Interview 2	Ms. Turner	November 16, 2020
Teacher Interview 1	Mr. Yu	November 27, 2020
Teacher Interview 2	Mr. Yu	December 1, 2020
Teacher Interview 1	Mr. Idris	December 2, 2020
Teacher Interview 2	Mr. Idris	December 6, 2020
Student Interview 1	Anita, Ravi, Riya, Rock, and Victor	December 8, 2020
Student Interview 2	Anita, Ravi, Riya, Rock, and Victor	December 12, 2020
Student Interview 3	Anita, Ravi, Riya, Rock, and Victor	December 17, 2020
Student Interview 1	Alondra and Anya	December 21, 2020
Student Interview 2	Alondra and Anya	December 27, 2020
Student Interview 3	Alondra and Anya	December 30, 2020
Teacher Interview 3	Mr. Idris, Ms. Turner, and Mr. Yu	January 13, 2021

Interview 1 (life history)

The first interview provided background and context regarding the participants' life experience prior to the present time period and setting of research. Seidman (2019) advised the interviewer to avoid "why?" questions. In order to gain a description into a participants' life history, Seidman (2019) believed asking open ended questions may better help reconstruct their stories and cut deeper into the power of their narrative. Clandenin and Connelly (2000) supported how these narratives were a study of experience. The matter of working with people as

participants combined experience and relationship and was essential to this perspective. In order to see how people explained their experiences, I first recognized the relationship in how people used story as a means of interpreting lived experiences.

Participants in this study were asked questions having to do with their past experiences concerning their cultural identity and provided essential context into their present experiences. Their own interactions with family at home, friends at school, and colleagues at work shaped their perspective. As humans inevitably engage in thought and conversation concerning similarity and difference, stories emerged surrounding how their identity was included in this phenomenon. The method of interview was essential in the participants' opportunity to self reflect upon their own identity.

Teacher Interview 1 took place individually with each teacher participant and followed interview questions found in the Teacher Interview Protocol (see Appendix B). Student Interview 1 began after collaboratively determining student participants with their respective teachers during Teacher Interview 2. Student Interview 1 followed interview questions found in the Student Interview Protocol (see Appendix C). Instead of individual interviews, student participants engaged in focus group interviews alongside fellow student participants from each campus site. There was a logistical advantage in planning focus groups as well as the benefit in being able to observe their interactions and reactions to each other. Eros (2014) described focus groups as "the foundational component of interaction" (p. 272). Utilizing this method supported the notion that data collection was not only possible between interviewer and participant interactions, but also in response to the element of participant observation creating the potential for new forms of data (Morgan, 1988).

Interview 2 (contemporary experience)

The second interview provided details of the present lived experience. Seidman (2019) stated that the researcher should "not ask for opinions but rather the details of their experience, upon which their opinions may be built" (p. 22). The idea here was that the participants were reconstructing their ordinary or mundane experiences based on the topic of research and area of inquiry. By utilizing questioning in this way, participants were able to provide detailed descriptions and personal stories based on their experience. This placed the participant into a posture that was set up for reflection, which took place in the final interview.

Teacher Interview 2 took place again as individual interviews with each teacher participant. It was during this time that I reviewed the *Purposeful Sampling Criteria* and determined student participants in collaboration with their teachers. Student Interview 2 took place again as focus group interviews.

Interview 3 (reflection on meaning)

Teacher Interview 3 took place as a focus group interview with all three teacher participants together as an opportunity to debrief and share reflections and experiences together. I had originally proposed that individual student participants be invited to participate in the meaning-making process of Student Interview 3 if it was determined that more perspective and insight was required for specific emergent themes. However, the students' participation in the first two focus group interviews were so impactful, that I decided to continue focus group interviews in the same way for Student Interview 3.

The third interview provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences that were shared in the second interview. This required the interviewer to be attentive to what the participants shared in the previous interviews in order to pose thoughtful

and reflective questioning in the next interview. This step also gave reason to the intervals of time recommended to occur between each interview in order to engage in a purposeful period of reflection. This was meant to be a period where participants could culminate all the factors of their past into where they were presently in the context of the topic. Seidman (2019) explained that "meaning-making" should be the center of attention throughout all three interviews in that when participants are asked "to reconstruct details of their experience, they are selecting events from their past and in so doing imparting meaning to them" (p. 24). The theoretical framework of discourse, which supported the task of participants to form their experience into language or stories, provided a more meaningful connection and contributed to the discovery of emergent themes through this step.

Analysis

Analysis began with data collected from audio recordings of teacher interviews. These recordings were played and transcribed onto a Microsoft Word document using its dictation tool. A second listening occurred while formatting the document as well as manually inputting punctuations and correcting mistakes. The order in which each interview was transcribed and analyzed will be displayed below in Table 4. Chapter IV presents data collected from each participant's Interview 1, which asked questions revolving their life history. These accounts will be displayed as a profile for each participant. Chapter V presents the contemporary experience of the teacher participants. For this, I read through the transcripts and highlighted specific text that aligned with a set of a priori codes determined before data collection based on my collection of past literature. Based on my theoretical framework of Foucault (1972) and his teachings on discursive practices, my review of past literature was organized into four categories that emerged as discursive practices. It is important to note that a priori codes were determined for the analysis

of data collected from teacher interviews and absent for student interviews. Reason being,

available literature based on the concepts of identity formation and culturally responsive

teachings were prevalent more specifically in the examination of teachers rather than students in

music education settings. These a priori codes were: (a) identity formation, (b) culturally

responsive teaching practices, (c) perceptions of cultural diversity, and (d) presence of social

justice curriculum. For Chapter VI, the student experience presents the same process of analysis

as the teacher interviews, however a priori codes were not determined for this data. Following

transcription, emergent themes were discovered by determining meaningful topics based on my

understanding of the discursive field of the music classroom.

Figure 1

Process of Analysis
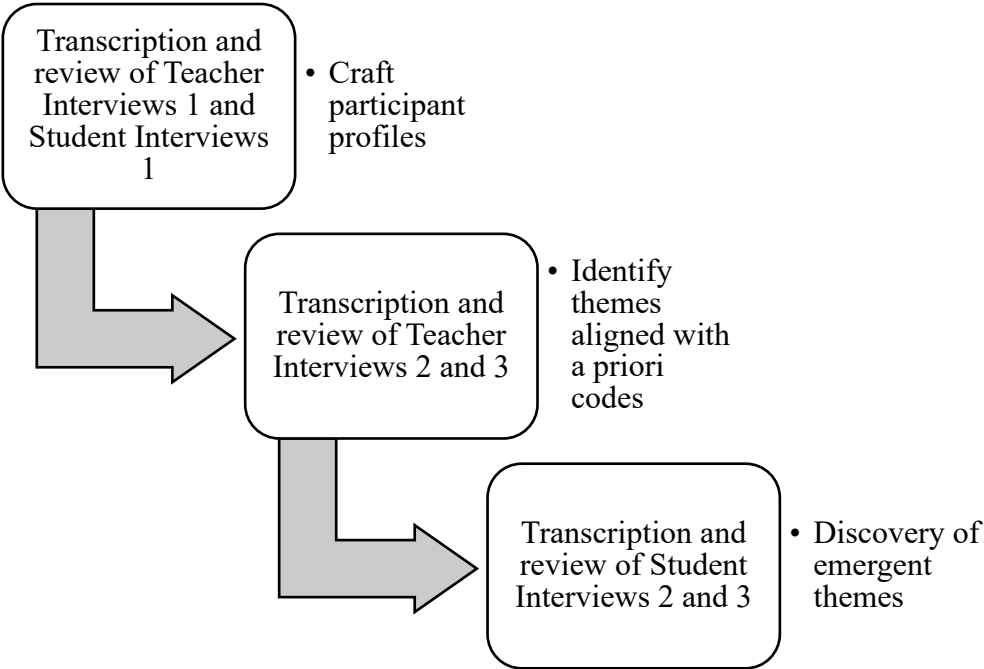
Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) strategies for

promoting validity and enhancing the rigor of qualitative research. Each strategy is presented

with commentary specific to the method of study.

Triangulation

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that triangulation could be accomplished through

comparing "interview data collected from people from different perspectives or from follow up

interviews with the same people" (p. 245). I employed triangulation by way of in-depth

interviews that were designed to be carried out in a three-part series. With each successive

interview, I was able to compare data collected from each participant with the information

gathered from their previous interview. This also granted me the ability to follow up with

clarifying questions obtained through preliminary review of data between each interview.

Member Checks/Respondent Validation

Each participant received portions of the manuscript as a means of member checking

(Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This study handled personal information that could potentially

come from vulnerable human subjects. Member checks meant to check back with participants to

identify any possible misunderstandings. Through this, the voice and perspective of the human

participant could be dominant. However, there was an inherent difficulty in the validity of in-

depth interviewing due to the potential of distortion or manipulation in whose meaning is being

presented. It could be assumed that the interviewer may be "imposing their own sense of the

world on their participants rather than eliciting theirs" (Seidman, 2019, p. 44). Seidman (2019)

disputed that the prevailing attribute of the qualitative approach is the human factor. I recognized

and affirmed that as the human interviewer, I myself was an instrument that affected the data

gathering process because of the human capabilities of adaptability and flexibility. Therefore, the

meaning was derived in part by the interaction between the researcher and participants.

Adequate Engagement in Data Collection

Utilizing Seidman's (2019) in-depth interview as the method for study meant extensive

time was spent in data collection because of the three interview process. Seidman (2019)

provided the structure, process, length, and spacing of interviews to guide researchers. It was

recommended that each interview will last approximately 90 minutes and the three interviews to

occur over a two to three week period with each interview being anywhere between 3 days to a

week apart. This allotment of time allowed both the participant and researcher to experience

intervals of reflection and aided in the expectations that "data and emerging findings must feel

saturated" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246).

Researcher's Position or Reflexivity

As the researcher, I identified as an Asian American male who was born in the United

States to Korean immigrants. My position was in the interest of cultural identity and stemmed

from my own experiences as a music educator and person of color. This social justice agenda

pertained to a desire to provide a voice for people from marginalized groups to share their stories

that an audience may not otherwise hear. My role as the researcher brought to the fore the theory

of intersectionality. Between the researcher and participants, conversations between peoples of

multiple social forces took place. It was inevitable that my own representations of cultural

identity not match those of my participants. Lutz (2015) urged research to go beyond this

dissonance to point out that not all categories of difference are remarkable or worth noticing. In

the case for intersectionality as a valuable theoretical tool, it was "important to investigate

diversity in the context of power relations and analyze in detail what precise aspect of all

possible differential markers makes the difference, that is, creates unequal identities" (Lutz, 2015, p. 42). This examination of discourse and intersectionality was importantly an investigation into struggles of power aimed to give reason to listen and learn from salient perspectives.

I had both professional and personal relationships with the teacher participants due to the proximity of work in the same school district. This posed the issue between the interviewer and the participant where a series of assumptions that "they already understand each other" may occur thus causing a distortion in the data (Seidman, 2019, p. 47). I drew from Hourigan and Edgar's (2014) encouragement for the researcher to recognize their "own perspective and bias in the process" when designing phenomenological study (p. 150). This was meant for the researcher to bracket their own experience by putting their own perspective and potential prejudices out of the data collection and put themselves back into the process after analysis. Patton (2015) considered the process of *epoche* where a researcher could fully understand a phenomenon only when they have recognized the assumptions that precede the phenomenological analysis. By maintaining an audit trail through the practice of journaling, the researcher's perspective surrounding the phenomenon will be reported in order for the reader to consider, separate from the analysis of data.

Peer Review/Examination

This study has taken part in the process of review by a thesis committee. Review of Chapters I, II, and III occurred by the thesis committee in order to gain approval for research. Additionally, both the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board and the Office of Research of the research site's school district has reviewed and approved data collection with human subjects. Following data collection and analysis, committee members received the final

thesis document prior to the thesis defense where a decision is determined regarding the outcome of the examination.

Audit Trail

A research journal was maintained with preliminary thoughts in congruence with the timeline of series of teacher and student interviews. This running record was a chance to record reflections and questions that were planned in preparation for each subsequent interview. This provided a detailed account that aided in the analysis of the data and provided a greater description and perspective into the data collection process.

Rich, Thick Descriptions

By providing in-depth and detailed accounts of collected data, I anticipated the reader to receive a proper orientation into the mindset of the participants. By asking participants in this study to reflect and identify their own cultural identity, I also encourage the reader to engage in the very same reflection. I affirm here again the worth of the role of the researcher as the human instrument. The intersectionality of the multiple backgrounds that come from researcher, participant, as well as reader provide a setting in which all parties can be exposed to the conversation surrounding diversity. Although common background may make this conversation easier, so to speak, it is the 'difficult to answer' questions concerning our identities that created the sought after rich descriptions within the discourse.

Findings will be presented in the three following chapters. Chapter IV will present a profile of each participant crafted to provide context and background into their musical and cultural backgrounds. Chapter V will present the teacher participants' experiences along with discussion surrounding each a priori code on topics of identity construction, cultural diversity, culturally responsive teaching experiences, and the presence of social justice. Chapter VI will

present the student participants' experiences along with discussion surrounding emergent themes

derived from the data collection. Chapter VII will be a conclusion to this study which will

provide an overview of definitions and findings as well as applications for teaching practice and

implications for future research.

Chapter IV

Life History

This chapter provides contextual information regarding each participant's background

having to do with their past musical and cultural experiences. The majority of data presented in

this chapter was taken from Interview 1 of the three-part in-depth interview series and allowed

participants to establish for themselves their identifying characteristics (see Table 4). The three

questions answered and outlined in these profiles are: (a) How do you describe your musical

background? (b) How do you describe your cultural background? And (c) Have you had any past

experiences where your cultural identity was acknowledged through any musical experiences?

Table 4

Participant Overview

Participant name	Participant title	Identifying characteristics
Ms. Turner	Blue Bayou High School Choir Director	female, woman, conductor, musician, straight, White
Mr. Yu	Green Mountain High School Band Director	Asian American, Buddhist, leadership, marching band
Mr. Idris	Golden Valley High School Band Director	Black, African American, hip hop music, HBCU culture
Riya	Green Mountain High School Band Student	cultural dancer, Indian, Hindu
Ravi	Green Mountain High School Band Student	Indian, immigrant parents, Americanized, Hindu
Victor	Green Mountain High School Band Student	Hispanic American, musical family
Anita	Green Mountain High School Band Student	Marthomite, Indian American
Rock	Green Mountain High School Band Student	Vietnamese American, pop music
Anya	Blue Bayou High School Choir Student	musical family, Indian American, American, female
Alondra	Blue Bayou High School Choir Student	musical family, Mexican American, leadership

Teacher Participant Profiles

Ms. Turner

Ms. Turner grew up in a family that supported her musical endeavors from a young age. Her earliest musical memory involved her singing in church and was encouraged to do so by her parents. As a child, Ms. Turner tried to be involved in as many music activities that were available to her. She was involved in theatre, choir, piano, and band; and this involvement seemed to instill in her a passion for performing. She eventually went on to study music education for her undergraduate degree through the encouragement of her high school choir director after being made aware of her potential to be "good at being a choir teacher" (Teacher Interview 1). Leadership opportunities and the fulfillment found in mentorship appealed to her to the point where "it came really naturally" (Teacher Interview 1).

There was "this really intense choral conductor" in her undergraduate choir experience that specifically "shaped [her] as a musician" (Teacher Interview 1). This conductor led her to be aware of stigmas associated with being a female conductor. "I became aware of stereotypes and biases and boxes that female conductors were put in and the kind of obstacles that they would have to face" (Teacher Interview 1). She responded to these stereotypes and felt the need to, "highlight and bring to the surface certain characteristics of [her] personality to not be dismissed out of hand as a female…" (Teacher Interview I). This perception pushed her to pursue a master's degree where her female identity was further cultivated.

"So, I think the strongest part of my musical identity is being female. There is not a lot that's interesting about being straight or white. [laugh] That's just fine. Whatever, moving on [laugh]" (Teacher Interview 1). Ms. Turner's life experience involved female mentors that she encountered who engaged her in ways that highlighted crucial ways to enrich the female identity.

There was one choir program during her master's degree where her professor programmed music on the topic of empowerment and the dichotomies of the female experience. She described it as "comedic, but also poignant" and further shaped her perspective of what roles society has placed on women (Teacher Interview 1). "It doesn't really matter who you want to be as long as you get to choose who you want to be as a woman and what roles – what boxes you want to check in your life to make it fulfilling to you" (Teacher Interview 1).

After her master's degree, it came time for Ms. Turner to make decisions on what to pursue next professionally. Various people encouraged her to pursue a doctorate, including her father who seemed to measure value in success through a particular way. "He was always under the impression that for me, to be considered a success in the workforce and in the teaching field, that I need to go through and get all of the advanced degrees and ultimately teach at a university" (Teacher Interview 1). Ms. Turner was also recruited by her professors to pursue a doctorate, but ultimately decided otherwise because of her familiarity with this discourse surrounding the teaching field. "I mean, for me to actually be marketable as a person with a doctorate, I need more than three years of teaching experience. I wouldn't take me seriously. Why should anyone else?" (Teacher Interview 1). She recognized here the value of experience that led to her decision making despite the conflicting voices in her life.

Mr. Yu

Mr. Yu identified himself as a first generation Asian American. He was around a "huge mixing pot" of different ethnicities in his community (Teacher Interview 1). Due to this observed diversity, the concept of race was made aware early in his life. As a child he thought, "Oh, I'm a little bit different from everybody else" (Teacher Interview 1). He did not feel like an outcast, however he did grapple with how it was uncomfortable to talk about the subject. "I did have to

kind of figure that out and it's not very talked about a lot. It was kind of weird to talk about that with my parents because that's not something they had to go through" (Teacher Interview 1). Mr. Yu was aware to the diversity and how it contributed to his understanding of comparisons between himself and other groups.

Mr. Yu's religious identity also manifested in our conversation. He identified as a Buddhist and grew up going to temple every Sunday. As he got older, he explained that his relationship to Buddhism became less a religion and more a philosophy in the choices he makes in his life. Mr. Yu got involved in the youth group community at the temple and was active in its activities. Mr. Yu would find leadership opportunities that would contribute to his calling to help and serve others.

For Mr. Yu, exposure to any semblance of music experiences were rare growing up. Aside from listening to songs on the radio, he could not recall much in the way of musical memories from his childhood. Mr. Yu's musical identity was mainly realized in his high school marching band experience. "I loved it" (Teacher Interview 1) he said, as he described the different performance opportunities that he had in his high school band program. In particular, through the guidance of his band directors and peers, Mr. Yu again found an avenue to satisfy his leadership identity through the service opportunities that were offered from band.

Mr. Yu noticed a cultural dissonance when it came time to declare a major in college and in making decisions on what he wanted for his career. "When I first decided that I wanted to do music for my career, I ran into a lot of issues with my dad in particular" (Teacher Interview 1) Mr. Yu called this a "cultural gap" in that a career in music was not considered notable or professional in the eyes of his father due to particular values associated with Chinese culture.

It caused a lot of stress and tension in my own family trying to decide what I wanted to

do with my life and it wasn't until another adult mentor in my life, my band director

pulled me aside and said, "Hey. You would be really good at this and I think you would

really enjoy this." (Teacher Interview 1)

This push ultimately carried him to pursue a degree in music education for his undergraduate

degree. Even in the beginning of his studies, Mr. Yu still struggled to make sense of this tension

between his aspirations and his cultural upbringing. He described a "kind of rewiring that had to

happen to [his] brain…" in negotiating and ultimately accepting a career in music education as

true to his desires (Teacher Interview I). Mr. Yu attributed mentors in his life that normalized

differing viewpoints and ideas that led to the eventual self-acceptance of his decisions.

Mr. Idris

Mr. Idris's story had a rich connection to African American music. His family was

Nigerian, so he remembered growing up listening to Nigerian music at social gatherings with his

parents. He was influenced to listen to R&B and hip-hop music on the radio by his sister who

would collect CDs and album covers. "I was real big into that. I think some of my favorite artists

back when I was younger – Bone Thugs and Harmony. I don't know if you were familiar with

them" (Teacher Interview 1). Much of Mr. Idris's early musical identity came from the activity

of listening and discovering artists of this genre.

Mr. Idris was unsure what motivated him to join band, nonetheless he started playing the

baritone in middle school. "I wasn't the gung-ho band kid in middle school practicing every day,

but I do remember having a liking for my instrument" (Teacher Interview 1). He enjoyed playing

his instrument and understood the importance of having meaningful musical experiences. There

was a time in middle school when he was enlisted by his uncle to play his baritone while his

uncle proposed to his wife. "I know it sounded bad [laugh] but that was a cool music experience that I remember…" (Teacher Interview 1). Throughout his experience in middle school and high school band, Mr. Idris connected well to the arrangements of radio pop songs they would play and hear from African American artists like Outkast, Janet Jackson, and Earth, Wind & Fire. "That's when I really started taking a interest in to band, just being able to play songs that I identified with, you know?" (Teacher Interview 1). Through his experiences in band, Mr. Idris was afforded an avenue to connect with music that aligned with his own cultural tastes.

Mr. Idris identified as Black, African American and grew up around a predominantly African American community. It was not until a previous teaching position where he was placed in an environment with a cultural background different from his own. It was majority Hispanic in its racial makeup which prompted him to have conversations with a Hispanic co-worker and colleague about how to connect with these particular students.

> I seeked out a lot of help from him and trying to understand just the cultural norms within
> the Hispanic community, but I think it was awesome. It was awesome learning them and
> also them getting to experience me and being able to bring some of my cultural identity
> in what they did (Teacher Interview 1).

It was important for Mr. Idris to not only have conversations having to do with differing cultures, but also mutually incorporating his own cultural background into the experiences he provided for his students.

Mr. Idris attended a HBCU (Historically Black College and University) and made an effort to incorporate this part of his identity into his teaching. The social traditions during his time there and the styles of music he would perform in the marching band that executed "HBCU-style" shows were experiences that he valued providing for his students. Mr. Idris told the story

of when he brought school spirit to one of his previous teaching positions by introducing the

homecoming traditions that he experienced at his HBCU school.

> I was like, "Well, I want to bring that atmosphere" and I started out with the band
>
> program 'cause I have a lot of kids in there and I would get them…we would say the little
>
> chant, "Set Yo Homecoming Out!" and everybody else would repeat, "Set it out, set it
>
> out, set it out" and then I end up like being the DJ for the pep rally… (Teacher Interview
>
> 1).

Mr. Idris was motivated to provide these experiences because "it gets [the students] more

engaged in what they're doing and they look at you, 'Oh, I can identify with you'" (Teacher

Interview 1).

Discussion of Teacher Participant Profiles

These teacher participants represented a unique perspective based on their backgrounds.

Ms. Turner's experiences highlighted the narrative of the female identity. I noticed this first in

her undergraduate choir experience that seemed to contribute to her identity construction.

Through the guidance received from her undergraduate choir director, she was introduced to the

intersectional experience in being a female, musician and conductor. She explained that she felt

the need to alter certain parts of her personality in order to be taken seriously. This seems to refer

to the discourse surrounding males in dominant positions of power in music. Ms. Turner's

involvement in these choirs appeared to nurture her musician identity and more specifically, her

female musician identity. The hegemonic voices in her life that attempted to explain what it

meant to be a success or to be taken seriously had justifiably driven her professional aspirations.

Additionally, she also experienced the performance of music by women or women composers in

very intentional settings that purposefully brought to the fore the narrative of a women identity and the importance of feeling affirmation through musical performances.

Mr. Yu's perspective was notable as he represented a person of color that grew up in the same school district as the setting of this study. Therefore, it was important to recognize and infer that he has experienced similar examples of cultural dissonance as the students do in this school district. For Mr. Yu, these instances appeared in voices that conflicted with his music career aspirations as well as his pedagogical decision making. He was made aware of the power of difference in his own educational setting that informed his present decisions. This brought to the fore a battle between his pedagogical upbringing and his motivations surrounding his cultural identity. He now taught in the same school district that he grew up in, so he is familiar with the demographics that he observed in his classroom. However, he was not afforded the same culturally responsive experience from his teachers when he was a student that he desired to provide for his own present students. Mr. Yu's background in competitive concert and marching bands had driven the focus of his curriculum heavily toward rehearsing repertoire for contests. He said that, "our priorities in music education growing up for me felt more competitive based and more about getting their rating and getting that standardization rather than exploring different kinds of music" (Teacher Interview 2). This statement coupled with the recognition of the cultural makeup of his classroom sparked his motivation to provide music experiences relating to honoring each of his student's identity.

Mr. Idris connected his cultural identity with his motivations to provide an engaging musical experience for his students. Mr. Idris provided a perspective having to do with seeking help in understanding differing cultures as a means to better connect with his students. Mr. Idris valued connection and relating to his students through similar past experiences based on culture.

He makes it a point to convey to his students to say, "Hey, I see myself in you, hopefully you guys see yourself in me some type of way…" (Teacher Interview 2). Within his present teaching position, Mr. Idris viewed his job as an opportunity and privilege to impact a community that shared his own cultural background. He was a Black teacher teaching a population of majority Black students. Therefore, it was imperative to hear from this perspective when seeking knowledge surrounding the intersectional experience. In other words, Mr. Idris' perspective allowed insight into his identity as a teacher who is Black and how that is negotiated with both Black and non-Black students.

Student Participant Profiles

Riya

Riya's musical background began when her parents placed her into a cultural dance class, called *kathak*[1]*,* which is one of two main traditions of Indian dance. She remembered observing her dance teacher who also taught the *tabla*[2], which is a type of percussion instrument.

> I was kind of forced to do the dance part but every time I would just look over and look at the people playing the *tabla* and that's when I discovered that like dance wasn't really my forte, but I wanted to do *tabla* and so my parents just like forced me to do *kathak* and I quit in like fifth grade (Student Interview 1).

This experience compelled Riya to join band in middle school despite her parents' wishes for her to continue in dance. She felt exposed to instrumental music because of this cultural activity that combined dance with music. "I just wanted to be on the other side" (Student Interview 1). Riya also related her motivation to join band in her experiences with another type of dance called,

---

[1] An ancient Indian classical dance originating from North India. A Hindu act of theistic devotion that incorporates rhythmic foot movements, hand gestures, facial expressions, and eye work.
[2] A set of drums commonly used in North Indian music. Most frequently accompanies vocal and instrumental music.

garba[3]. "I like to do team activities and that's what *garba* is all about. You can't have *garba* with one person" (Student Interview 1).

At first, Riya's parents discouraged her involvement in band. "It was like not really common in Indian communities. We're usually just focused on academics and stuff" (Student Interview 1). Eventually, her parents would come to realize previously unseen cultural connections to her band experience. Riya recalled a time when her grandparents would visit and requested she perform something for them. Instead of playing a popular song they were learning in class, Riya decided to instead look up how to play "Jana Gana Mana", which is the Indian national anthem. She shared that both her parents and grandparents were amazed.

That's when they realized that band, you know it's not just about me living in American playing music that everyone else knows about. It's also like bringing heritage to our home and like that was kind of eye opening for them because they didn't really support me doing band… (Student Interview 1).

Both of Riya's parents were immigrants. They first lived in New York as business owners. Riya said that she learned to be adaptive from her parents. "The reason I say I'm adaptive is because [my parents] came here with like practically nothing and they became really successful" (Student Interview 1). Riya also identifies herself as a Hindu and attends a Hindu camp. "That's where I learn more about my culture every single year because like the older you get the more conceptual they teach you, like more material they teach you. 'Cause you're just more mature that way. So, that's why I identify myself as adaptive" (Student Interview 1).

---

[3] A communal circle dance from the Indian state of Gujaret. A dance that honors the feminine form of divinity.

Ravi

For Ravi, music "wasn't really something that [he] was fully interested into doing" (Student Interview 1). He described a negative experience he had with the recorder in 4th grade that turned him off to any desire to learn a music instrument. However, Ravi had an older sister that joined band in middle school before he did, so "whatever she did [he] ended up doing" (Student Interview 1). He said that he "was always pushed in the direction of music" which guided his parents to request that he join band when it came time for him to choose a music elective (Student Interview 1). Ravi's motivations in music have been influenced by his family. "It wasn't always just like something that I had to do. It became something that I wanted to do" (Student Interview 1). What started out as something of no interest to him became a "love for music [that] grew as the years went on" (Student Interview 1).

Ravi described his parents as "really Americanized" (Student Interview 1). His Indian-born mother immigrated to the United States as a result of being married to his father, who was born in the United States. However, his father's parents were immigrants from India. "[My parents] don't really force anything crazy upon me, but like we're really cultured" (Student Interview 1). Ravi said his family was not forceful in imposing cultural practices on him, which he described as "not the norm of first generation or an Indian family in America" (Student Interview 1). While he did participate in religious routines like *puja*[4] and cultural festivities like *garba*, Ravi felt like it was never something that he felt obligated to do. When it came time for him to choose band as a music elective, there was encouragement rather than opposition which is in contrast to the experience of his classmates that share his cultural background. Ravi attributed this to the environment he described in his home:

---

[4] A Hindu blessing meant to be an act of worship through the ritual offering of lights, water, and flowers.

And so, for like the music aspect, it was always just like I've always listened to Indian

music like I can go downstairs right now and then there's Indian music probably playing

right now with my mom. She's always singing along and I'm always there like…I'm

always in the presence of something musical. (Student Interview 1)

Ravi's perspective also involved observations of cultural experiences in school feeling

performative or inorganic. "So, it's always just been like weird whenever we have like these

cultural things "cause like it always feels like a little bit forced on you" cause it's just random

like out of nowhere…" (Student Interview 1). To Ravi, there is skepticism to these activities that

attempted to respond to cultural identities. "They're just there as like a placeholder and not to

like have a significant meaning" (Student Interview 1). He remembered a time when there was a

Diwali celebration they had in elementary school that "ignore[d] the whole meaning of it and

then move[d] on" (Student Interview 1). Ravi negotiated his expectations for these experiences.

"We're here in America, you can't expect them to do that, but it would be like at least nice, I

guess?" (Student Interview 1).

Victor

Victor grew up with the experience of listening to his family members perform and

appreciate music. "My uncle played the piano at a high level and my aunt played the violin at a

high level…" (Student Interview 1). His parents also enjoyed attending musical performances

and would gather as a family to see the symphony and theatre. Victor viewed these experiences

as moments that brought his family together and as a motivating factor to participate in music.

"So, I used to grow up and I saw those things and I kind of wanted to be like them in a way"

(Student Interview 1). However, he did not learn that he had the opportunity to play an

instrument until his middle school band would perform at his elementary school and thought,

"Wow, I could do these things that I grew up listening to" (Student Interview 1).

Victor identified as Hispanic American and the first generation in his family to be born in

the United States. He described his association with music through his cultural background here:

> My dad is from Mexico and my mom is from Colombia, so I always grew up around
>
> instruments, I guess like in music in general, especially brass instruments, you know?
>
> Basically, all popular music in Spanish now has some sort of brass instrument or some
>
> sort of musical instrument, so I always just grew up with those sounds around the house
>
> (Student Interview 1).

Victor's parents immigrated looking for opportunity and success based on what they observed

from other family members. They were supportive of Victor joining band and being involved in

extra-curricular activities because of the success they saw in his aunt and uncle performing

music.

Victor rarely had experiences having to do with recognition of his cultural background.

"My culture and actual band like never really overlapped that much" (Student Interview 1). The

only experience that closely resembled this was a time in eighth grade when he was a part of a

small ensemble that played *The Mexican Hat Dance*. Victor was able to send his family

recordings of the performance which they "thought it was really cool" (Student Interview 1). "I

guess nothing like what's happened to [the other participants] has happened to me…" (Student

Interview 1).

Anita

Anita was granted many musical experiences growing up that involved piano, vocal

lessons, and dance. "My parents wanted me to be like well rounded…" (Student Interview 1).

Her musical inclination was cultivated mainly in singing at church. As a Marthomite, which is an Indian Christian denomination, Anita was involved in the church choir which allowed her to enjoy all kinds of music. However, she struggled with piano because she had trouble grasping the concept of playing with two hands together and had mixed feelings about voice lessons. "I didn't hate it, didn't love it…" (Student Interview 1). Despite these feelings, Anita continued at the request of her parents. In middle school, she was influenced to join band because of her older brother. He excelled in band, which affected some of her decisions. Anita made the choice to play an instrument different than her brother in an attempt to be independent. Also, being in her brother's shadow seemed to push her to perform at a certain level.

> Definitely like my brother being good at music influenced like…I always thought like I was like 'Oh, I don't know if I could ever be that good' and like be good enough to do that, but now I'm happy with where I'm at (Student Interview 1).

In addition, Anita observed different treatment given to her compared to her brother.

> He was allowed to do more things than I was. Like 'cause he's like a boy or whatever, like double standards and so I definitely like…I'm always trying to get more freedom than him (Student Interview 1).

Anita's musical identity was constructed in the environment of observing the permissions granted to her brother. She desired to succeed, but on her own terms without comparison to others.

Both of Anita's parents were immigrants from Kerala, a region in South India. She identified as an Indian American, but more specifically a Malayali because she spoke Malayalam. In association to her Indian culture, Anita described areas of cultural dissonance associated with being in band. It became apparent that South Indians were discouraged from

doing band in high school due to a heavy focus on academics. In addition, her parents in particular felt contention when her older brother made a decision to pursue music performance as a career. "So, it's like I feel like the pressure of like my parents thinking like, 'Oh, what is somebody else gonna think?' When you do something like oh like my brother pursuing music was a big deal because it was, 'What is somebody gonna think?'" (Student Interview 1).

Rock

Rock's story involved having siblings very close in age to her. She had an older sister that was one grade above and a younger brother that was one grade below her. Along with the influence of her older sister who was already in band, Rock was inspired to join band when her middle school band came to her elementary campus to play for them. "So, when that happened, I was like, 'This is so cool, like I have to join this. It sounds like so much fun' like I wanted to also be able to play for the elementary schools like play with them" (Student Interview 1). To Rock it was, "Of course. Like this is the only choice" (Student Interview 1).

Both of Rock's parents were immigrants to the United States and arrived at a young age. Her mother is Vietnamese and her father is Chinese, but grew up in Vietnam, so she called herself "half Chinese, half Vietnamese" (Student Interview 1). However, she mainly identified as a Vietnamese American due to both of her parents' upbringing. Much of this connection to her culture had to do with growing up listening to Vietnamese songs and speaking Vietnamese. Rock noticed that much of the style of songs the adults in her life would listen to were ballad-like, in contrast to children's songs that were repetitive and upbeat. "So, a lot of the songs that I grew up listening to is just like really simple but like very upbeat. So, in return that made me like want to listen to more like upbeat songs out today…" (Student Interview 1).

Rock's perspective of experiences having to do with learning about diverse cultures was similar to Ravi's story in how it felt contrived and misappropriated. She mentioned the Lunar New Year holiday that many Asian cultures celebrate. Rock felt offense to these celebrations being included in school because of misrepresentations of the holiday. She noticed it referred to as *Chinese New Year* and presented in a way that erased all of the other Asian cultures who celebrate the holiday as well. Rock wondered, "Are [they] really being inclusive of everybody because like not only Chinese celebrate lunar new year, like a lot of people do. So it's just like, Is this really being you know, celebrated correctly?" (Student Interview 1). Rock felt it important for people to know how each culture celebrated the holiday differently and had its own separate traditions. "I think it's because they try to understand, but once they understand a small part of it, they think they understand everything" (Student Interview 1).

Anya

Anya's environment growing up was encouraging in that it placed value in seeking opportunities to pursue her musical interests. She was largely inspired by her older sister to be involved in music. Both of them were placed in a variety of music making experiences including the styles of Indian *Carnatic*, Bollywood, American church, and choral music. "It was just cool to watch her growing up. She would do like the Indian music as well as American music and I just loved watching how she just did both..." (Student Interview 1). Anya was also encouraged by her parents to perform. Thus, she participated in various musical programs offered in elementary school as well as in her church community. Her parents went above and beyond in supporting her decisions to be involved in music.

> If I felt that I wanted to audition for something or sing something or learn some music,
> they would do whatever they could despite them not really being musically experienced

whatsoever, they would do what they could to find a way for me to learn it or like find

someone to help me learn it. (Student Interview 1)

Anya had opportunities to be musical in her community, where it was expected for students to

showcase their talents at celebrations. "...We had *mehndi*'s which are like henna ceremonies and

they always encourage the youth to like whatever skills they have, whether it be music or dance

just to come and show what you do—what you enjoy doing" (Student Interview 1).

Anya identified as an Indian American female. Her parents grew up in India and later

immigrated. "My sister and I had to navigate things here" (Student Interview 1). As a first

generation American, Anya still felt tied to the identity of being Indian. She noticed her sister

first having to understand American culture and learned from her sister how to navigate between

their two identities. While Anya does notice the presence of difference, the support and

understanding that came from her parents seemed to suppress any sort of cultural dissonance.

"We're lucky that they understand that and they support us through it, but obviously there are

some differences and you know, challenges when it comes to things that we want to do and they

don't completely understand because that's not what they're used to" (Student Interview 1).

Prior to her identity formation in high school, Anya struggled to make sense of appearing

different around her peers. "I feel shame in saying this but like when I was younger and like a lot

throughout like elementary school and I was—as I was growing up you know in middle school

especially, I was like embarrassed by my culture for like absolutely no reason" (Student

Interview 1). She felt a need to blend in and hide her identity. Anya pointed to her choir

experiences in high school that provided opportunities to embrace diverse cultures "and it made

[her] excited and proud" (Student Interview 1).

Alondra

Alondra's experience revolved around her parents' intention to expose her and her sisters to as many musical performances as possible. "My parents aren't really musically inclined or that wasn't like one of their primary interests, so none of them played instruments or sang, but they were always interested in exposing us to music" (Student Interview 1). Because of this, Alondra's parents felt it necessary to take advantage of any musical performance available to them. "I remember not so much of being there but remember like seeing pictures and my parents telling me about—as very young, taking me to the Houston Symphony and to listen to the children's programs that they would have and we would always be playing music on the TV..." (Student Interview 1). She would visit her grandparents in Mexico, which also added to her exposure to music. "Going to Mexico, everyone in the streets you heard music, so we got to listen to like marimba players in Veracruz or mariachi that came outside of the door and all that" (Student Interview 1). Much of Alondra's musical pastime revolved around music making with her sisters. "We loved singing and we loved making performances for my parents" (Student Interview 1). Putting on elaborate home concerts and singing songs together constituted as playtime for Alondra and her sisters contributing to her eventual interest in performing in choir.

Alondra described herself as Mexican American with a multicultural background through her family's heritage. "My grandparents are from—my grandma has a Spanish background and my grandfather is Italian and Spanish and they're both immigrants from Mexico, so we're kind of like—my mom was first generation in Mexico and I'm first generation in the United States" (Student Interview 1). Alondra had space to discover her culture through music experiences. "I guess living in Texas specifically just because of our proximity to Mexico, it has allowed me to be able to explore my music culturally a lot more and be able to see it around me more often"

(Student Interview 1). An experience that contributed to this belief came from a performance in her Spanish Honor Society talent show. She explained "...getting the opportunity to audition and then perform getting all dressed up in the clothes of my country and my hair and singing in Spanish in front of all my friends and then having everyone to applaud for it..." (Student Interview 1). It was a source of pride for Alondra to have a community rally behind this type of performance in showing their appreciation. She felt both surprise and excitement being able to openly celebrate this identity in front of her community.

Discussion of Student Participant Profiles

Each of the students' accounts provided an important array of perspectives that contributed toward the rich conversations we experienced in each focus group interview. Riya and Anita both represented the perspective of cultural dissonance common within their Indian community and amongst fellow South Asian students. Riya's story of when she performed *Jana Gana Mana* for her grandparents highlighted the importance of encouraging cultural connections between classroom music experiences with values associated with music making at home. Anita experienced continued negotiation between herself and her family in the value systems associated with participation in band.

In contrast to Riya and Anita, Ravi's experience came with less cultural dissonance. While Riya, Anita, and Ravi come from similar cultural backgrounds, Ravi experienced support in participating in his music activities from home. I saw this as a reason for why Ravi possessed clarity on his views of how he felt cultural identities should be treated in his music activities. This troubled Ravi that such activities missed an opportunity to teach his classmates about the significance and implications of learning about his culture. "I think it's really important that

people start to learn and actually like you said, celebrate the cultures, so we can understand each

other more" (Student Interview 1).

I found similar perspectives between Ravi and Rock in that they desired more genuine

experiences having to do with their identity. Instead of desiring more cultural experiences, Rock

spoke mostly to the lack of acknowledgement of her personal interests within musical

experiences. This lack of attention to identity was also present in Victor's story. Victor came

from a musical family that observed multiple family members experience participate in music

making. However, Victor found rare occasions growing up where his cultural identity was

acknowledged through his music experiences. This may have sparked his present desire to see

more experiences where his own and his peers' cultural background are more highlighted.

Anya experienced deliberation in how different she felt socially as a result of appearance

in her race and culturally in her behavior and norms. This negotiation with the power of

difference was obvious and constant through her growing up. However, Anya pointed to her

present music experiences as an avenue that celebrated these differences in the open

opportunities she was afforded. Both Anya and Alondra's experiences echoed this celebration in

that their present environment was able to properly respond to their musical desires. Alondra's

connection to her cultural background's music provided motivation for her to perform this type

of music in her musical opportunities.

Conclusion

The purpose of Chapter IV was to provide context into how each participants' cultural

and musical backgrounds informed their present experiences. From an intersectional standpoint,

it was imperative to document each participants' multiple facets of identity in order to fully

understand what that meant to their experiences. These participants represented a variety of

backgrounds contributing to the richness of dialogue and supporting the understanding of

cultural identity in music classrooms. Chapter V will begin with the presentation of each's

teacher present experiences with discussion based on these findings.

Chapter V

Teacher Experience

The findings presented in this chapter are data collected from Interview 2 which focused on teacher participants' contemporary experiences and Interview 3 which focused in reflection on meaning. Each teacher's experiences are presented individually with discussion immediately following based on a set of codes determined prior to data collection. At the conclusion of the three teacher narratives, I returned to Foucault (1972) and past literature to discuss how the discourse surrounding cultural identity was described within the discursive field of their music classrooms.

Ms. Turner

Music Literacy

Ms. Turner's identity as a choir director was defined by exploring different cultures besides her own that reflected the cultural makeup of her classroom. "I have a natural curiosity and affinity for world music and not only the effect of those pieces but the actual experience of music making in other cultures" (Teacher Interview 2). This was noticed with Black students who were accustomed to learn music differently from notation-based music literacy expectancies.

> When [my Black students] sing in church choirs they don't read or solfege music or anything like that. They build harmonies that they hear. One of my students says, "Yeah we just do what sounds good. We don't rehearse. Oh, you take that part, you take that part. It's not like that. You sing what sounds good." And they understand that aural and harmonic vocabulary because it's the musical language that they grew up with, so they hear harmony more easily. (Teacher Interview 2)

Purposefully, Ms. Turner worked to help her students understand that "sight-reading and being able to read music is *a* type of literacy. It's not *the* type of literacy" (Teacher Interview 2). Ms. Turner seized the opportunity to welcome a learning process celebrated by a cultural group different from the norm. "...being able to learn things by ear—I think it used to be more emphasized but in Texas, literacy is king" (Teacher Interview 2).

Concert Programming

While Ms. Turner felt that it was important to be as true as possible to the original form of music making based on its cultural background, she understood the difficulty in recreating a true representation of the process. Ms. Turner mentioned her choirs working on *Shosholoza*, which was a South African protest song. "I'm never going to replicate exactly what it would be like to sing that but, I think it's important for the students to know first where it came from how it would be experienced..." (Teacher Interview 2). This attitude was best revealed in her concert and programming choices. The Blue Bayou choir programed and performed a concert titled, "Sounds of Asia" and was inspired by feedback from her Asian students and featured performances of pieces that had Asian influences or by Asian composers. "I had a knowledge of this repertoire a little bit but hearing the kids get excited about that—seeing the way their faces lit up differently..." (Teacher Interview 2). Students gained excitement in being able to lend cultural attire to their friends in an effort to share their culture. Ms. Turner would also pass some of the music teaching process to her students. "We have dialect coaches in the room and just highlighting what their expertise is..." (Teacher Interview 2).

Religious Connotation

A topic manifested from our conversation was the religious and sacred contexts strongly tied to choral music. Ms. Turner grew up in a Protestant Evangelical church environment that

caused discomfort for her in their message of condemnation towards people that believed things differently from its teachings. "I know for a fact that our kids are still hearing that message, you know?" (Teacher Interview 2). Yet, much of the music composed for chorus is written with sacred texts and religious connotations. "I say, 'This is not something I'm telling you to believe. We're studying this music for the musical integrity'" (Teacher Interview 2). Ms. Turner drew focus as well to the aesthetic quality of music making.

> There is—the music is chosen for its musical integrity, for its educational integrity, not because this is what I think you should believe, or the choir thinks you should believe. So, if you connect with *Domine Fili Unigenite* because that's your personal truth, "Great!" If you don't want to connect that way, there are these really intense and beautiful phrases. (Teacher Interview 2).

Treating Colorblindness

Ms. Turner admitted to paying more attention to the level of diversity in her classroom since starting work on a Black History Month program.

> There's this concept of a melting pot which I have since learned—I think that's a beautiful idea, but I have since learned that actually indicates identity erasure a little bit and the salad bowl is a better metaphor and Blue Bayou is extremely diverse. (Teacher Interview 2)

Ms. Turner perceived her campus to possess diversity. However, it was observed that the racial and cultural identities are not necessarily mixing together. "They're just gravitating more to sort of people that they don't have to explain their experience to or decode or speak in code or exist in code" (Teacher Interview 2). There existed a sense of comfortability in aligning with people that identify similarly in terms of culture.

While her perceptions of the classroom noted that the student population is diverse, Ms. Turner was careful to say whether or not it is inclusive and that everyone was treated the same.

I think bias and anti-racism training is still super, super necessary and that's just going to take years and years and years to build because—I think—I honestly—I think certain members of administration think racism is not a problem and that it doesn't exist and they don't acknowledge it even when it happens right in front of their face. (Teacher Interview 2)

She shared a story of how one of her Black students reported to a principal that another girl had posted a racist social media post that was offensive to Black people. "[The student] reported it to our principal who said, 'OK. OK. Just don't get mad. Don't get mad.'...I mean—it's just wrong on so many levels" (Teacher Interview 2). Unfortunately, the case was dismissed to the point where the student's feelings were completely invalidated. "She was stereotyped. She was basically told, 'Don't be an angry black girl' by someone in authority" (Teacher Interview 2). A figure in a position of power failed at an attempt to validate a student's unique struggle associated with her race. "So, I think there's more of that going on than we understand or know about" (Teacher Interview 2).

Taking Stock of Bias

It is situations like these that allowed a paradigm shift in the way Ms. Turner sought equitable treatment of her students based on their identity. These perceptions were evolved and affected by assessing her reactions in the way she treated specifically students of color. "All kids are not the same right? They come with their own stories, their own traumas, their own whatever" (Teacher Interview 2). Ms. Turner pointed out how specific identities came with their own narratives where she believed equitable treatment of these identities must be nuanced.

"Yeah, they're all different and they all respond to different things and yet we're supposed to treat them all the same and at the same time we won't acknowledge that we're not treating them the same" (Teacher Interview 2). There was one instance where she hotly reacted to a student of color who was merely joking around with his friends although swearing and yelling. "If a white student was doing that, would I have reacted the same way or would I have just calmly redirected?" (Teacher Interview 2).

Ms. Turner's experience with acknowledging the identity of students appeared as well in how she treated *The Star Spangled Banner*. Performing the national anthem solely for the sake of tradition was insufficient reasoning for Ms. Turner, when there were black students in her classroom. She realized that there was also an African American national anthem that she felt responsible for introducing and working on concurrently.

> I came to this parallel in my head and I was like, "OK if I'm going to teach the national anthem, first of all I'm going to call it the *Star Spangled Banner* and we're going to teach *Lift Every Voice* with harmony alongside it" because there isn't just one national anthem and we're not going to make assumptions about which one I'm talking about as *the* song that you're supposed to identify with as an American. (Teacher Interview 2).

Ms. Turner desired to remove assumptions having to do with giving power to dominant cultures in response to the presence of black students in her classroom.

Mr. Yu

Competitive Teaching Identity

Mr. Yu recounted his own past personal experiences in middle and high school when discussing how cultural identity was acknowledged in his classroom. Implementing his own

culturally responsive teaching practices felt new and rare to Mr. Yu because he never

experienced it himself growing up.

> Especially in music, we were really focused on that marching band, you know? Getting
>
> that marching show on the field and then after that's over getting that concert, then that
>
> UIL (University Interscholastic University) and that sight reading and our priorities in
>
> music education growing up for me felt more competitive based and more about getting
>
> their rating and getting that standardization rather than exploring different kinds of music.
>
> (Teacher Interview 2).

There were only occasional moments when his identity reflected in his musical experiences, but

"never did [he] feel like [he] was the one in control of or being asked [his] opinion to give [his]

input and feedback into what was being done or played" (Teacher Interview 2).

Cultural Identity Project

Mr. Yu implemented a project based on student's cultural identity and background in his

classroom. This was in response to his perception toward the diversity of the band program and

his own thoughts concerning cultural identity. Mr. Yu, "really didn't get the opportunity to

express [himself] in that way" when he was in school (Teacher Interview 2). Therefore, he called

it an exploration of students' cultural heritage. For example, there were two students that

performed a traditional Indian dance. Another was two students who explored traditional

Chinese music and performed a song with their instruments.

> They played a song that they had to talk to their parents and find something that was
>
> meaningful to them and so I just quickly discovered that the students not only had a lot of
>
> fun with it this past year but it was just a great way for them to explore and find more
>
> about themselves and their family and where they came from. (Teacher Interview 2)

Mr. Yu's justification for including this in his curriculum had to do with his perception of the diversity present in his classroom. He believed that by giving them the opportunity to explain their culture, they are discovering another way to express themselves musically.

After students submitted their projects, Mr. Yu presented them to his classroom in order to give students an opportunity to gain exposure to different cultures and also as a chance to see a new outlook on their peers. "A different side of maybe one of their friends that they probably don't discuss very much amongst themselves and giving them that musical opportunity to express themselves" (Teacher Interview 2). In one instance, the project provided a space for his Black students to express unique issues associated with their race in representing the "Black Lives Matter" movement. In turn, this allowed Mr. Yu to open up conversations surrounding these topics.

> I talked about racial inequality and injustices and it was really cool for them to see that side of them and for them to really critically think about some of the things that are going on in the world and I think that's also extremely important not only for them to be culturally aware but being cognizant of what's happening around them in their society and in teaching them how to express themselves. (Teacher Interview 2)

This stemmed from his belief that people have an inability to express differing opinions or conflicting viewpoints in appropriate ways.

Paradigm Shift

Mr. Yu experienced inner conflict between his allegiance to a competitive performance-based teaching identity and with this aspiration to explore cultural identity.

> I think we're just now scratching the surface of creating actionable things and not just being aware but giving students the opportunity to express themselves culturally and

diversely and it's easier said than done where we're changing the ways band or music has

been done for *x* amount of years and so I think there are more and more teachers

nowadays that I think are trying to explore that side of education (Teacher Interview 2).

After just a taste of providing a classroom experience having to do with cultural identity, Mr. Yu

noticed that "it really not only made [him] aware, but it really made [him] consider how we do

bands and it really made [him] consider what other things [he] can do moving forward with the

project" (Teacher Interview 2). In response, Mr. Yu recognized that present educators may feel

ill-equipped to make these critical decisions.

I think the how is where we're getting kind of getting lost. I think there's a lot of people

trying to figure it out right now and I think that's a good thing. I think it's a move in the

right direction but conversations like this are what's helping us get to that point (Teacher

Interview 2).

Although, he perceived it as "very new to our society" (Teacher Interview 2). Mr. Yu believed

conversations such as these may help fellow teachers gain a clearer understanding of how to

create actionable things that honor the diverse identities in classrooms.

Acknowledging Diversity

Mr. Yu believed his students treated the presence of diversity differently than he did

himself growing up. "I think this new crop, the new generation of kids are extremely aware.

Much more aware than when I was growing up in school and my parents before me" (Teacher

Interview 2). He attributed this toward the presence of social media that gave students more

exposure and encouragement to pay attention to social issues. Mr. Yu told a story about a student

named Chandler who was on the Autism spectrum. Chandler was unable to participate in the

marching band by performing in a drill spot on the field and so his participation meant playing

his trombone on the front sideline of the field. In an effort to be inclusive toward Chandler, his fellow students came together and created a chair for him called "Chandler's chair." "They said, 'Mr. Yu, can we give this to Chandler because we want him to feel like he belongs to the band program'" (Teacher Interview 2). Mr. Yu connected the idea of cultural diversity as opportunity to cultivate the sense of belonging.

> I think the students now and kids nowadays are really all about inclusivity and trying to make sure everybody feels like they belong. I think that's one of the best things that we do for kids and music is that we teach them how to belong. (Teacher Interview 2)

He did observe that students still socially gravitated toward others that share similar racial or cultural background. However, as a result of this project, Mr. Yu noticed students began engaging in conversation having to do with learning about their peer's cultures. "It starts conversations. It helps open some dialogue about learning about one another and I really do think these group of kids are extremely [laugh] open to one another" (Teacher Interview 2).

Mr. Idris

Cultural Connection

Mr. Idris acknowledged a connection between his identity and his students' identity in his present teaching situation. "I'm just able to identify with the students a lot more than in previous schools" (Teacher Interview 2). It was his second year to teach at Golden Bend Middle School and found that it was natural to connect and communicate with his relatively new community. Mr. Idris found that the most notable way he incorporated his own cultural identity with his teaching experiences had to do with the musical style he imposed on his pep band.

Just taking what I did in college and just taking the style of songs that are not the regular

songs that you would probably hear at some middle school incorporating that. We use

lots of vocals. (Teacher Interview 2)

Mr. Idris employed changes including the kids incorporating movements while performing in the

stands for football games and pep rallies. This caused me to wonder how it felt for him to be

teaching a predominantly Black, African American community. "I think it's awesome" (Teacher

Interview 2). He explained how he and his present colleague always hoped to teach together in

front of an African American audience.

So, just the impact we could have within that environment. Not just in music but also just

in life, and us representing positive things for them. So, it is a great thing. It is one that

we like to say was God given. (Teacher Interview 2).

Mr. Idris felt responsibility in establishing himself "where the community looks like you" and

was a desirable situation to him to be teaching in.

Programming Cultural Music

Mr. Idris was confident in his ability to implement pop music and HBCU style traditions

in his band, but struggled to find ways to incorporate music that identified with his racial

background. "Sometimes it's hard to find music unless it's maybe jazz or anything like that so

it's kind of hard sometimes programming things specifically for my culture" (Teacher Interview

2). We discussed how this challenge may have to do with a lack of composed music written for

the specific types of ensembles that Mr. Idris is expected to instruct in his present band program.

He mentioned the PML (Prescribed Music List), which was a repertoire list from which music

programs in Texas were required to select their contest programs. This was in reference to how

he felt the PML was restrictive towards selecting music for contests compared to his freedom in

selecting music for non-competitive performances. "I think in trying to find some of those music for concerts that we put on for ourselves. The way we do that is a little easier. But for UIL and Solo and Ensemble, it's not good" (Teacher Interview 2).

It felt to me that Mr. Idris more easily gave examples of programming cultural music for performances not associated with contests. He programmed a piece called "España" for a Hispanic heritage month performance. As a result, Mr. Idris recognized engagement from the students that identified with the music. "Students were excited about playing it. It also brought a level of just enthusiasm in wanting to really make sure that they're perfecting the music or playing it up to par" (Teacher Interview 2).

Recognizing Culture

Mr. Idris perceived that his students did have an awareness of their own cultural identity. Within classroom instruction, he would ask many questions to them in efforts to get to know them and share about their backgrounds. He even opened up questions to his class having to do with how students celebrate certain holidays. Mr. Idris reciprocated this openness by intentionally sharing with his students about his own experiences having to do with his cultural identity. "I let them know who I am and let them know that I am a first generation Nigerian American" (Teacher Interview 2). One aspect of Mr. Idris' narrative had to do with his experiences with people mispronouncing his name and treated this as a chance to create a sense of common understanding with his students.

> I let them know about my name. Especially when I'm talking to kids about their name. "Don't be ashamed about your name. Tell me how to actually pronounce your name." I talk about stories of people just butchering my name and not feeling comfortable to tell people, "Hey, this is how to pronounce my name." (Teacher Interview 2).

Mr. Idris attributed this open environment he created to his students' cultural awareness of themselves. In his instruction, he constantly connected any musical concept to a story he could share. "I try to bring that musical concept to life through maybe a story that I'm talking about in my life" (Teacher Interview 2).

Discussion of Teacher Participants

The discussion of teacher participants was framed by a set of a priori codes outlined in this section. These a priori codes were: (a) identity formation, (b) culturally responsive teaching practices, (c) perceptions of cultural diversity, and (d) presence of social justice curriculum.

Identity Formation. Foucault's (1972) writings involved the surveillance of underlying senses of power within discursive fields. I applied his philosophy in the way teacher participants described the formation of their cultural identity intersecting with the development of pedagogical decision making. Ms. Turner faced this dissonance when deciding between following traditional music literacy and sight singing expectations or following the spontaneous music making processes learned from her Black students experienced in church choir singing. A pedagogical dissonance was met with the decision to de-emphasize a method rooted in a conventional norm in order to enhance the musical integrity of her classroom. Ms. Turner found it necessary to be true to the music learning process tied to the culture the particular piece of music derived from in hopes for a richer experience. In this instance, it may be in the best interest of students to experience music learning in this way. Ms. Turner found that black students who identified with this learning process experienced an acknowledgement in their identity while non-Black students were exposed to a new perspective in music making. A traditional pedagogical method of rehearsing need not be a limitation in allowing a novel experience for students. Even so, Ms. Turner took initiative to educate herself in her own

understanding. "I mean—the reason I'm teaching that way is because it's truer to how the music would have been learned or performed in that culture based on my research" (Teacher Interview 2). By way of investigation, Ms. Turner was able to explore this practice of teaching. Ms. Turner described this as a philosophy that she would like to regularly implore that considers "just how different and how cool and unique every single culture out there is. If you can just have a little bit of curiosity about it to open the door" (Teacher Interview 3).

Mr. Yu described similar negotiations between contradictory voices that drove his aims in the design of his classroom experiences. Natale-Abramo's (2014) study described this as "pedagogical discourses that conflict" where participants negotiated between practices of a "traditional conductor" model of pedagogy with a more student-centered "creative approach." Mr. Yu's identity was rooted in this "traditional conductor" philosophy tied to competitive performance. The notion of incorporating students' cultural identity into the design of classroom experiences was continually met with the caveat that it opposed traditional secondary ensemble pedagogy. Mr. Yu imagined substantial creative opportunities that he could provide for his students based now on the knowledge acquired from the exploration of his students' cultural identities. However, this ambition is unsustainable without professional development specifically meant to enrich teachers in culturally responsive teaching practices (Cain, 2015).

It was notable that Mr. Yu implemented a classroom practice in contrast to what he grew up experiencing in his own classroom growing up. Reason being that teachers have a tendency to feel more comfortable leading their classrooms as a reflection of their own experiences and background (Abril, 2009). I observed a paradigm shift, where Mr. Yu was beginning to understanding this change in dynamic. From his perspective, he believed other educators may share in experiencing the same transformation in teaching identity. In other words, Mr. Yu

shifted in how he reacted to the growing acknowledgment of the presence of diverse identities. Dekaney and Robinson (2014) found that when new expressions of music are welcomed in the classroom, it improved the possibility for the music classroom to be relevant for more students. It may be in educators' best interest to habitually reevaluate their own practices through observing the transformation of their classrooms. "We need to kind of change that kind of mindset, that kind of thinking and saying, 'Let's be aware of people's identity, but let's also embrace that' and 'How can we help each other through those kinds of things?'" (Teacher Interview 3).

Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices. The notion of identity formation persisted in this discussion surrounding culturally responsive teaching. Mr. Yu believed at one point that it was inappropriate to bring activities that particularly paid attention to cultural identity into his classroom. "There's that idea out there that we shouldn't talk about culture and race and we shouldn't bring that into the classroom..." (Teacher Interview 2). This underlined what Foucault (1972) believed as a discourse of power. I analyzed this through Mills' (2003) lens having to do with investigating problems rather than a subject. What Mr. Yu seems to have described was the problem of continued unresponsive teacher behavior. Behavior having to do with a historic lack of attention to the identities present in the classroom perhaps based in the concern of handling these bodies inappropriately (Turner, Sweet, & Fornaro, 2019). Mr. Yu was motivated by a stronger discourse of power found outside of the discursive field of his teaching profession within his perception of society's desire to explore diverse identities. "As more of those kinds of conversations are happening now in our society, we thought it was better than ever now to have that kind of experience for the students to explore their own cultural identity..." (Teacher Interview 2).

Mr. Yu's implementation of new culturally responsive teaching practices involving students' cultural identity was a deliberate response. He ultimately desired to provide appropriate jumping off points for conversations having to do with the students' exploration of their own and their peers' cultural identities. I recognized this as the opportunity to practice appropriate social decision making. Mr. Yu stated that, "We teach so much more than music. We teach life skills" (Teacher Interview 2). Cultural identity projects such as this supported the need for social and emotional learning curriculum that provided objectives for students having to do with decision making processes that honor themselves and others. Endeavoring to provide a music experience as a reflection of the students' cultural background can be a difficult task (Abril, 2009). However, involving students in the decision-making processes could lead to a truer reflection of the values of each culture. An appropriate measure of this kind of representation was found in Ms. Turner's classroom decisions by reflecting student input. The "Sounds of Asia" concert, a spontaneous idea inspired by Asian students, became an opportunity for those who identify with Asian culture to share its music and customs with their peers. This in turn, provided a meaningful endeavor for Asian identifying students and a worthwhile musical experience for those desiring to learn about their culture. Ms. Turner mentioned that she tried to notice when her students' experienced these naturally curious moments.

> When I see their eyes light up or their curiosity spark about something that wasn't in my lesson plan, I just kind of—especially this year, I like to go down that road with them and I would like to bring that into my philosophy..." (Teacher Interview 2)

I wondered the degree in which teachers felt equipped to pivot from planned or sequenced curriculum in order to meet their students' cultural needs. I also wondered how loose or rigid mandated classroom curriculum is in encouraging such uniquely identity-based experiences. If

educators desire to provide an engaging experience to where participation is intrinsically

motivated, it may be in their best interest to adopt a teaching philosophy that allows this type of

flexibility.

Ms. Turner created a responsive environment where a students' religious identity need

not be othered by providing multiple ways to connect to the music making experience. "I want to

build their comfort and their vocabulary and their ability to navigate relationships where a person

doesn't believe the same thing as you" (Teacher Interview 2). In observing both programming

and the intentions in the music learning process, I found efforts were motivated by a utilitarian

philosophy in desiring to impart useful characteristics onto her students. "I think that learning

about those different things is part of what helps us make responsible citizens that know how to

listen, know how to navigate conversations where there's cultural differences and the norms are

different" (Teacher Interview 2).

Perceptions of Cultural Diversity. A motivation behind this investigation stemmed

from my curiosity in understanding the perceptions of students and teachers who exist in

culturally diverse environments. Mr. Yu viewed band as a way to create opportunities for

students to learn how to treat diversity within a kind of activity that requires uniformity. He

described band as "militaristic," and that "we all have to look the same. We all have to do the

same thing at the same time" (Teacher Interview 2). Mr. Yu recognized the responsibility he had

as a band director in attempting to create an environment which celebrated diverse identities

while honoring the traditions of the band discipline. These seemingly opposite objectives bred

grounds for opportunities having to do with treating difference amongst peers as in the situation

with "Chandler's chair." "We come together, and we have to practice together, learn together,

learn how to play with one another regardless of all those different things" (Teacher Interview 2).

While the situation with "Chandler's chair" did not occur as a result of the cultural identity project, further cultivation of this kind of environment must endure in order to equip students with future opportunities that require inclusionary practices. Ignoring the presence of diversity might lead to erasure of certain identities as a result of an activity that demands conformity.

I also asked Mr. Yu how he perceived his students to acknowledge his own cultural identity. "I think it's important for the Asian American students especially to be able to see that someone is able to be a teacher. An Asian American is able to be a teacher" (Teacher Interview 2). He connected this to the importance of representation, in that students should recognize the culture in which their teachers represent. What Mr. Yu meant by this was in acknowledging the power of difference. "Even though I identify this way and this culture and this ethnicity, I do want you to know that in music, in band class, we're all one family and even though I'm different—it's different but the same" (Teacher Interview 2). Mr. Yu described an environment where common goals are achieved while people are acknowledging difference.

Presence of Social Justice Curriculum. Mr. Yu considered the students in his band program to be extremely diverse, but did not believe that they engaged much in discussing about their identities amongst their peers. In other words, they did not necessarily have an open space to express these understandings. Mr. Yu created this space by way of his cultural identity project in making opportunities to have conversations having to do with difference. By adding this social justice component to his curriculum, his intention effectively established a sense of shared understanding. Thus, adding to the sense of community, which contributed to Kelly-McHale (2017) thoughts on this desired trait from what students seek in their music programs. Kindall-Smith's (2012) work in integrating social justice content into current music education curriculum found that it impacted student learning and teacher assumptions of students. These points

supported Mr. Yu's justification in devoting instruction toward this social justice agenda. While cultivating the education of diverse cultures in his classroom, he was also providing an exercise in practical habits in equitable treatment of others.

Ms. Turner navigated this issue with her treatment and response with the situation with *The Star Spangled Banner*. As a choir director for students of color, the situation placed her in a position where she could respond according to her understanding of the student's identities and the narrative attached to them. "So, it's changed me in that I'm more aware of how I'm responding to students and what the bias implications are in myself and any assumptions that I make" (Teacher Interview 2). Being intentional in the treatment of students based on their identity may seem offensive to some, but occurs as an avenue to acknowledge a narrative. "Saying that you're colorblind—I understand now, I didn't understand when I first started teaching, is a form of erasure" (Teacher Interview 2). This example where Ms. Turner was careful in her language in addressing *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Lift Every Voice* was a judgement call in her attempt to soften dominant powers at play. Acknowledging a student's cultural identity and meaningfully reacting based on that identity must be present in environments where cultural diversity exists.

Mr. Idris felt empowered to teach in front of a community that shared a similar cultural background as his own. This was evidenced in his excitement to incorporate musical styles associated with his own cultural upbringing and its similarity to the population he teaches presently. Mr. Idris seemed passionate about creating connections with his students through his ability to relate and understand their senses of identity. Mr. Idris incorporated musical styles associated with his own cultural background in the music experiences he provided for his students specifically within pep band settings. With his musical identity so closely tied to

popular music and his background in HBCU bands, he was unrestricted in programming this type of music for his students. However, Mr. Idris experienced an impasse when programming music for performances associated with competitive performances. Housee (2008) concluded that teaching strategies that are inclusive of Black experiences may provide an avenue toward providing power to their narratives. By highlighting these experiences, Mr. Idris increased student engagement and provided a space for critical thinking based on their identities. Incorporating styles of music associated with Black culture, such as the traditions established in HBCU marching bands, may be a way to bring empowerment to these populations.

Chapter VI

Student Experience

The findings presented in this chapter are drawn from the data collected from second and third interviews which focused on student contemporary experience and student meaning making, respectively. Each of the two campus sites will be presented individually with a discussion immediately following each of their accounts. This chapter begins with accounts from Green Mountain High School students and will discuss emergent themes: (a) realizing a culturally responsive environment, (b) influence of the director, and (c) programming cultural music. This precedes accounts from Blue Bayou High School and will discuss emergent themes: (d) celebrating cultural diversity and (e) building cultural community.

Green Mountain High School Students

Perceptions of the Culture Project

Anita first mentioned the culture project implemented by Mr. Yu when I asked the students how they perceived their cultural identity was acknowledged in their classroom music experiences. She decided to perform a song from a movie that she grew up watching in India with her cousins as her contribution to the project. Anita's initial thoughts surrounding the project were lukewarm. "I don't think that my culture was suppressed, but I don't think it was like being showcased necessarily. It was just like it wasn't a good or bad thing" (Student Interview 2). Anita also believed that this cultural project was only given to them in response to the massive pivot in instruction that ensued due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "I think it was also partially 'cause like we're online so they had to do some improvising" (Student Interview 2). Riya agreed with Anita's statement by exhibiting skepticism toward her teacher's intentions as a result of the pivot to an online mode of learning.

They had to come up with something that everyone would be interested in which is

like— it's a good thing, but it's also a sad thing that it takes us to be online for a project

to be pushed. I think we should have done that a long time ago... (Student Interview 2)

Still, Anita and Riya agreed that the cultural project did nothing to hurt their cultural identities,

they just wished that something like this was an established part of their regular band experience.

Ravi added to the conversation by bringing up a different position. "We needed a whole

pandemic to acknowledge some people's cultures, but then again, it's a music program and a lot

of kids don't expect a cultural aspect when they sign up for band..." (Student Interview 2). While

Ravi agreed with Anita and Riya's thoughts surrounding the project, he also argued on the side

of expectations. Still, Ravi recognized the benefits that these kinds of projects granted his fellow

students. "I think that that should become like a yearly thing and just probably do more stuff

about just like centered around stuff that's not just concert music" (Student Interview 2). The

students believed that in a usual year not affected by a global pandemic, this culture project

would not have been implemented.

Willingness to Learn

I wondered how students described their sense of awareness toward their peers' cultural

identities within their band program. Ravi believed there to be a mutual respect for each other's

identities, but there was not yet an environment where open conversations about this would

occur. "I don't know if people are going to be willing to ask questions to learn more but

everyone in this band program which I'm really happy to say really respects one another"

(Student Interview 2). Even so, Ravi mentioned that, "they're willing to learn about it..."

(Student Interview 2). Ravi expounded on how the band could cultivate this willingness to learn.

> For example, Anita is Christian right?...let's say we do something—some performance or
> something that has that—relates to it. I'm probably going to end up asking more questions
> 'cause I want to know more about it. (Student Interview 2)

Ravi believed that he would exhibit curiosity in response to continued projects that represent
student's cultural identity. However, he accepted that not all students share these same
motivations. "There's a lot of kids who are just going to be like, 'Let's just get the project, get
the grade and move on' and not actually delve on the meaning of the project" (Student Interview
2). Riya agreed but argued that the majority of the student body are the kinds of people that
"want to express their own culture and then learn about other cultures" (Student Interview 2).
Anita explained how multicultural their band program was and reasoned how dominant cultures
got in the way of acknowledging other cultures.

> ...Because we focus mainly on western culture, we'll never know that part of somebody.
> There's someone in our band program who's from Madagascar, like that's insanely cool
> and I've never asked her questions about it, but I remember she told me that once and I
> was like, "I've never met someone from Madagascar" like that's insane! So, it's like stuff
> like that... (Student Interview 2).

Anita wished to see more meaningful ways that supported situations such as this for herself and
the rest of the students in her band program.

Motivations by Music Selection

I asked how students felt their band directors treated their cultural identity within their
classroom. Ravi took this question to mean if anything was different in their interactions with
each other as a result of the culture project. The students understood their band directors to
customarily be singularly focused on rehearsing music towards concerts and competitive

performances. For Ravi, immediately after the culture project, his band directors expressed

interest in his cultural background. However, the interaction was described to be minimal and

short lived. He described the cultural project as an "outlier."

> It's that one thing that's just so far away randomly that just happens and everything else
>
> on one side is just music, music, music and not cultural music. Not like music that people
>
> can really relate to... (Student Interview 2).

Ravi's issue was in the way his band directors selected music for programming their concerts.

"Our UIL music usually it's always like the most random things that no one ever like really

heard of" (Student Interview 2). Ravi desired regular instances where cultural meaning was

imbedded into their music programming selections. Victor agreed with Ravi and summed up

these thoughts in this statement.

> I feel like if you were to pick music from other cultures, I feel like not only would people
>
> enjoy more, 'cause it's a little different. Also feel like it would be a good opportunity to
>
> teach about the culture that you pick the music from. (Student Interview 2)

Both Ravi and Victor believed they would personally put in more effort towards participation if

the selected music had more appealing cultural implications. Ravi added how he felt other

students would contribute. "I feel like just doing that with other cultures, like not just increasing

cultural awareness. It'll just increase like participation and like the skill level and everything"

(Student Interview 2).

Talking About Diversity

I wondered if the reason these experiences were not as universal was because of people's

comfortability level in discussing each other's cultural backgrounds. Ravi believed that "no one

really wants to overstep" (Student Interview 2). Anita added, "Like, how do you just start talking

about somebody's culture?" (Student Interview 2). She supposed that people are affected by their

fear of accidentally saying something offensive, but felt that ignoring this kind of identity might

"lead to problems" or "lead to something bigger" (Student Interview 2). This information led me

to ask how they perceived the level of cultural diversity present at their school. Ravi described

the band program as "pretty diverse" and categorized this as "good." (Student Interview 2). He

brought up a realization after his fellow students experienced the culture project. "I think

throughout the band, everyone has different meanings of what their cultural identity is..."

(Student Interview 2). Through the project, Ravi was able to see his peers express themselves

each in a diverse and unique way with the culture in which they identified most strongly with.

Riya viewed the level of diversity as opportunity. "I think there's so many opportunities for

people to learn about each other 'cause our band is especially diverse..." (Student Interview 2).

Such opportunity came in an example where Riya and Ravi would seek permission from their

band directors to be excused from portions of their summer band camp rehearsals to attend their

Hindu camp each year. They would say, "we need to skip summer band...then he gets kind of

upset and then we started talking about why it's really important and why we need to go..."

(Student Interview 2).

I attempted to circle the conversation back to how they felt their band directors treated

their identities. Victor argued that there is "difficulty talking about your culture" especially when

there are large differences between cultures or when there are generational gaps present. "I feel

like it's really hard to explain that you kind of have to like show it in a way" (Student Interview

2). Riya argued that their band director's ought to have contributed toward the same cultural

project that the students participated in. "I feel like we're not going to get as much information as

we're giving them like I feel like they should have done something for that culture project, to be

honest" (Student Interview 2). Riya desired some sort of reciprocity because she believed that a chance to better understand her band director's background would have enhanced the experience. Victor agreed by saying, "I know very little about their culture and like you know stuff like that and it's kind of weird like that they asked us to do the culture project but then at the same time, we know very little about their culture and their lives" (Student Interview 2). Riya spoke for her peers and argued that students might have taken things more seriously if this was the case.

Discussion of Green Mountain High School Student Participants

Realizing a Culturally Responsive Environment. Green Mountain High School students collectively affirmed their desire to learn about and explore their own and their fellow students' cultural backgrounds within their music experiences. Ravi stated that these types of opportunities could be, "a way for people to actually learn about one another and it feels like it brings people together 'cause people's culture—their personal identity in their culture is such a big part about them" (Student Interview 3). However, Green Mountain students described apprehension with some of their peers in beginning conversations having to do with cultural identity. "There's a majority of people who actually want to like express their own culture and then learn about other cultures but then we have a part that holds us back..." (Student Interview 2). In addition, these students described just one musical experience that had highlighted their cultural identity and no other was a regular part of the normal sequences of their band program. If conversations having to with the presence of diversity were more integrated regularly into curriculum, a greater sense of student learning and trust may have been established (Kindall-Smith, 2012). The discourse here placed the power in their band directors' curriculum. In other words, the students' competence in how to treat their surrounding array of identities was contingent on the experiences their directors provided for them (Mills, 2003). Culturally

responsive activities may be more meaningful when forces of power pay attention to students' cultural identities and are more of a routine in their experiences. The response to this problem may be the implementation of genuine culturally responsive teaching practices in the form of continued projects. Even so, the Green Mountain High School students' perceptions of the one culturally responsive teaching practice they encountered was appreciated but met with skepticism. For Ravi, it was not enough just to participate in one project having to do with his cultural background. It seemed ingenuine to him because it came as a surprise due to not having any similar experiences leading up to this instance. By first establishing an environment where productive talk surrounding the topic of culture is the norm, students may more genuinely participate in each successive introduction of culturally responsive activities. Green Mountain High School students were still able to imagine the benefits in involving themselves in these experiences. "I think bringing our own identities and our own culture, our lives at home, I guess—into band culture. It can help it positively" (Student Interview 3). Being informed by their past experiences, they displayed an understanding of the outcomes the desired.

   Influence of the Director. Green Mountain students expressed their desire to know their band directors on a cultural level. With the discussed culture project, students felt that there was a missing component in its implementation or purpose. Riya felt that her band directors should have participated in the culture project the same way the students were tasked to represent their cultural backgrounds.

> I feel like they should have done something for that culture project to be honest...they
> need to be contributing and like everyone can learn about each other 'cause I'm one
> hundred percent sure they have like their own passions and like of course their cultures
> are interesting. (Student Interview 2).

Victor described the situation as "weird" that his band directors asked him to participate in an activity having to do with their cultural backgrounds when they knew very little about their band directors' cultural backgrounds in the first place. The students at Green Mountain High School collectively desired a type of relationship with their band directors where this kind of cultural talk was a norm. "I think a lot of people would take more interest in doing band work at a higher level or something like that 'cause they're trying to achieve that type of relationship" (Student Interview 2). Riya's claim provided evidence toward an approach that music educators may use to increase student motivation. "If you want to start to learn more about people and usually when you're in an environment where you know people better, you tend to be more productive because like there's no hesitation when it comes to like teamwork" (Student Interview 3). While the purpose of the culture project itself worked to allow a celebration of the cultural diversity present in the Green Mountain High School band program, the students seemed to perceive the project as a venture that had not reached its full potential. They expressed desire to have opportunities relating to exploring the diverse cultural backgrounds of not only their peers but those of their teachers. However, the example that was established was not helpful to this endeavor. Band directors overlooked the opportunity to participate alongside the students in this project in a way that may have contributed to students receiving a more meaningful cultural experience.

Programming Cultural Music. Students expressed opinion in how music was being selected for certain performances. I wondered about the notion that music selected for students could reflect their own interests or cultural backgrounds. Within the discursive field of the music classroom, the power dynamic existed in who possessed the power in deciding programming choices. Victor expressed desire in preparing music that reflected his own or his peers' culture. However, he was sympathetic to his band directors' ability to present this appropriately. "I feel

like the music choice is also based off what the band director could teach successfully. I realized

that a band director might not be able to teach music they're not familiar with" (Student

Interview 3). Victor acknowledged the idea that band directors will likely select music based on

their own past experiences and comfortability level in teaching genuinely (Abril, 2009). The

hesitation in programming cultural music existed in the measures required in order to

appropriately teach a piece of music tied to a student's culture.

　　　　Ravi expressed concerns about the notion of student choice. "I don't think we have a

choice...at the end of the day it's not our decision, it's their decision" (Student Interview 3). Ravi

explicitly believed that students possessed little choice and was usually up to their band directors

to select music for them, especially for competitive performances. Ravi mentioned some

instances where selected pieces for competitive performances had had cultural significance,

where they were allowed to explore its background and history. However, he expressed that the

amount of these instances was minimal. Ravi argued that allowing student choice in selecting

music to perform might lead to an increase in participation and motivation from students.

Students perceived the presence of cultural diversity present as potential for meaningful

conversations and an opportunity to learn of their peers' and directors' backgrounds. In addition,

this type of productive talk led by student voice may contribute to the band director's ability to

program music that responsively reflects the cultures present in their classroom. I thought it was

notable that Ravi's description of the presence of cultural diversity in his band program was

characterized as good. Although, he stated this with the caveat that people recognize each

member has their own unique definition of how they want acknowledgement of their identity.

Integrating productive conversation that acknowledges the cultures of all stakeholders may be

responsible for creating a culturally responsive environment. Cultivating this environment may

contribute towards a shared understanding of how specific cultures wish to be celebrated, leading

to meaningful music programming led by opportunities motivated by student voice.

Blue Bayou High School Students

Inclusivity

My conversation with the students at Blue Bayou High School began with them

describing the environment of their choir program. Alondra began by describing this as

"definitely diverse." (Student Interview 2). She described choir as welcoming and attracted

differing cultures, but struggled to find the particular word that specifically captures this

depiction. I suggested the word, "inclusive." Alondra responded with, "Exactly! An inclusive

environment. An open minded environment which I feel that is established by the directors

first..." (Student Interview 2). She explained how discussions having to do with other peoples'

culture had been a norm because her choir directors had placed value in its importance. Anya

agreed with this perspective and added how her past and present choir directors were "just so

excited about learning." (Student Interview 2). They noticed that their directors conveyed the

characteristic of leaders who were willing to ask questions and explored the different cultures

present in their classroom. They continually reiterated how their directors modeled these types of

behaviors.

> All of our directors have always openly displayed that there is so much that the world
>
> offers and you need to be open to exploring that and just you know, furthering your
>
> knowledge and continuing to grow by exploring these different things. (Student Interview
>
> 2).

This level of inclusivity led me to ask how they felt about student choice. Or, how much agency

they felt they had in the decisions made towards their experiences. "They are super open about it

with their classes and we have surveys like all the time...there's a lot of conversation that we all have regarding the different activities we want to do in class" (Student Interview 2). Anya affirmed that she feels that she has choice in these decision-making processes. In our conversation, both Anya and Alondra pointed to the inclusiveness of the choir as a reason for the presence of diversity in the student population.

Performing Cultural Music

In response to the topic of inclusivity, I speculated how this perspective endured through the music that they rehearse and perform. I had mentioned the "Sounds of Asia" concert and explained my wonderment in how they felt about its representation. Anya enjoyed putting the concert together and noted particularly how the learning process was meaningful to her. She called it an "all-encompassing experience" (Student Interview 2) which not only included music making but also included learning about the clothing and food associated with the various Asian cultures. Alondra was fascinated by the concept of this concert. "First of all, I had never heard of a school doing anything like that before. Having a whole program of so many diverse cultures focus and bring light to a minority in the choirs." (Student Interview 2). Alondra mentioned how comprehensive the process was. They had prepared a piece in a Malaysian language and were made to watch a video of Malaysian drummers in order to observe a representation of the percussive sounds the piece meant to emulate. Alondra noticed the intention in all of these efforts and foresaw the potential benefits of these experiences for herself and her peers.

>...so that when they grow up and they go off to college or whatever, they know not only do they know more about the world but also they know how to appreciate the culture of others which I thought was really cool... (Student Interview 2).

Alondra had particular trouble with a Chinese piece they were preparing for the concert. "It was

different and it felt uncomfortable to sing the language" (Student Interview 2). She felt

frustration because of its difficulty which caused her to not enjoy the process as much. However,

she was able to recognize that this frustration came from the lack of knowledge in the form of the

music because it differed from her Western-centric upbringing. "They weren't as melodic as

Western music" (Student Interview 2). They were even fortunate enough to have assistance from

a Chinese foreign exchange student who took part in teaching the language. "So, we knew what

we were saying was like to the source so that made it cool and I feel like it made us better

musicians in the process" (Student Interview 2).

Cultural Competence

Anya recognized the beauty in struggling through the process of understanding another

culture's customs. "It's like accepting the unfamiliarity of it and then it's just transferring that

into our daily lives" (Student Interview 2). Discomfort was experienced in the learning process

with a differing cultures' music. Still, she realized that an entire society associated with that

culture uses these types of music making as their norm.

> We might think whatever we were grew up with and learned first is beautiful, but that's
>
> because that's what we started with, but that's not what everybody else started with and so
>
> it's just realizing that we all come from different backgrounds and is sometimes we think
>
> that whatever is easier and what we know is like better. (Student Interview 2).

Anya placed special attention to the uniqueness of different styles of music and found fascination

in finding the similarities and differences between them with the music she was familiar with.

Our conversation concluded with a discussion having to do with how the students felt that

they had evolved or benefitted from these experiences. Alondra said, "I've become so open

minded about different cultures, different points of view and a lot better at confronting situations

of conflict" (Student Interview 2). Alondra believed that this open-mindedness and mutual

respect for one another was a learned skill cultivated through her choir experiences. Anya said,

"I feel like all of the students and myself have just been more curious and I've noticed I'm

having conversations that I've never really had before" (Student Interview 2).

Discussion of Blue Bayou High School Students

Celebrating Diversity. The perspectives of Blue Bayou High School students provided

insight into the proper treatment of programming music having to do with students' cultural

backgrounds. I recognized the presence of the relationship between the notion of cultural

pluralism and equality in that both must be present in order for a true representation of cultural

diversity (Civitillo et al, 2017). The artifact that represented the notion of equality was present in

the transparency of each students' identities through open discussion imbedded into regular

classroom instruction. Alondra and Anya repeatedly stated that they felt their choir directors

allowed input and choice from students ultimately leading to programs like the "Sounds of Asia"

concert. Alongside the permission of input and choice, discussion existed revolving around how

these cultures were going to be treated properly and bringing to the fore the presence of

difference. "We had a conversation after class, all of the classes did this, and we sat down and

we talked about how are we going to be respectful" (Student Interview 3). The attempt at

displaying each culture properly occurred by inviting open discussion meant to expose any

variable that could potentially mistreat an identity. "We just like talked about different things

that might come off as like wrong if we do it and like how we should avoid that and what we

should be careful of" (Student Interview 3). The notion of equality was established by the

presence of productive conversations surrounding the presence of diversity.

The artifact that represented the notion of cultural pluralism was present in the purposeful involvement of students who identified with the culture that is being represented. An example of this was in the music learning process of one of the pieces in the program that had Indian classical music origins.

I do think at one point like at the beginning everyone's first reaction was like, "This is not like *music* music, this is just like music that we're doing." But, no. It does have value. It does have skill. (Student Interview 3)

Alondra realized here the impact of how one of her classmates was welcomed to coach the rest of the choir in specific techniques from the music her classmate had expertise in. "She had been training in it and hear her sing it and her technique and stuff, you realize like, 'Oh no! These people trained to do this'" (Student Interview 3). Alondra experienced a shift in her own value system tied to certain styles of music and allowed her to recognize the value in a style of music that differed from her own upbringing. The notion of cultural pluralism was also observed in the audience's reception of the concert. Anya felt that the choir was distinguished in its ability to celebrate the cultural identities of her fellow students. She believed that parents who attend typical choir concerts that perform classic literature may have trouble relating to the performance. "When we bring in music of their culture, something that they heard when they were younger, you know? It's a different type of connection...it kind of just brings a different meaning to our choir experience that our parents are realizing..." (Student Interview 3).

Building Cultural Community. How do music communities build a sense of curiosity in a manner that leads to meaningful conversations surrounding cultural identity? The students at Blue Bayou High School pointed to the example set by their choir directors that cultivated this environment. Both Anya and Alondra continually used the word "inclusive" in their accounts.

This description represented how their choir directors would model the approach of how to invite diverse cultures into spaces where identities could be productively discussed. Anya found beauty in the uniqueness of differing cultures' music and felt that this recognition broke down the boundary of accessing this type of learning. It was remarkable that Anya recognized that her own biases affected her own comfortability of learning about and how to perform music from a culture different from her own. Instead of reacting negatively to this, she placed importance in working to see how other perspectives placed value in their own music making processes.

The experiences in the Blue Bayou High School choir program cultivated the concept of multicultural human subjectivity, where community was developed between performers and audience members through transformative musical performances meant to break down cultural boundaries (Bradley, 2008). Alondra described this level of connection:

> I felt like so many people in the audience identified with what they were seeing and just made us so much more pleasurable to see because like as artists and performers, we perform and we have to love what we're doing, but also the audience has to love what we're putting on and you have to always think about them. (Student Interview 3)

Stakeholders in this community contributed to creating a multicultural human subjective environment by engaging in the discourse surrounding the presence of cultural diversity. Alondra felt that these types of concerts "appealed to a whole another level of audience and you give them something to look forward to and it's something to be proud of..." (Student Interview 3). The discourse surrounding cultural identity contributed to senses of community and an enhancement of the musical experience.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

Music classrooms that possess the value system of acknowledging teacher and student cultural identities pave the way for opportunities having to do with building community (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Present literature explained the practical use of culturally responsive teaching that provided teachers with relevant tools to create these experiences for their students (Abril, 2009; Cain, 2015). However, the rationale behind this study was in the desire to hear the student and teacher perspective behind this topic and specifically how they perceive the presence of culturally responsive teaching practices related to their cultural identities. Participants of this study represented a range of identities that may be reflected in other music education communities that possess similar levels of cultural diversity. By representing these perceptions, I aimed to provide affirmation for teachers seeking reason to promote inclusionary practices in their music classrooms and assist in identifying any discursive practices that might be restricting their ability to respond to the presence of diverse cultures. Consequently, this may further the necessary discourse surrounding how each person's cultural identity wishes to be acknowledged and celebrated.

Engaging in these conversations with participants was understandably uncomfortable, but not enough to deter me from engaging in an opportunity to share the unique identity of these individuals. This research sought to contribute to culturally responsive teaching literature by representing an illustration that educators and scholars could use to create potential spaces for this discourse. I encourage educators to engage in the type of inquiry presented in this study with their colleagues as well as their students. Reason being, participating in this type of inquiry provided a chance for myself and fellow practitioners to self-reflect on personal motivations that

guided classroom decision making and re-evaluated present systematic practices occurring in the music classroom. Seeking response from the student perspective highlighted the need for this type of inquiry to exist in order to justify the presence of true student-centered instruction. In other words, culturally responsive teaching occurred genuinely when students' voices were considered. I wanted to normalize the conversation surrounding our cultural identities in order to reveal opportunity between the uncertainties that lead to activities that celebrate these differences.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of students and teachers regarding their cultural identity in music classrooms. Research questions included: (a) How do teachers describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom teaching practices? and (b) How do students describe their cultural identity in relation to their classroom music experiences?

Past Research and Definitions

This study was an examination of cultural identity in the music classroom where data was collected through an in-depth interview process. The motive behind this style of inquiry came from my desire to share voices from a diverse array of perspectives while recognizing that the concept of cultural identity was complex and constantly evolving (Joseph, 2007). Endeavoring to understand cultural identity must also be coupled with the consideration that these types of identities were multi-faceted (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011) and were in constant negotiation with surrounding environments (Hahl and Löfström, 2016).

Culturally responsive teaching was examined as an experience where cultural identities of participants were intentionally explored in their music experiences. Gay (2015) defined culturally responsive teaching as an outgrowth of multicultural education where educators are encouraged to respond genuinely to the increasing transformation occurring within the changing

cultural diversity of their classrooms. Music classrooms provided a unique environment and phenomenon where identity shaping (Fitzpatrick, 2012), recognition of cultural diversity (Dekaney and Robinson, 2014), and social emotional learning (Kelly-McHale, 2017) took place through their music experiences. Therefore, the subject of teacher and student cultural identity who were involved in these music classrooms was worthy of examination.

Teachers led solely by Western or traditional performance standards contradicted with the aims of culturally responsive teaching and experiences (Joseph & Southcott, 2009). Unless a teacher allowed students to express their self-identified musical cultures within the design of their curriculum, students would struggle to feel like they have agency in the collective music experience (Abril, 2009). It was very unlikely that a child's musical upbringing reflected the same genres and styles endorsed in traditional secondary public-school curriculum, which emphasized a deep issue in the amount of choices that the student had in electing the type of music programs they expect to be involved in.

Individuals each have a set of unique identities where their identifying qualities overlap to create specific connotations in the way they experience burdens. Crenshaw (1989) called this the theory of intersectionality where social relationships and the formation of subjects relate to each person's overlapping identities. Within the discursive field of our music classrooms, educators must wonder how these identities are perceived by their students. In order to honor the presence of multiple identities, the opportunity must be present for students to self-identify their cultural backgrounds unto their teachers and peers. Knowledge of self-identified culture may provide an unprecedented power to the music educator. The intersectionality lens may ultimately aid in their ability to plan activities that reflect genuine expectations of their students while opening up spaces that are considerate of the burdens tied to their specific background.

It was challenging to provide a clear definition to the term cultural diversity due to the wide spanning categories within the word culture and the ambiguity to the word diversity. Therefore, I sought to find meaning in how participants described cultural diversity. I wondered in what way did communities describe the value in cultural diversity and more importantly, if the peoples from non-dominant cultures had a voice in the measure of this value. This stemmed from the discourse of power in the dominant culture potentially leading these conversations (Koza, 2008) or with the differing aims of equality versus cultural pluralism (Civitillo et al, 2017). In an effort to define cultural diversity, it was imperative to simultaneously ask peoples of non-dominant cultures what their perception of cultural diversity was while wondering if present discourse surrounding cultural diversity was being led by dominant voices.

Overview of Method and Analysis

The method of this research was an in-depth phenomenological study that examined how teachers and students described their cultural identity in relation to their classroom music experiences. Teachers ($n = 3$) and students ($n = 7$) were selected to participate in these interviews from three campus sites. Participants were asked to recount their past and present experiences surrounding their cultural identity and described what this meant to their classroom music experiences. Data was collected through Seidman's (2019) three-part in-depth interview series process where each interview served a specific purpose. The first interview sought information surrounding participants' life history, the second interview investigated participants' descriptions about their present experiences, and the third interview reflected on meaning making surrounding the topic.

Foucault's (1972) thoughts and teachings were used as a framework that inspired my concern with the theory of discourse, which was a term used to describe the social construct of

the way individuals assign meanings to material or object occurrences (Mills, 2003). Mills

(2003) organized a list of approaches Foucault would apply to investigate discourses of power

within a discursive field. I used these approaches as a lens to shape my discussions surrounding

codes or emergent themes. Data collected from teacher interviews were reviewed with the

intention of aligning topics of discussion with a set of a priori codes. These codes were

determined when I organized past literature into categories that specifically represented

discourses of power in educational settings. Data collected from student interviews were

reviewed with the intention of discovering emergent themes that uncovered discourses of power

surrounding their cultural identities in relation to their music experiences. Discussion of these

codes and themes revolved around assigning clear meanings to the intention of honoring cultural

identities in the music classroom while exposing any imbalances of power that may get in the

way of this venture.

Overview of Findings

Inquiry with participants surrounding their cultural and musical backgrounds revealed

insight into each individuals' rich and unique history. This informed how each participants'

value systems contributed to how they wished their cultural identities directed their music

experiences. For example, Ms. Turner's internal negotiations with her female, musician identity

allowed her to be aware of and respond to how marginalized populations desire their identities to

be represented in their music experiences. Allowing participants to self-identify their own

cultural identities was imperative in removing any assumptions about the identities they

represented. This allowed free and genuine insight into their perspectives and contributed to a

clearer understanding of their motivations. Another example of this emerged in how Rock and

Victor both realized that they have had little music experiences having to do with the

acknowledgement of their cultural backgrounds. It was clear that this motivated their present desire to seek experiences where their cultural backgrounds are genuinely implemented in their classroom experiences. Additionally, from an intersectional standpoint, being able to take stock of each participants' multi-faceted identities was useful in acknowledging their unique struggles in how they experience restrictions in their representation. Mr. Idris who identified as an African American with a background in HBCU style marching band and interest in popular music exhibited a desire to teach in a community that reflected his cultural background and to incorporate styles of music that were a reflection of this. However, there were moments in his teaching decision making process that contradicted these intentions due to competitive performance expectations and prescribed music programming restrictions.

Participants of color stated how the presence of diversity was an ideal and desired trait in a community and described it as "good." However, it was revealed that further or continued action must be taken in order to qualify this value. Beyond the recognition of ethnic or racial diversity, educators must take the responsibility of adding meaningful inquiry into their practices for the purpose of gaining useful knowledge of their community's cultural practices. Ms. Turner demonstrated this trait in her and her colleague's continued habit of inquiry with their students surrounding how they wish their personal interests were to be reflected in the music they perform. This was also evident in Anya and Alondra's recount of their experiences where they described many instances having to do with survey or agency in student input. Ravi was notably one of the student participants to state that he recognized the presence of cultural diversity and described it as positive. In contrast with the experiences of Blue Bayou High School students however, Ravi adamantly described how he felt he had little choice in the music that they

performed. Within settings that have similar perceptions of diversity, educators may be missing

an opportunity to provide meaningful instances of discussion surrounding topics.

Students at Green Mountain High School and Blue Bayou High School similarly

described value in desiring experiences having to with learning about their peers' cultural

identities and having opportunities to share about their own cultural identities. For example, Riya

from Green Mountain High School noticed how much her fellow classmates excitedly observed

a rehearsal of her Indian cultural dance. Anya from Blue Bayou High School cheerfully shared

cultural clothing with her fellow choir members in preparation for their concert highlighting

music influenced by Asian cultures. Even so, I observed Green Mountain High School's band

program to be at the beginning stages of an environment that was culturally responsive whereas

the Blue Bayou High School's choir program seemed to have this type of environment nearly

completely realized. Blue Bayou's choir had regular experiences having to do with programming

choices that were a direct reflection of the cultural makeup of the choir, embedded discussions

having to do with race, culture, or ethnicity within their rehearsals of music, and modeling of

inclusive behavior from choir directors. Routine use of these tactics was not observed at Green

Mountain High School's band program and was evident in the students' surprise and skepticism

in the implementation of activities having to do with responding to the cultural makeup of their

classroom. This is not meant to disparage Mr. Yu's curriculum choices made at Green Mountain

High School, but to illustrate how culturally responsive teaching environments require

intentional and routine implementation. A key intention that I discovered that may make

culturally responsive teaching experiences more meaningful to students was in the role of the

teacher. Students at Green Mountain High School expressed a desire to see their band directors

participate in the exploratory and demonstrational nature of their culture project. Students felt

that the activity might have had better reception in the form of more meaningful involvement from their peers if they had observed a clear model or example from their teachers. Additionally, this may pose an opportunity for teachers to self-identify their cultural backgrounds in an effort to build a deeper sense of trust in the student-teacher relationship thus leading to a greater sense of community.

Reflecting on these rich stories led me to wonder about the perspectives of the numerous teachers and students who were not included in this study. It was important to recognize that the selection of teacher participants was affected by proximity and based on my own professional and personal considerations. Student participants were selected by teacher participants based on a selection criteria along with their assumptions surrounding which students may have had rich stories to share. By selecting participants in this way, there were certainly a multitude of perspectives and stories that were excluded from this study. My main concern existed in the missing Black perspective as well as the excess in South Asian identities from the student pool. While it was challenging to include the multitude of identities present in these communities, one must still consider this factor when examining these findings. Reason being, that the foundation of this research was in the examination of music classrooms with multiple cultures. It could be generalized that these findings could differ and be more expansive with the inclusion of additional identities.

Suggestions for Teaching Practice

I encourage teachers to engage in the same types of conversations that were demonstrated in the in-depth interviews of this study. For myself, engaging in this type of inquiry through the interview process created a unique connection between myself and the participants to where a deep understanding was generated because of the vulnerable nature of the topic of identity. For

teachers hoping to create a culturally responsive environment in their classrooms, it may be in their best interest to invite this type of conversation. By knowing how students self-identify culturally, educators may be able to more appropriately handle the various types of identities present in the classroom and be proactive about preparing culturally responsive activities responsibly. Additionally, knowing the manner in which students value music and how they grew up making music in their homes provides a wealth of knowledge in how to program music and create music making experiences that are more meaningful to them. Better understanding the unique burdens associated with students' cultural identities may also proactively remove potential for social injustices that may further marginalize populations that exist in culturally diverse populations.

These types of conversations may best be appropriate at the beginning of a school year, with the occurrence of introductions and when expectations are being set. Many teachers operate with the understanding that the environment established at the beginning of the school year is imperative toward the routines and behaviors they desire in their students. I encourage teachers to take this time to ask questions to their students surrounding how they self-identify culturally and then lead them to questions concerning how they grew up making music in their homes. As previously mentioned in previous discussion, it is essential that teachers are modeling culturally responsive behavior. Meaning, that they are reciprocating a manner of vulnerability and contributing to the activity in the same way they expect from their students. Students will be more inclined to share more genuinely and meaningfully when they observe leadership participating in these types of conversations and embodying these types of behaviors as norms.

I asked teacher participants to reflect on what it meant to be questioned on topics of cultural identity and culturally responsive teaching practices for their students during Interview

3. Our conversation inevitably revolved around how uncomfortable it was to engage in this dialogue and how there have been little opportunities to practice this skill. They also recognized how important it felt to reflect upon their own practices through the lens of culturally responsive teaching. Mr. Idris felt that it was beneficial to him to wonder about his intentions in bringing his own and other students' cultural identities to the attention of his classroom and how it might be perceived by them. Mr. Yu explained how his participation brought him to think about the potential in how much impact he could have on his students by representing a person from a marginalized population for anybody who might struggle to share that identity. Ms. Turner detailed how impactful it was to talk about her teaching practices because it made her consider her intentions; if she was actually reflecting how her students identify culturally or if she was unconsciously imposing what she perceived her students' cultural identities to be. Each of these points are considerations that any educator should engage in regardless of their capacity to provide culturally responsive experiences for their students. Professional development or mentoring on the topic of culturally responsive teaching may pave the way to remedy this observed lack of comfort and encourage this type of self-reflection. Much like how the students felt it was necessary for their teachers to model these types of experiences, I think the same could be said for administration and leadership to model the same experience for their teachers. Practitioners must feel like they are supported in these endeavors in order for them to feel equipped to pursue this type of understandably uncomfortable subject matter. Leadership in schools must advocate for these practices by allowing culturally responsive teaching objectives to be regularly integrated in their professional development sessions.

Students at Blue Bayou High School described a culture created within their choir program that possessed a sense of community. Ms. Turner, who purposefully programmed music

as a reflection of the cultural background of her students, allowed student input and choice to

govern these experiences. From Green Mountain High School, Victor and Ravi believed that

their peers would be more intrinsically motivated in their commitment to the music making

process if the music they performed were more culturally relevant. This approach supported the

case for culturally responsive music programming choices as a tactic for promoting the quality of

music programs. By observing the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices at

Blue Bayou High School and accounting for the student perspective at Green Mountain High

School, I can reason that students may take ownership over their involvement in their music

programs if they performed culturally relevant music. I implore stakeholders to qualify and

gauge the level of success of these programs not just by their accolades, but also by their

commitment to the intentional programming of diverse music. Still, access to culturally relevant

music arrangements is restricted due to the types of ensembles that traditionally exist in present

music programs at the secondary level. Further investigation and inquiry must be needed in order

to access more music from underrepresented composers that embody the array of cultures in

music classrooms. Also, I encourage educators to collaborate with fellow colleagues, ideally

colleagues who are of color to see how they may genuinely respond to this endeavor.

Suggestions for Research

      Lingering research questions that I had following my analysis informed suggestions for

future research. What specific music experiences were transformative in participants

construction of their music identities? After using the method of in-depth phenomenological

interviewing, the result turned out to uncover rich stories from each of my participants'

experiences. Naturally, the presentation of this data turned into more of a narrative that provided

insight into their transformative experiences. If this research were to be conducted again, the

method of narrative inquiry would allow each specific story to be analyzed in order to share about the influence of each unique music experience.

Something I felt that was missing from this study was designation in specific culturally responsive teaching practices and their effect on the teacher and student experience. What specific culturally responsive teaching practices are used that are most accessible in acknowledging the cultural identities of diverse classrooms? A teacher or action research study that monitors the progression of specific culturally responsive teaching practices may contribute to better understanding the effective outcomes of certain activities and objectives.

An ethnography of specific racial or ethnic group present in diverse classrooms may provide a comprehensive look into how particular groups value music making experiences. For example, how do Indian American students perceive their musical cultures are valued and appreciated in their classroom music experiences? Observations, interviews, and collection of artifacts may provide resources that allow more comprehensive representations of each group.

A philosophical study into the aims of aesthetic education may provide important worth into its practice. Are music teachers to completely ignore each student's unique, culturally engrained music background or can they incorporate each student's perspective into the collective experience? I argue that the latter may enhance the aesthetic music experience for all stakeholders in music programs where cultural diversity is present.

Quantitative researchers may provide a survey to students that includes questions based on their perceptions of how their cultural identities are being recognized. Student participants would be allowed to rank their perceptions based on a scale for questions such as: How often do your classroom musical experiences acknowledge your cultural background? Or, how open do you feel your music classroom is in discussing each other's cultural identity?

An exploratory study of cultural music for traditional band, choir, and orchestra ensembles may be necessary for teachers who feel restricted by the compositions and arrangements presently accessible to them. The need to explore how to access these types of music also exposes the limits of prescribed music lists required for competitive performances. Further investigation may be necessary in uncovering more music from underrepresented composers and their arrangements that responsively represent the music of cultural groups.

Final Reflections

There was an overwhelming amount of information that came out of data collection that could have produced a multitude of different themes to discuss. I chose to focus my study and presentation of findings on voices of power within the discursive field of the music classroom that may be hindering the celebration of cultural identities. Especially for those that come from marginalized populations, it was necessary for these people to have a platform to voice their experiences. Consequently, it felt special to hear these stories from both my colleagues and young students. There was a feeling of catharsis as I had these conversations with each of my participants as if they were yearning to have their voices heard surrounding these issues. I encourage educators to hear the words of these participants when considering the value of multidimensional music experiences. Within culturally diverse classrooms, a multitude of enriching experiences have potential to emerge by allowing students to voice the definitions of their unique identities. The presence of cultural diversity is qualified when those representing the aforementioned diversity have the opportunity to share how they wish to be valued. Ravi captured this point in one of his closing accounts:

> It's really important for people to actually truly know one another and for everyone to respect one another and I think that having this diversity really opens up people to being

able to work with one another, but not just working with one another, but with educating

and learning more about different things around the world—what's actually out there

'cause there's much more than just one little thing that's how people experience all over

the world. (Student Interview 3)

References

Abril, C. R. (2009). Responding to culture in the instrumental music programme: A teacher's journey. *Music Education Research, 11*(1), 77–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800802699176

Albertson, M. P. (2015). *Music teacher educators address diversity in the university* (Publication No. 3704447). [Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/dissertations-theses/music-teacher-educators-address-diversity/docview/1687151960/se-2?accountid=14667

Bradley, D. (2009). Oh, that magic feeling! Multicultural human subjectivity, community, and Fascism's footprints. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 17*(1), 56 – 74. https://doi.org/10.2979/PME.2009.17.1.56

Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J. E. (2011). Toward a conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy: An overview of the conceptual and theoretical literature. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 38*(1), 65. https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/23479642

Cain, M. (2015). Celebrating musical diversity: Training culturally responsive music educators In multiracial Singapore. *International Journal of Music Education, 33*(4), 463 – 475. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415584295

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions. (n.d.). Retrieved March 27, 2021 from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

Civitillo, S., Schachner, M., Juang, L., van de Vijver, F., Handrick, A., & Noack, P. (2017).

Towards a better understanding of cultural diversity approaches at school: A multi-

informant and mixed-methods study. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 12*, 1-14.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2016.09.002

Collins, P. H. (1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and

connection. *Race, Sex & Class, 1*, 25–45.

https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/41680038

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique

of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of

Chicago Legal Forum, 140*, 139–167.

https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/uchclf1989&i=143&a=dW1pY2guZWR1

Dekaney, E. M., & Robinson, N. R. (2014). A comparison of urban high school students'

Perception of music, culture, and identity. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 24*(1),

89-102. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1057083713505221

Drummond, J. (2005). Cultural diversity in music education: Why bother? In P. S. Campbell

(Ed.), *Cultural diversity in music education: Directions and challenges for the 21st

century* (pp. 1-9). Australian Academic Press.

Eros, J. (2014). Collecting and analyzing focus group data. In C. M. Conway (Ed.), *The Oxford

handbook of qualitative research in American music education* (pp. 271-287). Oxford

University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199844272.013.015

Fitzpatrick, K. R. (2012). Cultural diversity and the formation of identity: Our role as music

teachers. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(4), 53–59.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112442903

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. Pantheon

Books.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*.

Pantheon Books.

Gay, G. (2015). The what, why, and how of culturally responsive teaching: International

mandates, challenges, and opportunities. *Multicultural Education Review, 7*(3), 123-139.

https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2015.1072079

Great Schools. (2020). Retrieved from

https://www.greatschools.org/texas/missouri-city/2584-Lake-Olympia-Middle-School/

Great Schools. (2021). Retrieved from

https://www.greatschools.org/texas/missouri-city/2544-Lawrence-E-Elkins-High-School/

Great Schools. (2021). Retrieved from

https://www.greatschools.org/texas/missouri-city/19423-Ridge-Point-High-School/

Hahl, K. & Löfström, E. (2016). Conceptualizing interculturality in multicultural teacher

Education. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 11*(3), 300-314.

https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2015.1134544

Hoffman-Kipp, P. (2008). Actualizing democracy: The praxis of teacher identity construction.

Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(3), 151-164.

https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/stable/23478986

Hourigan, R., & Edgar, S. (2014). Phenomenological research. In C. M. Conway (Ed.), *The

Oxford handbook of qualitative research in American music education* (pp. 148-162).

Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199844272.013.009

Housee, S. (2008). Should ethnicity matter when teaching about 'race' and racism in the

classroom? *Race Ethnicity and Education, 11*(4), 415-428,

https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320802478960

Joseph, D. (2007). Music education in Australia: Valuing cultural diversity. *Victorian Journal of Music Education, 10*(1). 27 – 38.

Joseph, D., & Southcott, J. (2009). 'Opening the doors to multiculturalism': Australian pre-service music teacher education students; understandings of cultural diversity. *Music Education Research, 11*(4). 457 – 472. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800903390758

Kelly-McHale, J. (2017). Socialization in the music classroom. In S. Edgar (Ed.), *Music education and social emotional learning* (pp. 53). GIA Publications.

Kindall-Smith, M. (2012). What a difference in 3 years! Risking social justice content in required undergraduate music education curricula. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 22*(2), 34-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083712450029

Koza, J. (2008). Listening for whiteness: Hearing racial politics in undergraduate school music. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 16*(2), 145-155. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40327298

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635

Ladson-Billings, G. (2018). The social funding of race: The role of schooling, *Peabody Journal of Education, 93*(1), 90-105, https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2017.1403182

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs, 30*(3), 1771-1800. https://doi.org/10.1086/426800

Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Mills, S. (2003). *Michel Foucault*. Routledge.

Morgan, D. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Natale-Abramo, M. (2014). The construction of instrumental music teacher identity. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, 202*(Fall 2014), 51-69. https://doi.org/10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.202.0051

Patton, M. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Sage.

Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.

Statistical Atlas. (2018). *Race and ethnicity in Fort Bend County, Texas*. https://statisticalatlas.com/county/Texas/Fort-Bend-County/Race-and-Ethnicity

Turner, K., Sweet, E., & Fornaro, E. (2019). From Ferguson to Charleston and beyond: Talking about race and diversity in the classroom. *Communication Teacher, 33*(1), 38-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2017.1400672

U-Haul Migration Trends. (n.d.). Retrieved February 1, 2020 from https://www.uhaul.com/Articles/About/14384/U-Haul-Migration-Trends-Houston-Ranks-As-No-1-Us-Destination/

VanDeusen, A. J. (2019). A cultural immersion field experience: Examining preservice music teachers' beliefs about cultural differences in the music classroom. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 28*(3), 43–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083718824729

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. State University of New York Press.

Vaugeois, L. (2009). Music education as a practice of social justice. In E. Gould, J. Countryman,

C. Morton, & L.R. Stewart (Eds.), *Exploring social justice*: *How music education might*

matter (pp. 2-22). Toronto: Canadian Music Educator's Association.

Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN   **Christopher Song <songchri@umich.edu>**

---

eResearch Notification: Notice of Exemption for (HUM00185522)

eresearch@umich.edu <eresearch@umich.edu>   Mon, Aug 31, 2020 at 11:06 AM
Reply-To: eresearch@umich.edu
To: conwaycm@umich.edu, songchri@umich.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
eResearch.umich.edu

Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB-HSBS) • 2800 Plymouth Rd., Building 520, Room 1170, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800 • phone (734) 936-0933 • fax (734) 998-9171 • irbhsbs@umich.edu

---

To: Christopher Song

From:

There are no items to display

Cc:

Colleen   Conway
Christopher   Song

Subject: Notice of Exemption for [HUM00185522]

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:
Title: Examining Perceptions of Cultural Identity in Diverse Music Classrooms
Full Study Title (if applicable):
Study eResearch ID: HUM00185522
Date of this Notification from IRB: 8/31/2020
Date of IRB Exempt Determination: 8/31/2020
UM Federalwide Assurance: FWA00004969 (For the current FWA expiration date, please visit the UM HRPP Webpage)
OHRP IRB Registration Number(s):

IRB EXEMPTION STATUS:
The IRB HSBS has reviewed the study referenced above and determined that, as currently described, it is exempt from ongoing IRB review, per the following federal exemption category:

> **EXEMPTION 2(i) and/or 2(ii) at 45 CFR 46.104(d):**
>
> **Research that only includes interactions** involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) **if at least one of the following criteria is met**:
>
> **(i)** The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that **the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained**, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
>
> **(ii)** Any disclosure of the **human subjects' responses** outside the research **would not reasonably place the subjects at risk** of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation

Note that the study is considered exempt as long as any changes to the use of human subjects (including their data) remain within the scope of the exemption category above. Any proposed changes that may exceed the scope of this

category, or the approval conditions of any other non-IRB reviewing committees, must be submitted as an amendment through eResearch.

Although an exemption determination eliminates the need for ongoing IRB review and approval, you still have an obligation to understand and abide by generally accepted principles of responsible and ethical conduct of research. Examples of these principles can be found in the Belmont Report as well as in guidance from professional societies and scientific organizations.

SUBMITTING AMENDMENTS VIA eRESEARCH:
You can access the online forms for amendments in the eResearch workspace for this exempt study, referenced above.

ACCESSING EXEMPT STUDIES IN eRESEARCH:
Click the "Exempt and Not Regulated" tab in your eResearch home workspace to access this exempt study.

Thad Polk
Chair, IRB HSBS

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Protocol

Interview I (life history)

A review of the teacher's musical background, upbringing, and experience up until the time they became a music teacher. How did the teacher decide to become a music teacher? A review of how the teacher describes their identity as it relates to background, race, ethnicity, culture, and heritage. What has been the teacher's experience relating to their identity up until the time they became a music teacher?

- "Tell me about your musical background. How did you get involved in music? Can you recall your earliest memory of a musical experience? Where did the majority of your musical experiences take place? Will you give me an example of a performative or life altering musical experience?"

- "Tell me about your cultural background. What are some of the ways that you self-identify? Do you feel like you grew up in a culturally diverse environment? Can you recall a time where you felt like your cultural identity was acknowledged?"

- "How did you decide to become a music teacher? What factors led you to make this decision? Was there an experience or person that motivated these desires?"

Interview II (contemporary experience)

What is it like for the teacher to incorporate their cultural identity into the music classroom's experiences? How does the teacher describe the music classroom's cultural identity as it relates to the collective musical experience? What are the details from the teacher perspective surrounding the intersection of their individual cultural identity with the group cultural identity?

- "Tell me about how you view your cultural identity within the musical experiences and interactions in your music classroom."

- "Are there any times where you felt like your identity changed or evolved? new identity was formed?"

- "How would you describe the level of cultural diversity in your classroom? Do you see any intersections between your identity and your student's?"

- "How does your identity inform the way that you teach to the various identities you see in your classroom? What guides the way that you respond or recognize this?"

- "Do you see the differences in identities between student to student and teacher to student as something that is recognized? Do you feel that these differences are treated fairly?"

Interview III (reflection on meaning)

What does it mean for the teacher to acknowledge their student's cultural identity? How does the teacher make sense of the group's cultural identity? What does it mean for the teacher to recognize the intersection of individual and group identity?

- "What does it mean to you to identify with your culture in your music classroom?"

- "How do you make sense of your musical experiences as it relates to the different identities present your classroom?"

Appendix C

Student Interview Protocol

Interview I (life history)

A review of the student's musical background, upbringing, and experience up until they joined their current music program. How did the student decide to join their current music program? A review of how the student describes their identity as it relates to background, race, ethnicity, culture, and heritage. What has been the student's experience relating to their identity up until the time they joined their current music program?

- "Tell me about your musical background. When is your earliest memory of a musical experience? Where did most of your musical experiences take place? Did anyone influence your decisions or place you in these musical experiences?"

- "How did you decide to become a member of your music program? What factors led you to make this decision? What experiences motivated these desires?"

- "Tell me about your cultural background. Please share what you are comfortable with having to do with your identity. Are there any instances that contributed to this identity formation?"

- "What role do you feel, if any has your cultural identity played in your life prior to you joining your music program?"

Interview II (contemporary experience)

What is it like for the student to incorporate their cultural identity into the music classroom's experiences? How does the student describe the music classroom's cultural identity as it relates to the collective musical experience? What are the details from the student

perspective surrounding the intersection of their individual cultural identity with the group cultural identity?

- ▪ "Tell me about how you view your cultural identity within the musical experiences and interactions in your music classroom."

- ▪ "Are there any times where you felt like your identity changed or evolved? or a new identity was formed?"

- ▪ "How would you describe the level of cultural diversity in your classroom? Do you see any intersections between your identity and your classmate's or teacher's?"

- ▪ "How does your identity effect the way your music teacher facilitates your learning and musical experiences? Do you feel like your identity is acknowledged through these experiences?"

- ▪ "Do you see the differences in identities between student to student and teacher to student as something that is recognized? Do you feel that these differences are treated fairly?"

Interview III (reflection on meaning)

What does it mean to the student when their cultural identity is represented within their musical experiences? What does it mean to the student when they learn about other people and group's cultural identity within their musical experiences? What does it mean to the student when their cultural identity intersects with the group's cultural identity in the music classroom?

- ▪ "What does it mean to you to identify with your culture in your music classroom?"

- ▪ "How do you make sense of your musical experiences as it relates to the different identities present your classroom?"