EXPLORING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

PEDAGOGY IN A SELECTED CHORAL MUSIC

SETTING: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

By

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Abstract: Some choral music educators have tapped into the power of their discipline and used its cultural ties to embrace diverse learners and communities (Lehmberg, 2009; Shaw, 2015). Others have struggled with releasing themselves from hegemonic traditions that prioritize certain styles, music ensemble types and genres thus marginalizing or disengaging students in their classes and programs in the process (Gurgel, 2015; Palkki, 2015). One reason for this discrepancy can be explained through the framework of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) theory uses five principles found in Gay (1997), Ladson-Billing (1994) and Nieto's (1999) principles of culturally relevant teaching: *identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships*. CRP theorists recognize culture as an intercepting societal construct that affects learning. Music educators who practice CRP are in a position to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014) and cultivate cultural literacy during the learning process (Hess, 2015). Howard (2013) concluded that culturally situated pedagogy enriches student engagement and increases positive outcomes. This may be demonstrated in effective music classrooms. This qualitative study uses naturalistic inquiry design to explore how the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population, enhances student engagement and fosters cultural literacy. It explores the paradigms and practices of two music educators in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic. A finding in this study was that four elements of practice: the use of relevant content, a student-centered paradigm, a balance of rigor with fun, and cultural congruency utilized all of the principles of CRP. An additional finding was that the COVID-19 pandemic compelled the choral music instructors to teach in a manner that focused on these two principles of CRP: *teaching the whole child* and *teacher student relationships*. This study reinforces the concept that culture is inextricably linked to learning. Cultural perspective informs how educators teach and students learn. The more educators understand this concept, the more they can empower students be citizens, communicators, and innovators in an increasingly diverse and globally connected society (Bradley, 2015).

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INTRODUCTION

Research supports the notion that the teacher is the variable in education that has

the most impact on student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000;

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Culturally Responsive

Pedagogy (CRP) theorists take this further. They acknowledge the power of educators;

yet they recognize culture as an intercepting societal construct that affects learning. Gay

(2010) indicated that culture is a foundation to learning.

A major tenet of CRP is an education which is congruent to students' cultural

ways of doing and understanding will put students at an advantage in the learning

process. According to Howard (2013), students who find very few parallels or

connections in their education with their own culture are positioned at a disadvantage.

CRP seeks to use students' cultural capital and understandings as launching points to new

content (Howard, 2013).

A foundation for the definition of culture must be laid before this study

commences. CRP compels a focus on culture. Marion and Gonzales (2014) define *culture*

as a system of shared values and norms that define appropriate attitudes and behaviors for

its members. Culture in this study will be broad and encompassing. Culture demographics will include race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, geographic location, intellectual and physical ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

While many educators recognize the saliency of understanding how culture intersects with education, they often are compelled to see the diversity of cultures that are present in our schools. Globalization has caused an increase in diversity in education (Rampal, 2015; White et al., 2014). Rampal (2015) noted that teacher education programs have failed to give teachers the opportunity to address the multiple cultural realities that are present in their classrooms. Music educators have been encouraged to embrace these diversities in their pedagogical approach (Kelly-McHale, 2019; Rampal 2015). Music has cultural ties that are cyclical. Music affects culture and culture affects music. Compounding these concepts is the reality that contemporary music in cultures around the world is affected by diversity and globalization. CRP may provide a set of tools for music educators to use to help today's youth understand and appreciate new musical idioms, expressions, theories, and cultural practices (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Music educators agree that all students, regardless of cultural heritage, ability and financial circumstance, deserve the opportunity to receive the best music experience possible (Fuelberth & Todd, 2017). Bradley (2015) purported that music can make people feel connected by helping them through the cultural translations needed to make those connections. Backing this principle is the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME) 2017 Strategic Plan's fourth value of *inclusion and equity.* The strategic plan valued "building strength and promoting diversity in a profession representing the wide

spectrum of people and cultures, abilities, economic backgrounds and gender identities"
(National Association for Music Educators, 2017, p. 1).

Although providing an inclusive curriculum in the secondary music classroom has the potential to meet the needs of diverse student populations, to provide an engaging learning environment, and to enhance cultural literacy, some music educators achieve these objectives (Lehmberg, 2009; Shaw, 2015), while others struggle in the process (Gurgel, 2015; Palkki, 2015). One reason for this discrepancy can be explained through the framework of CRP (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2013; Palkki, 2015; Shaw 2015). Music educators who practice CRP are in a position to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014) and cultivate cultural literacy during the learning process (Hess, 2015). Cultural literacy in this study is defined as an understanding of the history, politics, social norms, and value system of a culture other than one's own (Stewart, 2015). Cultural literacy is the skill that allows students to navigate that which is culturally unfamiliar and unknown. It fosters critical awareness that students learn to apply to themselves and others (Ochoa et al., 2018).

Culturally responsive pedagogy starts with students' own strengths and culture with the purpose of launching new understanding from this base. It rejects the notion of deficit-based thinking often used in conjunction with diverse students. Howard (2013) concluded that culturally situated pedagogy enriches student engagement and increases positive outcomes. This may be demonstrated in effective music classrooms. The Yale School of Music Symposium of 2018 in its Declaration on Equity in Music (Yale University, 2018) stated, "Recent research about perception, cognition, and motivation to learn is at odd with much traditional music instruction" (p. 4). It proposed broadening music curriculums to included diverse styles and course offerings at all levels.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores how the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population, enhances student engagement and fosters cultural literacy.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer three questions:

1. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population?

2. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance student engagement?

3. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes foster cultural literacy?

4. How does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explain the above?

Theoretical Framework

The epistemological perspective that guides this study is constructionism. Music is a social construct. Constructionism is appropriate for this study that explored the practice of teaching music. Constructionism was described by Crotty (1998) as, "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). Constructionism as a paradigm allows an exploration of the different social contexts that influence how educators teach the discipline of choral music. Moreover, constructionism is imbedded in the theoretical framework for this study, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Gloria Ladson-Billings was a pioneer in the development of CRP, also called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. This study uses the term Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Ladson-Billings (1995) coined her version of the theory as a result of studying the practices of eight educators who primarily

taught African-American children in a low-income district in Northern California. Parents and administrators identified these teachers as highly skilled and successful. A final segment of Ladson-Billings (1995) study involved the eight teachers in a research collaborative in which they observed and analyzed each other's practice. Thus, CRP theory was born. Geneva Gay (2000) expanded Ladson-Billing's (1995) theory to include strategies for teaching diverse populations. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive pedagogy as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective" for students (p. 31). They and their contemporary, Nieto (1999), asserted that there is a need for educators to understand how culture affects learning.

Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) developed a CRP framework of five principles found in Gay (1997), Ladson-Billing (1994) and Nieto's (1999) principles of culturally relevant teaching: *identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships.* Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) conceptual framework for CRP is infused with tenets of the Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT acknowledges the effects of racism and hegemonic practices found in dominant culture. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) argued that CRP challenges these systems of oppression in all five principles. Figure 1 is an illustration of the five principles of CRP.

Figure 1

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Note. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by authors

Brown-Jeffy & Coopers (2011) in Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature.

Identity and Achievement

Identity and achievement address cultural heritage, multiple perspectives and public

validation of home-community cultures. This area utilizes the cultural capital that students

bring to school. Culturally responsive pedagogues examine their own cultures as well as their

students' and note how that affects classroom learning. Nieto (1999) determined that "by reconnecting with their own backgrounds and with the suffering as well as the triumphs of their own families, teachers can lay the ground-work for students to reclaim their histories and voices" (p. 30). CRP scholars call this reflexive practice *cultural competence*. Cultural competence was described by Ladson-Billings (2014) as appreciating one's own culture while gaining knowledge of at least one other culture. In this paradigm, culture is considered a kind of capital. Students are empowered by this orientation of their own culture. In CRP, cultural competence is considered a prerequisite for learning new content.

Equity and Excellence

Ladson-Billings (2014), Gay (2018), Palmer (2018) and Howard (2013) stressed the goal of academic achievement as a purpose for CRP. Ladson-Billings'(1995) teacher investigations exhibited teachers who were driven toward helping their students to succeed. Moreover, CRP vehemently rejects deficit-based thinking that is often used to explain low expectations or low achievement with culture (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2011). This ideology often blames underserved students' social conditions for their academic challenges. CRP theorists maintain that educators can influence student outcomes by rejecting deficit-based thinking by believing that all students are capable of success (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Developmental Appropriateness

Brown-Jeffey and Cooper (2011) believed that it is important to consider what is culturally appropriate for students when addressing developmental appropriateness. To do this, scholars stress the foundational tenet of cultural congruency (Garcia & Chin, 2016; Gay, 2000; Howard, 2013; Kelly-McHale, 2018; Palmer, 2018; Sleeter, 2011). Cultural

congruency exists when the learning process validates and affirms cultural ways of doing and learning. Furthermore, CRP connects cultures of the students being served to new content. CRP theorists stress the importance of students' culture being the point of reference for all teaching and learning. CRP's validation of students' cultural reference creates a cultural congruence between home life and education (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2011). Students' whose educational life is congruent with their home life and culture are considered to be postured for positive academic outcomes (Howard, 2013).

According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), developmental appropriateness includes cultivating a mindset of socio-political awareness for instructor and students. CRP has deeper concepts for teaching and learning than celebration of cultures. CRP is a movement toward equity and social justice (Sleeter, 2011). It aims to increase positive outcomes while empowering students to critique the hegemonies of the dominant culture (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2013). This practice of provoking critical consciousness in learning is considered a catalyst for student engagement and learning.

Paulo Freire's (1970) philosophy for education encourages critical thought and student engagement in knowledge-seeking and construction. Freire (1970) advocated for learning that moved beyond the traditional banking methods of instruction in which students are passive receptacles of knowledge and teachers are the center of all information. Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that the teachers she observed utilized Freire's pedagogy, therefore, establishing Freire's philosophy as critical to CRP.

Teaching the Whole Child

This principle has overlapping concepts with developmental appropriateness. Teaching the whole child involves engaging the student in ways that are positive and

relevant. Walter (2018) determined that CRP is relevant because it is student-driven rather than curriculum-driven. Student backgrounds and prior experiences become the foundation for study, therefore, the content becomes more relevant to students. Connection of tacit knowledge to new ideas can then be fostered when relevancy is established. CRP nurtures the whole child by connecting home, school and community.

Student-Teacher Relationships

Educational research acknowledges that teachers are an important variable in student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000). CRP theorists repeatedly use the concept of caring in CRP. Gay (2000) maintained that caring interpersonal relationships is a hallmark of CRP teachers. Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that CRP goes beyond caring for students to concern for, the welfare of the community and social justice. Ladson-Billings (1994) declared that student-teacher relationships in CRP were such that they encouraged the "same connectedness between students" (p. 25). Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) stated that CRP teachers "work to build a classroom community that is safe for students to nurture everyone's cultural identity" (p. 78).

<div align="center">

Procedures

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Music educators bring their varied encounters with music to the profession of music education in a host of different educational settings. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic inquiry offered a strategy for exploring their different realities. This qualitative study used purposive sampling, which is conducive to a naturalistic study as its participants are selected based on insights relevant to the study (Erlandson et al., 1993). A secondary choral music education program in an Oklahoma state school district was selected to provide in depth exploration of the practice of CRP.

A naturalistic study requires the researcher to gather data in a variety of ways (Erlandson et al., 1993). This study involved interviews of choral music educators, observations of their instruction and performances, and collection of artifacts. Interviews used semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed for an exploration of mindsets and experiences of music educators. Observations were unobtrusive in order to experience the daily operations in the way that the 'natives' experience them (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria served as a guide for procedures as well as a checklist to ensure that the study was sound. Data collection and analysis was a result of prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are included to assist the reader in understanding of terms and concepts that are used in this study:

Banking Education is traditional lecture-style of teaching and learning in which the teacher is the primary source of knowledge and the students passively absorb information (Cammarota, 2011).

Critical Pedagogy is a problem-posing approach to learning that decentralizes the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge while fostering a collaborative approach among students and teachers (Cammarota, 2011).

Culturally Competent was defined by Gloria Ladson Billings (2014) as "ability to help students appreciate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge and fluency in at least one other culture" (p 75).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, also called culturally relevant teaching, occurs when educators use the characteristics and experiences of ethnically diverse students as content and context in their learning in order to teach them more effectively (Gay, 2002).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is a term that is interchanged with culturally responsive teaching (Howard, 2013).

Cultural Literacy is an understanding of the history, politics, social norms, the value systems, and belief systems of cultures other than our own. Cultural literacy helps people of different cultures to communicate with each other (Stewart, 2015).

Deficit-based Thinking is resorting to broad assumptions about a population of students to explain behavior or academic deficiencies. This type of thinking diverts attention from institutional factors that affect outcomes (Rampal, 2015).

Eurocentric is a term that describes a focus or perspective that is predominantly Euro American or White (Naidoo, 1996).

Hegemonies is "domination by the ruling class and unconscious acceptance of that state of affairs" (Delgago & Stephancic, 2001, p. 147).

Hand Signs, popularized by John Spencer Curwen, were created by Sarah Glover and incorporated into the Kodály music education method to help students assign a physical placement to a vocal pitch (Bowyer, 2015).

Kodály teaching method stresses that sound precedes symbols and places emphasis on kinesthetic connections in music making (Bower, 2015).

Micro-aggressions were defined by Critical Race Theory as "stunning small encounters with racism, usually unnoticed by members of the majority race" (Delgado & Stephancic, 2001, p. 151).

Multicultural Education was defined by Nieto (2010) as "embedded in a socio-political context and as [inclusive] and basic education for all students, [permeating] all areas of schooling, and that is characterized by a commitment to social justice and critical approaches to learning" (loc no.752).

Solfège syllables are assigned to each scale degree as a teaching tool for sight-reading vocal music (Musicnotes Now, 2021).

Summary of the Study

Contemporary choral music educators have the opportunity to be more inclusive and serve diverse populations better than the previous generations of choral music educators. Some choral music educators are seizing these opportunities through inclusive curriculum and teaching methods. These music educators and their programs demonstrate outcomes that link inclusivity with positive outcomes. Alternatively, some choral music educators are challenged to meet the cultural needs of their community and either limit their reach, or struggle to serve students of diverse populations. This study uses Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Theory as a lens to explore how choral music educators respond to the educational needs of diverse students.

In the subsequent chapters, I include the following: Chapter II contains the pertinent literature review related to choral music education practice and inclusiveness; Chapter III explains the methodology of the study; Chapter IV portrays the narrative description of the data collected and analyzed; Chapter V is an explanation of that narrative though the lens of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy And the final section, Chapter VI, illustrates the findings of this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The cultural context of student populations in public schools and universities has dramatically changed in the past two decades (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014). The ratio of students of color to white students is rapidly evolving in such a way that use of the term "minority" to define non-white students will soon be inaccurate (Rampal, 2015). Racial and ethnic distributions in America are projected to have a total enrollment of 45% white students in 2027 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). This is a decrease from 49% in 2015. Moreover, projections for the year 2050 indicate that African American, Latino or Hispanic and Asian students will comprise 57% of the total American student population (Howard, 2003).

As educators work to serve the evolving student population, scrutiny of curriculum and programs is necessary. Scholars, theorists and educators agree that it is imperative that students are prepared to communicate and participate in an increasingly connected global society (Bradley, 2015; McCombs & Miller, 2009; Nieto, 2010). Students will need to think wider and deeper as they are asked to communicate in local and international communities that are more diverse. Concepts will need to be examined

through diverse lenses and skill sets. Inclusive educational paradigms are important to invoke new perceptions on pedagogical methods that will critique knowledge, augment understanding, and address achievement gaps (Gay, 2010).Moreover, educational practice that addresses cultural diversity allows for critical pedagogy (Cammarota, 2011).

John Dewey (1996), America's premier philosopher of democracy and education explained the connection between diversity and intellectual stimulation. Dewey (1996) argued that embracing diversity in education achieves education's democratic purpose. Paulo Freire (1970, 1993) justified a similar democratic approach to education by emphasizing a collaborative approach between students and instructor. In this learning dynamic, multiple perspectives encourage the challenge of traditional hegemonic canons. Cammarota (2011) concluded that this learning environment produces citizens that are active and ready to contribute to progress of society. Scholars have agreed that use of critical pedagogy empowers and engages learners (Cammarota, 2011; Horton & Scott, 2004). Theorists have argued that providing students with an education that is inclusive of several cultural perspectives is imperative in the quest to equip students to be citizens, communicators, and innovators in an increasingly diverse and globally-connected society (Assaf et al., 2010; Bradley, 2015; Cammarota, 2011; McCombs & Miller, 2009; Nieto, 2010).

Inclusiveness in Music Education

Music educators have begun discussions regarding the urgent need for programs that are inclusive and culturally relevant to the students that they serve (Kelly-McHale, 2016; Shaw, 2012). Many of these educators are collaborating in their communities to increase cultural awareness through music making and performance (Hirokawa, 2019).

Some educators are purposefully using music as a tool to build empathy, encourage cultural understanding and engage students (Laird, 2015; Llari et al., 2013).

Bowman (2007) described music as social phenomena that connect the lives and identities of people. Bradley (2015) believed that music has the power to help connect people to homelands, societies and each other. These connections build, define and help us to understand culture. A significant body of research explored the cyclical influence of music and culture (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014; Hess, 2017). Gay (2010) defined culture as "a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others" (p. 8).

The cultural connections in music may be seen as a powerful conduit for human understanding when coupled with music's empathetic capabilities. Laird (2015) stated that the inert rules of music making foster empathy. Students who create music together make human connections. This principle is heightened when combined with a curriculum that includes music from diverse backgrounds. Music education scholars suggested that inclusive music education programs "help broaden students' musical and cultural experiences, increase the value they place on unfamiliar music, promote deeper cultural understanding, and cultivate open-mindedness" (Yoo, 2017, p.1).

Music educators reported that a musical educational framework that incorporates inclusiveness at its core is thorough (Fuelberth & Todd, 2017; Kelly-McHale, 2019; National Association for Music Educators, 2017; Wang & Humphreys, 2009). The landmark Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 declared that music education programs should include "music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures" (Wang & Humphreys,

2009). The National Association for Music Education Strategic Plan for 2017 has two values that underscore a commitment to inclusiveness and embracing diversity:

Inclusion and Equity: Building strength and promoting diversity in a profession representing the wide spectrum of people and cultures, abilities, economic backgrounds, and gender identities.

Innovation: Enhancing music teaching and program management through combining effective and dynamic new practices with proven strategies in the context of our changing global community.

Fuelberth and Todd (2017) advocated specifically for choral music educators to move beyond traditional repertoire programming. Furthermore, curriculum development, recruitment, scheduling, and overcoming barriers are crucial for music educators. Scholars such as Fuelberth and Todd (2017) and Yaffy et al., (2018) encouraged approaching these elements of building music education programs with a wide, inclusive perspective.

Brown-Jeffey and Cooper (2011) inferred that an education that is inclusive of diverse students' backgrounds requires cultural literacy of the educator. The term cultural literacy was originated by E.D. Hirsch in 1987 (Ochoa et al., 2018). Hirsch determined that all students needed to have access to a shared knowledge. Hirsch went so far as to develop a list of facts that every American needed to know (Hirsch, 1988). Some education scholars have considered this term limited in its original definition (Maine et al., 2019; Schweizer, 2009). Nonetheless, a more culturally plural definition, which includes ideas of critical awareness of one's own culture as well as an openness to exploration of other cultures, has emerged in the literature. This version of cultural

literacy allows individuals to explore that which is unknown and communicate with others who are different than themselves.

Music Education as A Tool for Social Justice

Music has the potential to touch the soul of humans, and in terms of education it can nurture the overall growth of people, while promoting their abilities to critically discuss and collaboratively solve problems, thus supporting harmony and humanity in today's global world. Such a turn to ethics in music education would nurture citizens by building bridges transnationally between the experiences, actions and local cultures of individuals. This process could become a musically democratic path of learning to live together and coping more effectively with the complexities and diversities of our contemporary world (Hirokawa, 2019)

Hirokawa (2019) acknowledged this idea as "lofty" yet defended its notions as critical in a world where the last ten years have seen a surge of hate crimes. Hess (2017) previously admonished music educators to use its medium to challenge marginalization of groups and injustice. These scholars are among those with the school of thought that music education as a discipline has a higher calling toward social justice (Bradley, 2015; Bowman, 2007; Rampal, 2015). Shaw (2012) stressed that music educators must be willing to go beyond musical content and facilitate conversations that arise concerning race and culture as long as stereotypes are confronted and assumptions are challenged. Not only do these authors encourage discourse on social issues in music education courses, they also critique the discipline's own hegemonic canons. Rampal (2015) summarized that music education could be used to develop critical thinkers and global

citizens, yet she stressed the need to examine music teacher education programs and their position in this endeavor.

Relevance

Music repertoire that is inclusive of the cultural experiences of its students evokes relevance (Shaw, 2012). Students who are provided with familiarity of this element of their own culture gain confidence from this starting point and are then anchored as they explore cultures and music other than their own (Shaw, 2012). This is especially important to build rapport between students and educators who differ culturally and ethnically (Shaw, 2012).

A music education that is inclusive and diverse in content becomes relevant to the students that it serves. Several scholars advocate for utilizing the music classroom as an opportunity to provide discourse about the situations, cultures and people connected to the music (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2015; Hirokawa, 2019; Kelley-McHale, 2018; Rampal, 2015; Robinson, 2017; Shaw, 2015; Vaugeois, 2007). This exercise provides relevance to the study and the experiences of students with the content. For example, Stone (2019) discussed the legacy of Spirituals in helping Americans to navigate the enduring challenges of racial and ethnic relations. Spirituals, which help students and audiences to empathize with the plight of the oppressed in our societies, can be found in many school and professional repertoire. Stone (2019) argued that African-American Spirituals are as relevant to the American experience as to the African American experience. The concept of a "reach for hope" when surrounded by an uncertain future is reinforced in this staple in choral literature. In other examples, Robinson (2017) and Kelley-McHale (2016)

explored cultural contexts of music literature to encourage critical thought around social issues for elementary music classrooms.

Student Engagement

An inclusive music education program is concerned with engaging students from a variety of cultures, socio-economic backgrounds and abilities (Fuelberth & Todd, 2017; Yaffe et al., 2018). This may involve efforts to provide access for students with special needs and economic challenges. For many music educators, this often involves considerable collaboration with the community in an effort to overcome barriers to achieve equity for their students.

Anderson and Denson (2015) indicated a need for music instructors to become familiar with the music of their communities. They cited the need for music educators of urban communities to become students of the music of their pupils. Anderson and Denson (2015) encouraged the use of cultural bearers to help facilitate an inclusive music program. This involves collaboration with community members who may be versed in certain music styles and traditions. These practices provide inclusive channels for diverse student learning. Shaw (2012) suggested that to "reject a person's music is to reject him" (p. 75).

Pedagogy and Program Considerations

Music programs must consider a varied approach to pedagogy. Shaw (2012) suggested a balanced approach to music learning techniques. For example, aural learning is inherent in many choral music traditions in the African diaspora. African American students whose religious cultures utilize this method may experience cognitive dissonance when a gospel piece is taught with notation. Furthermore, some students

regardless of ethnic or cultural music traditions may prefer either method for learning music.

Shuler (2011) emphasized inclusiveness as a strategy for lasting music education programs. He cited all-state honor ensemble membership as an indicator of music education's lack of reach to students who do not have private teachers or live in suburbs. He purported that music curriculum design must have high quality ensembles and attractiveness to students who are not already in the program. Music education programs, which include non-traditional ensembles such as steel pans, rock-fusion, multicultural, Gospel or world drumming may facilitate longevity in music programs (Shuler, 2011).

Oklahoma Music Education Standards

The Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) addressed inclusiveness in music curriculum on all grade levels in its second standard, Music History and Culture: "Connecting - Student recognizes the development of music from an historical and cultural perspective" (Oklahoma Academic Standards, 2013, p. 6). This standard included a rationale that music has helped people to understand their culture and others throughout history. The document called the student to answer these essential questions:

- Who created the music?

- Why was the music created?

- How was the music used?

- What other cultures or musicians were influenced by the music?

- How were other cultures or musicians influenced by the music?

Additionally, the OAS encouraged music educators to emphasize the following concepts that lead to the creation of music:

• Music that is historically or culturally important because it is representative of a particular genre.

• Music that has symbolic, cultural, or historical importance.

• Music that is highly original and innovative.

• Music that represents different thematic aspects of the human experience.

• Music that reflects citizenship, and/or contributes to civil discourse.

• Music that expresses a wide range of human emotions. (OAS, 2013, p. 6)

National Standards

The National Association for Music Educators (NAfME) published standards that promote an understanding of how "cultural and historical context inform performance and results in different music effects" (NAfME Music Standards Pk-8, 2014, p. 6). Its position on equity and access in music education reads:

All students deserve access to and equity in the delivery of music education, one of the subjects deemed necessary in federal law for a well-rounded education, which is at the heart of NAfME's stated mission: to advance music education by promoting the understanding and making of music by all. (NAfME, 2017, para. 3)

NafME's position on inclusiveness and diversity in music education reads:

A well-rounded and comprehensive music education program, as envisioned in the 2014 National Music Standards, should exist in every American school; should be built on a curricular framework that promotes awareness of, respect for, and responsiveness to the variety and diversity of cultures; and should be delivered by teachers whose culturally responsive pedagogy enables them to

successfully design and implement such an inclusive curricular framework.

(NAfME, 2017, para. 3)

NAfME underscored its support of a holistic music education approach that includes a variety of music styles, cultures, and genres from around the world. It also concluded that this mission has a better chance of succeeding by recruiting a diverse teacher workforce that closely resembles the diversity of school populations (NAfME, 2017).

Secondary Choral Music on the National Level

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) serves as a professional organization and resource for choral music ensembles, both sacred and secular. Many secondary educators, including those in this study, utilize its resources for their choral music classrooms. The organization produces conferences, journals on pedagogical and scientific issues, and advocates for the choral conductor and their classroom. It acts as a national guide for choral music educators cultivating student engagement, recruitment, and promoting choral excellence.

Choral Journal, ACDA's official monthly publication has dedicated much space to exploring how the choral music setting can engage students, cultivate cultural literacy, and meet the needs of diverse students and in the past ten years. Hirokawa (2019) referenced Chorus America's 2009 study that found parents and educators who agreed that singing in choir improved students' social skills and helped them to be better listeners and group participants. Hirokawa (2019) asked the question if choral music education could teach empathy and cultural understanding. Junda (2019) developed Earthtones Vocal Ensemble, which set specific goals where students would:

- Acquire the feelings that arise when voices join in song developing a more

  meaningful understanding of and respect for community singing.

- Develop a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of the

  songs and respect for the people who sang songs, why they sang them and

  why the songs are still pertinent today.

- Create a performance of the culture or period that is informative and

  engaging. (p. 32)

These sources are in the April 2019 Choral Journal: A Focus on Relevance. The October

2018 Choral Journal took on the topic of social justice and choral communities. The

ACDA 2019 panel, Programming for the Twenty-First Century: Quality, Inclusion and

Diversity (year) cited resources for teachers for sexual orientation and gender diversity

and gave suggestions for sources for African-American choral repertoire.

Secondary Choral Music on Regional Level

The Southwest American Choral Directors Conference (SWACDA) held this

position in presenting its March 2020 conference and mission:

> Choral music, through the fusion of music and text sung by a family of
>
> voices, has the power to comment on the beauty and complexity of the
>
> human condition. The conference will be centered around the idea that
>
> music can inform people not only pedagogically but also allows signers
>
> and listeners to engage in important dialogues. We reflect and learn from
>
> the past, we intently study the present, and we dream about the future.
>
> (SWACDA, 2020, para. 1)

The article and conference focus suggested an understanding of the potential of the choral classroom to have potential beyond teaching notes, rhythms, and choral singing techniques.

Secondary Choral Music Education on State Level

The Oklahoma Arts Standards were revised in 2020. The language in the standards orients culture as a platform for learning music at various grade levels. Educators are encouraged to increase relevancy as music is connected to its "societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen personal understanding" (Oklahoma Arts Standards, 2020, p. ?). Evidence of efforts to support more inclusive curriculum are supported in the Inclusive Language document provided for its framework's writers:

- Work to include artistic works that represent many cultures around the world (i.e., non-Western, indigenous, etc.), especially those of your students.

- Consider which artists are elevated in the classroom and strive to include many examples (keep in mind - ethnicity, gender, age, sex, etc.).

- Include specific examples of both historical and contemporary artists from varying cultures and life experiences (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age, sex, etc.) in presentations and discussions.

- When selecting choreographic works to show as examples, consider the importance of non-Eurocentric representation (i.e., people of color, LGBTQIA, various body types and abilities).

- Be sure to include works from underrepresented populations (non-Western, indigenous, and female artists) in these discussions.

- Though all cultures have songs, games, and dances, some cultures are elevated above others in the music classroom. Work to include multiple cultures, especially those of your students.

- Have the expectation that students will talk about music from other cultures with respect. Discuss what are appropriate comments and what are inappropriate comments when talking about music from other cultures.

- It is important to compare and contrast voices of different historical and cultural times because it is through this interpretation that appreciation for art and its influence is established.

- Consider bias and allow for discussion reflecting historical appropriateness (or lack of) in artistic expression. (Oklahoma Arts Standards Inclusive Language Document, p. 1-2)

Over 100 secondary choral music education programs participate in Oklahoma's All-State Choral Music Honor Choirs annually. Many choral directors in Oklahoma select a portion of their school's choral program's repertoire content for the year from the audition material that is selected by the state honor choir organizations. Secondary students across the state, whose choral directors are members of American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), have the opportunity to audition for All-state honor choirs that are featured at the organizations' yearly state conferences. The repertoire selections reflect some effort to expose students to diverse choral literature, including different styles, periods, and cultures. Table 1 shows the repertoire of the OkMEA division of NAfME's, All-state's Mixed Choir.

Table 1

OkMEA All-State Mixed Choir Repertoire

2020	2019
Nunc Dimmitis, Gustav Holset; *Novello 14015253*	Adoramus te, Christe by Orlanda di Lasso; *Choral Public Domain Library*
O Clap Your Hands, Ralph Vaughan Williams; *Galaxy 1.500*	The Star-Spangled Banner by Eric Whitacre; *Hal Leonard; HL00198264*
Cantate Domino, Josu Elberdin; *Walton WJMS1138*	Awake the Harp from "The Creation" by Franz Joseph Haydn; *G Schirmer; 50293660*
Aftonen, Hugo Alfven; *Walton W2705*	O meu maracatu arranged by Daniel Afonso, *earthsongs, S361*
Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, Arr. Wilberg; *Oxford 9780193860605*	My God is a Rock arranged by Stacey V. Gibbs, *Walton Music, WJMS1155*
Lay a Garland, Robert Pearsall; *Oxford 9780193418226*	Michelangelo's Sonnet by Z. Randall Stroope; *OkCDA Commission for the 2019 Mixed Chorus*
Ezekiel Saw de Wheel, William Dawson; *Kjos T110*	The Lily and the Rose from "Scotia Songs" by Till MacIvor Meyn

In the 2020 repertoire list, students learn music of twentieth century Swedish tradition, American choral tradition, American folk song, sacred music composed by Spaniard, Josu Elberdin. Students sang in English, Basque, Latin and Swedish in these pieces. Although the audition music is diverse in style and region, it is noted that it can be categorized as primarily sacred, save "Aftonen." The 2019 OkMEA Mixed Choir Repertoire list gave students the opportunity to experience singing in English, Latin and Portuguese. The texts of these pieces were a split of sacred and secular, including a patriotic and folk tune. Time periods spanned Renaissance, Baroque and Twenty-First Century Contemporary. Both honor concert programs included an arrangement of an African American Spiritual.

Most Oklahomans speak English in their home. The repertoire list gives secondary choral students the opportunity to sing in their native tongue and then learn to sing in alternate languages. The styles and time periods explored through learning the repertoire vary depending on the repertoire that is selected for that year's audition. A look at the repertoire through a CRP lens could indicate a deficit of non-sacred, world music and non-Western influenced literature. However, it is important to note that repertoire is limited by selection process, committee and clinician.

The inclusion of the African-American Spiritual in both the 2019 and 2020 honor concert programs is a move that provides cultural orientation for many students. The musical idioms and lyric motives present in this genre are familiar to many American students. Stone (2019) argued that African-American Spirituals are as relevant to the American experience as to the African American experience. This segment of the African diaspora connects music from American popular culture music to other world music cultures and styles causing the African American Spiritual to be cultural capital for a diverse group of students.

Repertoire

Music educators advocate for repertoire that is based on the cultural background of students and their community (Shaw, 2012). The Choral Village was a project that engaged middle school-aged students in singing songs of Puerto Rican, Haitian, Hebrew, Kenyan, Arabic and African-American origins. Hess (2015) articulated, "aside from seeing themselves represented in their classroom programs, students learn to think critically and reveal interrelationships and connections between musics, amongst themselves, and between themselves and the musics" (p. 11).

Stone et al. (2018) interviewed 12 conductors of color who stressed to choral music educators to be persistent in programming music of diverse backgrounds. These conductor/educators promoted addressing difficult and painful histories often found in the literature of music that is not of the dominant culture. Educator Stan Spottswood elaborated, "We have an obligation to our students to be truthful about the problem before we provide an alternate solution for how we deal with our feelings" (Stone et al., 2018, p. 35).

The American Choral Directors Association's 2019 National Conference included panel discussions on programming and repertoire selection (American Choral Directors Association (ACDA, 2019). Choral directors from varied sectors discussed quality, inclusion, and diversity in selecting pieces for music education programs (ACDA, 2019). Eugene Rogers, Associate Professor of the University of Michigan gave several points for music educators to consider when programming or selected repertoire for ensembles:

- Move beyond the latest hits.
- Move beyond the canon.
- Ask questions about what you have and haven't programmed.
- Find balance in programming.
- Checklists are okay when exploring diverse repertoire.
- Do more than what you know, what's comfortable and what you have heard.
- Broaden the definition of "quality" to avoid elitism. Do not allow "quality" to be an excuse to not explore diverse repertoire.
- Do not allow cultural appropriation to hinder your exploration of diverse repertoire. (ACDA, 2019)

The literature and discussion around inclusion and diversity in choral music repertoire has a focus on making connections with students and audiences and changing the narrative that Western music is the standard (Shaw, 2015; Stone et al., 2018).

Examples of Inclusive Music Educational Practice

Despite the fact that many American music educators practice minimal non-Western music in their teacher education programs, some of them transcend their limited education during their practice (Wang & Humphreys, 2009). The Chicago Children's Choir (CCC) was founded during the Civil Rights Movement to unite students from different racial, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds (Stone et al., 2018). This organization has a mission to help young singers explore diverse literature and gain cultural understanding of the music that they perform (Stone et al., 2018). The CCC partners with over 90 Chicago schools to teach music and challenge students to develop discipline, pride and inter-cultural understanding. Other ensembles such as the Jerusalem Youth Chorus and the Boston Children's Chorus have a mission of cultural awareness and increased communication (Hirokawa, 2019). Llari, et al. (2013) concluded that although caution should be exercised when inferring that cultural understanding improves with multicultural music, there is significance in diversity in music education. These authors based their findings on studies that involved Chinese songs being introduced to 250 New York City students, an intercultural song project for students in Portugal and a multicultural music collaboration between Spanish speaking and Native American youth in a rural area (Llari, et al., 2013).

Junda (2019) started Earthtones Vocal Ensemble at the University of Connecticut. Earthtones Vocal ensemble gave undergraduate students an opportunity to be in an

ensemble that explored cultural diversity in song. Students in this ensemble were exposed to new traditions and worldviews while developing social consciousness. Junda (2019) described how this model could be used to serve students on both the collegiate and secondary levels as music educators embrace changes in traditions of the discipline. More examples of inclusive practices in music education were reported by Rampal (2015) in which he noted that universities used immersion programs to prepare students to be culturally responsive in their future music education jobs.

Cultural Bearers

Music educators who urge the practice of inclusiveness and diversity advocate for the use of cultural bearers to enhance authenticity and a personal connection for the students to the music (Hirokawa, 2019; Shaw, 2012). Stone et al. (2018) believed that educators should learn from cultural bearers as a strategy for best performance and teaching practices. Cultural bearers help to bridge a gap between the culturally relevant content of diverse music curriculum and the limited knowledge and experience music educators who have been trained in the western music educational traditions.

Non-Traditional Ensembles and Classes

Seasoned music education professionals Holley (2018) and Smith (2018) suggested that music education program consider transformations. Traditionally, secondary music education programs in large schools have what is affectionately called BOCs (Holley, 2018; Schuler, 2011). BOCs are bands, orchestras and choirs that often encompass much of the music course offerings in secondary schools. Holley (2018) and Smith (2018) proposed that educators look beyond these courses and reimagine music education for the future. Schuler (2011) concurred with this secondary educational model

by suggesting guitar and piano classes to course offering as these often are instruments that are most likely to be played after graduation.

Little Kids Rock (LKR) is an organization that partners with several of the nation's largest public school systems to present a program called Modern Band (Little Kids Rock, 2019). LKR teaches kids in 45 states to improvise, compose, and perform using the styles that they know and love such as rock, pop, reggae, hip hop, Rhythm and Blues , and other modern styles. Programs such as LKR utilize the model of expanding on existing cultural capital of the students that it serves. Schuler (2011) suggested that traditionally trained teachers could use this program as a source. These examples of innovative and collaborative music education programs demonstrate a hunger for new music learning opportunities for students that will engage students. College Music Society, the National Association for Music Educators, and the American Choral Directors Association agree that there is a need to diversify ensemble experiences and repertoire beyond Western Art Music traditions in order to be relevant to students that they serve (ACDA Diversity Initiative, 2017; Campbell et al., 2016; NAfME, 2014). Diversifying the course offerings help to broaden the reach of music education programs and therefore give an opportunity for more students to see the music of their culture included in their studies.

Challenges to Inclusiveness and Diversity

While it is known that providing an inclusive curriculum in the secondary music classroom has the potential to meet the needs of diverse student populations, to provide an engaging learning environment, and to create a sustainable music education program, some music educators struggle to implement this type of practice (Gurgel, 2015; Palkki,

2015). Obstacles to implementation are several and deep-seated. Three areas will be explored in order to understand the challenges faced by music educators as they attempt to implement education practices that are more inclusive: (a) Western Art Canon for music study, (b) teacher preparation program traditions, and (c) demographics amongst music educators.

Western European Canon for Music Study

Hess (2017) bluntly described the discipline of music education as rooted in white supremacy. Other scholars acknowledge that Western European art music traditions continue to influence programming, ensemble types, and repertoire of many contemporary secondary and university music programs (Campbell et al., 2016; Junda, 2019; Rampal, 2015; Shaw, 2012). Robinson (2017) declared, "Music is a social activity and music education is a system of teaching and learning music. Therefore, music education is a social system that is not immune to institutional racism" (pp. 82-83). Bradley (2007) concurred that Western musical canon dominates music education curricula.

The notion that music is universal and has significance for the sake of art itself is widespread among some music educators. Scholars such as Rampal (2015) and Bowman (2007) rejected this paradigm that music represents an aesthetic or universal language without ties to cultural, political, and historical context. Hess (2017) argued that failure to acknowledge cultural and political fabrics in music perpetuates the Western music education canon. Furthermore, Rampal (2015) suggested that music educators, being fully aware of their precarious position on hierarchies of schools, may be reluctant to

make changes or decisions that might invite scrutiny or controversy to their programs. Thus, the canon continues.

Choral and vocal music educators are faced with another facet to music making that involves a critique of the traditional Western canon. Shaw (2012) described the *bel canto* style as a Baroque Era inspired technique for singing that is considered universal, appropriate, and as a healthy method for vocal production. Yoo (2017) reported this tonal aesthetic for choral sound as preferred by secondary and collegiate choral groups regardless of any multicultural nature of repertoire. Yoo (2017) encouraged educators to explore the nuanced vocal production traditions in vocal music from cultures outside of traditional Western music. However, choral and vocal music educators who willfully interrupt these canons must consider the consequences. Many large choral ensembles compete regularly in competitions with a high regard for tonal production that is of the *bel canto* style. These programs and their directors are rewarded with acclaim and promotion. Choral programs that spend a good deal of time perfecting this style of vocal music, to the relegation of other styles on the periphery of their curriculum, may send a message to students that other music is of lower importance.

Bradley (2012) and Koza (2008) declared that the repertoire and content presented in classrooms often reflect patterns of privilege. Habits of presenting Western European repertoire without exploring cultural or historical context assumes that the students identify with the music and perpetuates the dangerous assumption that this type of music is "natural" (Rampal, 2015). This can be received as a micro-aggression for students whose cultures include music that is inherently different. The elevation of

Western music is maintained by the relegation of music of other cultures to the peripheries of the curriculum (Hess, 2015).

Robinson (2017) raised the critical issue in music education of music literacy. He declared that aiming for music literacy has the potential to divide students into two groups "those who are literate in Western European music theory and those who are illiterate in Western European music theory" (p. 93). Educators are becoming mindful of how these musical education traditions maintain the status quo and minimize important music skills such as improvisation, communication, and composition (Campbell et al., 2016).

Teacher Preparation Programs

There is a consensus among music educationalists that a paradigm shift for music teacher education programs is necessary (Campbell et al., 2016; Holler, 2018; Sculler, 2011). Rampal (2015) summarized:

> Music teacher education programs need to foster greater diversity in musical training, teaching practices, faculty and student backgrounds, and fieldwork sites. Academic rigor, musicianship, cultural immersion projects, lifelong learning initiatives, and diverse fieldwork opportunities will empower 21st century teachers to invite a broad student population to engage with music in new ways. (p. 48)

Campbell et al. (2016) noted that few graduates of music education programs have significant hands-on experience with repertoire beyond Western European Music. Underscoring this finding is the fact that audition requirements for many collegiate music education programs favor training in Western European traditions (Bradley, 2006; Hess,

2015; Koza, 2008). Campbell et al. (2016) emphasized that this phenomenon exists on university campuses with robust conversations about diversity and equity in their school administrations and social science departments. The course requirements for music education majors in many colleges are laden with Western emphasis leaving little room to broaden to a more global or multicultural scope for music study. Campbell et al. (2016) proposed *streamlining* course requirements in order to allow music majors to broaden their study while providing musicianship competencies, which emphasized contemporary and world music skills such as improvisation and composition. Campbell et al. (2016) stressed that an overhaul of curriculum will involve deans, provosts, and those typically not involved in the dialogue but powered to make changes.

Lack of Diversity Amongst Music Educators

While the ethnic and racial backgrounds of students in secondary schools and colleges have become more diverse, the ethnicity of those in the teaching profession has remains homogeneous (Elpus, 2014; Lehmberg, 2008). Lehmberg (2008) reported that approximately 90% of teachers in the United States are White, middle-class, and of Western European background. Robinson (2006) reported that 94% of music educators are White and middle class.

The NAfME Position Statement for Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education (year) suggested that education leaders begin "actively recruiting and retaining persons of diverse cultures and ethnic origins to teach music in schools" (NAfME, p. 2). Music composition and performance are tied to social constructs. This principle provokes concerns as teachers are charged with the responsibility of teaching students from different cultural backgrounds than their own (Shaw, 2012). Butler et al. (2007)

elaborated that too often White teachers are expected to be what they have not been trained to be: culturally literate educators for diverse student populations. Rampal (2015) urged music educators to see the profession within the context of its existence as a predominantly White profession.

Addressing the Discrepancies in Music Education

Two major higher education music forums have addressed the discrepancies in the practice of music education. Both think tanks have produced documents that acknowledge that music education is at an impasse regarding engaging diverse students. First, the Yale School of Music Symposium (2018) stated the need for music educators to be trained in cultural literacy and CRP in an effort to address the issue. It identified four barriers for inclusion and equity in music education programs:

- Financial – Prohibitive cost to instrumental purchase or rental, trips, or private lesson.

- Social – Experiences of social exclusion.

- Structural – Scheduling conflicts.

- Musical – An emphasis on traditional Western music that may not be relevant to students.

Second, the College Music Society organized a task force to address changes needed to music teacher training programs to prepare them for their future diverse teaching environments (Campbell et al., 2016). In this effort, the Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major (TFUMM) noted that research about cognition and motivation being at odds with traditional music instruction (Yale, 2018). The TFUMM determined that without changes to resolve this dissonance in research and practice, music education programs

could face declining enrollments. Both of these committees of experts advocated for the music educator to be a music curriculum developer who collaborates with students and communities to provide an education and experience that is relevant and meaningful for students of diverse backgrounds.

Dekaney & Robinson (2014) reported that most teachers would encounter students whose backgrounds are culturally, ethnically, linguistically, racially, and economically dissimilar from their own. In response to the increased diversity in classrooms, music teachers are being encouraged to consider a practice that is theoretically sound and culturally meaningful (Richards et al., 2007). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), as a teaching paradigm for music education, is theoretically sound because it draws on music's inherent cultural referents. Music intersects with culture and identity. The implications for a music education pedagogy that is anchored by the principle of being responsive to the culture and identities of the students it serves are significant. The literature surrounding CRP sheds light on several concepts that may explain student engagement or disengagement in music education programs. Some of these concepts are critical pedagogy, hegemonies, deficit-based thinking, socio-economics and class, relevancy, and cultural fluidity.

Critical Pedagogy

Kelley-McHale (2018) encouraged music educators to create spaces that not only develop musicality but also encourage critical thinking. A music educator who provides cultural and historical context and discourse to music instruction opens the door to a kind of intellectual rigor that is stimulating and engaging for learners. CRP scholar Ladson-Billings (1994) stated that CRP "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally,

and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 382).

This definition of CRP suggests an inherent quality of critical pedagogy. White et al. (2014) defined critical pedagogy as a philosophy that combines education with critical theory. It was first identified by Freire (1993) as an education practice designed to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action. White et al.'s (2014) paradigm suggested that CRP should be linked with critical pedagogy. However, several scholars recognize CRP as having the critical pedagogy component embedded in its ideologies. Several music education scholars agreed that music making and study has an important role in addressing social, economic, cultural, and ecological issues facing the world (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2015; Hirokawa, 2019; Rampal, 2015; Robinson, 2017; Shaw, 2015).

Hegemonies

All knowledge is socially constructed and presented from a certain perspective. CRP acknowledges this and challenges teachers and students to approach content with a critical mindset. CRP assumes that much of the teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment practices are steeped in Western European ideologies and norms that place students who are culturally diverse at a disadvantage (Howard, 2013). Therefore, a music teacher, who is committed to CRP, may challenge a teaching structure that considers Western Traditions as the standard. Traditional Western-based ensembles and genres may isolate students whose cultures have rich and informal music lives that they feel isn't valued (Yale School of Music, 2018). Rather, a teaching paradigm that embraces cultural

pluralism is positioned to align with CRP. CRP can be utilized in music classrooms to interrupt hegemonies that are embedded in the discipline.

Deficit Based Thinking

Several scholars agree that deficit-based thinking is an educational practice in which blame is placed on the victim for being uneducable. The deficit-based attitude is frequently used to explain the low academic achievement of some diverse students (Vaugeois, 2007). Rampal (2015) illustrated how deficit-based thinking can give music educators a pass on being accountable for diversity and equity in their programs. The author described the common assumption that certain students are ill-equipped to excel in typical music programs.

Music education scholars have questioned the low student-of-color membership in many bands, orchestras, and choirs across the country (Rampal, 2015, Schuler, 2011; Campbell, Myers & Sarath, 2016). CRP challenges the educators to question enrollment patterns in performance ensembles in secondary schools. A culturally responsive educator might ask questions such as "Does my classroom welcome *all* students?" and "Is my program accessible to *all* students?" As a younger music educator, Rampal (2015) conceded to being conditioned in traditional music education practices that can be exclusive.

Euphemisms such as "urban" and "at-risk" often describe populations of students that have been marginalized from dominant society in some way. Noted music educator and scholar, Juliet Hess (2017) deducted that these terms, although cloaked in niceness, often refer to class and race. Furthermore, scholars (Gordon, 2005; White et al., 2014)

argued that deficit-based thinking regarding students who are considered members of these populations diverts attention from the institutionalized injustices in our society.

The culturally responsive music educator must be critical of assumptions that these terms bring to their disciplines (Palkki, 2015; Rampal, 2015). Gay (2010), emphasized that CRP nullifies the deficit-based model. White et al.(2014) agreed that with the CRP model, educators no longer associate the cultural differences as impediments for student learning. Instead, cultural capital is used as a resource for instructional delivery or curriculum (White et al., 2014).

Socioeconomics and Class

The secondary CRP music educator who is committed to providing equity and diversity in his or her music program will inevitably encounter issues of socioeconomics and class. Many education programs are built on student access to private lessons, expensive instruments, and parents who have employment that allows them to support their child's music education in transportation and otherwise (Music in Schools Initiative, 2018). A program in which student-access to these resources is limited or non-existent may struggle to compare or compete with others that have abundant resources. Kelley-McHale (2018) articulated, "being culturally responsive challenges all music teachers to carefully consider the classroom environment, materials, and products that become the tools of music instruction" (p. 4). Culturally responsive pedagogues know their student population (Kelley-McHale, 2018) and are creative with the use of resources to teach them. This includes resources for economically-challenged students. Shaw (2015) described a choral music education program that developed a sliding scale in order to promote socioeconomic diversity within the choir. This program also piloted a busing

service to remove the obstacle of transportation in order to increase inclusiveness (Shaw, 2015).

Relevancy

The practice of culturally responsive pedagogy is also known as culturally relevant pedagogy (White et al., 2014). Gloria Ladson-Billing (1994) coined the term culturally relevant pedagogy by introducing the theory that relevancy in educational practice will increase engagement and improve outcomes. Later, Gay (2000) replaced the term relevance with *responsive*. Shaw (2015) asserted that the term *responsive* implied a student-centered focus. The implication here is that a student-centered approach to instruction will also create relevance (McCombs & Miller, 2010). Campbell et al. (2016) proposed that music educators shift to a framework for teaching that offers relevance as a key tenet. CRP addresses the literature that exposes the disjuncture occurring between music experienced by students inside and outside of many schools (Shaw, 2015). Student values tend to be more aligned with their contemporary realities and cultural experiences. Ladson-Billings (2014) acknowledged the existence of "youth culture" that maintained notions of membership, language, and art. Relevance in music education results in curriculums that explores music that connects students to their realities, whether this be contemporary music or music from cultural ceremonies or traditions.

Fluidity of Culture

Ladson-Billings (2014) observed that culture is fluid and implied that CRP explores this concept. A culturally responsive music educator works under this consciousness as he or she explores diverse music. Campbell et al. (2016) reinforced the idea that music cultures evolve. The authors encouraged music educators to be

participants and leaders in changing music education. Furthermore, educators are cautioned by CRP theorists to not be static when developing curriculum (Ladson-Billlings, 2014).

COVID-19 and Music Education

The COVID-19 pandemic began to cause effects on education in March of 2020. In order to mitigate the spread of the virus, many school districts shifted from in-person to remote learning (Kamenetz, et al., 2021) which often involved student learning at home on digital devices. Changes in learning modes exposed disparities in resources and elicited a focus on meeting needs for students who were extraordinarily affected by the pandemic (Wilson, 2020).

Changes to music education were profound as music educators pivoted from in-person instruction to teaching that was asynchronous or via teleconference. Schools that resumed to some version of in-person learning in the Fall of 2021 saw adjustments to music classroom and rehearsal settings. Music educators navigated the news that singing and playing wind instruments could cause "super-spreading" of COVID-19 (Naunheim et al., 2020). Some states offered guidance for band, choir and orchestra band that included wearing masks, bell covers for instruments, physically distanced seating, and ventilation for classes (Guidance for Band, Choir and Orchestra Programs at Educational Institutions During COVID-19, October, 2020; Safety and Health Guidance for Music Education, February, 2021). Many music educators experienced a reduction in ensemble participants as students opted to learn virtually or forgo participating in music programs during the pandemic (S. Stout, personal communication, September 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that serves as a lens for this study is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which is also called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. This study uses the term Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is a set of teaching strategies that connect cultures of the students being served to content (Kelly-McHale, 2018). CRP theorists stress the importance of students' culture being the point of reference for all teaching and learning. White et al. (2014) posited that CRP accesses students' ways of knowing and doing. CRP's validation of students' cultural reference creates a cultural congruence between home life and education (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2011). Students, whose educational life is congruent with their home life and culture are believed to postured for positive academic outcomes (Howard, 2013).

Howard (2013) deduced that one primary idea behind culturally responsive pedagogy is to create learning environments that allow students to utilize cultural capital and other recognizable knowledge to enhance their schooling experience. Howard (2013) added that the more congruent a student's cultural ways of knowing and being is with their educational ways of knowing and being, the more advantages that student has for outcomes. The idea is that students respond to new concepts and content when their own cultures are affirmed. Knowledge that is culturally situated can increase student engagement, effort and cognition (Howard, 2013). These cultural groundings then serve as a launching point for new material and ideas.

Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) organized concepts of CRP scholars Gay (1994), Ladson-Billing (1994) and Nieto (1999) into five principles: *identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and*

student-teacher relationships. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) conceptual framework for

CRP is infused with tenets of Critical Race Theory. CRT acknowledges the effects of

racism and hegemonic practices found in dominant culture. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper

(2011) argued that CRP challenges these systems of oppression in all five principles.

Figure 2 lists the five principles and their corresponding elements of practice.

Figure 2

The Five Principles of CRP and Their Tenets

Identity and Achievement:
Identity development
Cultural heritage
Multiple perspectives
Affirmation of diversity
Public validation of home-community cultures

Equity and Excellence
Dispositions
Incorporate multicultural curriculum content
Equal access
High Expectations for all

Developmental Appropriateness:
Learning styles
Teaching Styles
Cultural Variation in psycholgical needs
Motivation
Morale
Engagement
Collaboration

CRP

Teaching the Whole Child:
Skill development in cultural context
Bridge home, school and community
Learning outcomes
Supportive learning community
Empower students

Student-Teacher Relationships:
Caring
Relationships
Interaction
Classroom atmosphere

Note. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by authors Brown-Jeffy & Coopers (2011) in Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature.

Identity and Achievement

Identity and achievement address cultural heritage, multiple perspectives and public validation of home-community cultures. This area utilizes the cultural capital that students bring to school. Culturally responsive pedagogues examine their own cultures as well as their students and note how that affects classroom learning. Nieto (1999) determined that "by reconnecting with their own backgrounds and with the suffering as well as the triumphs of their own families, teachers can lay the ground work for students to reclaim their histories and voices" (p. 30). CRP scholars call this reflexive practice *cultural competence*. Cultural competence was described by Ladson-Billings (2014) as "the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture" (p. 75). In this paradigm, culture is considered a kind of capital. Students are empowered by this orientation of their own culture. In CRP, cultural competence is considered a prerequisite for learning new content.

Equity and Excellence

Ladson-Billings (2014), Gay (2018), Palmer (2018) and Howard (2013) stressed the goal of academic achievement as a purpose for CRP. Ladson-Billings'(1995) teacher investigations demonstrated teachers who were driven toward helping their students to succeed. Moreover, CRP vehemently rejects deficit-based thinking that often explains low expectations or low achievement with culture (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2014;

Sleeter, 2011). This ideology often blames underserved students' social conditions for their academic challenges. CRP theorists maintain that educators can influence student outcomes by rejecting deficit-based thinking and instead believe that all students are capable of success (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Developmental Appropriateness

Brown-Jeffey and Cooper (2011) believed that it is important to consider what is culturally appropriate for students when addressing developmental appropriateness. To do this, scholars stress the foundational tenet of cultural congruency (Garcia & Chin, 2016; Gay, 2000; Howard, 2013; Kelly-McHale, 2018; Palmer, 2018; Sleeter, 2011). Cultural congruency exists when the learning process validates and affirms cultural ways of doing and learning. Furthermore, CRP connects cultures of the students being served to new content. CRP theorists stress the importance of students' culture being the point of reference for all teaching and learning. CRP's validation of students' cultural reference creates a cultural congruence between home life and education (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2011). Students' whose educational life is congruent with their home life and culture are believed to postured for positive academic outcomes (Howard, 2013).
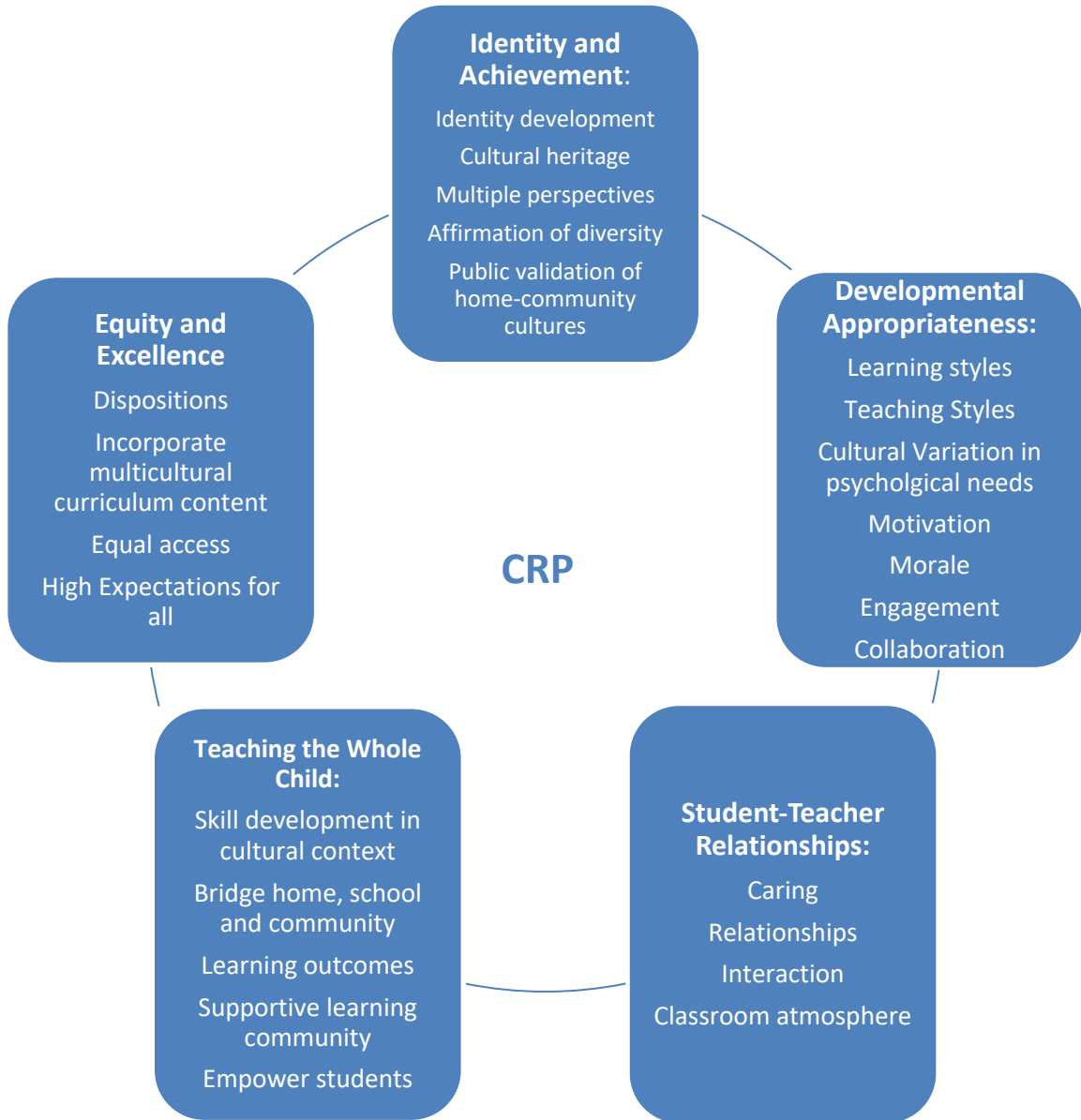
According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), developmental appropriateness includes cultivating a mindset of socio-political awareness for instructor and students. CRP has deeper concepts for teaching and learning than celebration of cultures. CRP is a movement toward equity and social justice (Sleeter, 2011). It aims to increase positive outcomes while empowering students to critique the hegemonies of the dominant culture (Gay, 2000, Howard, 2013). This practice of provoking critical consciousness in learning is considered a catalyst for student engagement and learning.

Paulo Freire's (1970) philosophy for education encourages critical thought and student engagement in knowledge seeking and construction. Freire (1970) advocated for learning that moved beyond the traditional banking methods of instruction in which students are passive receptacles of knowledge and teachers are the center of all information. Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that the teachers she observed utilized Freire's pedagogy, therefore, establishing Freire's philosophy as critical to CRP.

Teaching the Whole Child

This principle has overlapping concepts with developmental appropriateness. Teaching the whole child involves engaging the student in ways that are positive and relevant. Walter (2018) determined that CRP is relevant because it is student-driven rather than curricular-driven. Moreover, student backgrounds and prior experiences become the foundation for study. Therefore, the content becomes more relevant to students. Connection of tacit knowledge to new ideas can then be fostered when relevancy is established. In CRP, student needs that expand beyond their academic life are addressed. CRP nurtures the whole child by connecting home, school and community.

Student-Teacher Relationships

Educational research acknowledges that teachers are an important variable in student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000). CRP theorists repeatedly use the concept caring in CRP. Gay (2000) maintained that caring interpersonal relationships is a hallmark of CRP teachers. Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that CRP goes beyond caring for students to "concern for the implications their work had on their students' lives, the welfare of the community, and unjust social arrangements" (p. 474). Ladson-Billings (1994) declared that student-teacher

relationships in CRP were such that they encouraged the "same connectedness between students" (p. 25). Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) stated that CRP teachers "work to build a classroom community that is safe for students to nurture everyone's cultural identity" (p. 78).

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) was the first to introduce the term Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as an educational practice "that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 17-18). Later, Geneva Gay (2000) renamed the concept Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Interchangeable, both terms refer to a teaching and learning environment in which student cultures are inspiration for curriculum and content. In CRP, student ways of knowing and doing are aligned with school practices. Culturally responsive educators have the basic belief that all students can learn. Music educators have the opportunity to use the cultural ties to music to address incongruences between education and culture. Conclusively, the most important aspect of CRP is that scholars agree that it can be used to explain student engagement and outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Palkki, 2015; Rampal, 2015; Shaw, 2015).

Reflections of CRP

The theory of CRP is played out in a variety of teaching settings and in some educational policy in the U.S. Though these programs do not herald the benefits of CRP, a look at the structure and paradigms of these programs demonstrate an alignment with CRP. A look of the Indian Education Act and homogenous educational institutions affirms the existence of this phenomenon.

Indian Education in America Act

The 1972 Indian Education Act was landmark legislation that established an approach to meeting the educational needs of Native American students. It created legislation that:

- Recognizes that American Indians have unique, educational and culturally related academic needs and distinct language and cultural needs

- Is the only comprehensive Federal Indian Education legislation that deals with American Indian education from pre-school to graduate-level education and reflects the diversity of government involvement in Indian education.

- Focuses national attention on the educational needs of American Indian learners, reaffirming the Federal government's special responsibility related to the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives

- Provides services to American Indians and Alaska Natives that are not provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The first two bulleted items provide an assumption that learning and culture intersect. These ideas confirm Howard's (2013) position that "the merger of culture and pedagogy represents a complex and intricate set of processes that … may [affect] student learning" (p. 1).

Homogenous School Systems

CRP researchers discovered that cultural congruency matters in regards to student learning (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Shaw, 2015). Gay (2002) stated, "When academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal,

and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (p. 106). This is demonstrated in school systems and communities where the student bodies and faculty share many cultural similarities. For example, this is displayed in the academic achievements of private schools that are racially, ethnically and socio-economically homogeneous.

Implications for Research

Shaw (2015) reported that CRP is under researched. More research that demonstrates the impact of CRP on student engagement in music programs is needed. Shaw (2015) added that student voices, notably underrepresented in music education research, are needed. This research is not prescriptive, as CRP will undoubtedly look different in every educational setting. However, an exploration of the practice of CRP could inform music educators and music teacher preparation programs about the changes needed to facilitate the needs of evolving demographics of students.

Summary of Chapter II

This chapter first reviewed the situations that affect music educators and their practice. It explored the social statistics of students as well as their educators. Several music educationalists build the case for broadening music education to achieve a more thorough, rigorous and creative experience for students. These inclusive programs had a purpose of achieving relevancy and more student engagement.

The stance of the Oklahoma Department of Education and NAFME on inclusiveness in music education curriculum was noted. Examples of music programs that use inclusive multicultural repertoire and curriculum were given. Ideas for enhancing music education practices such as bringing in cultural bearers and expanding music

course offerings were illustrated as a way to help music educators to move beyond education traditions.

The literature demonstrated that although music educators understand that inclusiveness is essential for their programs, they are faced with the challenge of changing long-standing traditions and hegemonies in the practice. Several scholars spoke of the challenges of moving beyond the Western European canons for music study. Moreover, choral music educators explained their unique problem of a hierarchy of vocal tone production styles that prefer specific styles and singing techniques to others thus marginalizing specific cultures and styles of music. This alienated students rather than included them. Some music teacher education programs that reinforce these ideas in the recruitment, preparation and training of pre-service teachers may perpetuate the problem.

Finally, CRP theory was explained as a way to understand this phenomenon. The origin of CRP theory by Gay (2010) as a tool to understand a type of education practice with a goal of specific student outcomes was detailed. The concepts found in CRP theory were described in order to prepare for this study, which will involve an exploration of CRP in choral music learning and performing. Despite the fact that CRP theory is established, there are limited examples of studies that demonstrate its practice. Hence, the need for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study explores how the natural setting of a selected choral class meets the needs of a diverse student population and enhances student engagement and cultural literacy. The qualitative design allows for a rich description of the activities and ideas revealed in the study. Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative research helps to understand the meaning that individuals bring to a human problem. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered qualitative methods to be best for understanding human behavior. This chapter will include the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research design, the procedures, the researcher bias, limitations of the study and a summary.

Statement of the Problem

America's schools are becoming more diverse, and the communities in which our students will live and work will be more globally connected. Consequently, students must be equipped to communicate, innovate and thrive in this global society. It is crucial that education is anchored on this premise that diverse perspectives are considered valuable assets for problem solving and creating. Some choral music educators have tapped into

the power of their discipline and used its cultural ties to embrace diverse learners and communities. Others have struggled with releasing themselves from hegemonic traditions that prioritize certain styles, music ensemble types and genres thus marginalizing or disengaging students in their classes and programs. This inconsistency may be explained through the lens of CRP.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores how the natural setting of a selected choral class meets the needs of a diverse student population and enhances student engagement and cultural literacy.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer four questions:

1. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population?

2. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance student engagement?

3. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance cultural literacy?

4. How does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explain the above?

Positionality and Researcher's Bias

I am a classically trained musician who also happens to be African-American. I am also a music educator. Throughout my formal education, I became keenly aware of the gulf that existed in my formal music education and that of the music that was played and taught by the cultural carriers –family, church members and peers – of my community. The singing idioms, techniques and expressions were vastly different than

music in school and music in my culture. Even the behavioral expectations for the audiences were polar opposite. Yet, I loved and appreciated both worlds of music. I also noted that my understanding for one music world deepened when I would find a connection to the other. I began to search for "classical" music that had idioms from the African diaspora. I was often drawn to Black gospel music that was performed with Western techniques. Composers and artists who blended musical styles and traditions fascinated me.

As my experience as a music educator grew, I became more aware that European Western music traditions and ideas were considered the standard and that other ideas were considered subservient to these musical forms. I began to be appalled by colleagues who used terms like "real music" and "legitimate repertoire." "Who decided what is legitimate?" I wondered. Furthermore, as I began to teach in different settings, I realized that students would respond to content if they had some sort of cultural tie to the content. I soon learned that I either had to find repertoire that was relatable to them or find ways for them to relate to the repertoire. I had a passion for helping students to understand humanity and embrace diversity through music. I also wanted them to learn new things. I remembered my own experiences with learning music and began to explore ideas of multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The bias implied here is that I am a believer in the relevancy of CRP due to personal experience. The connection between culture and learning seems logical to me. My position as a choral music educator unites me with like-minded educators who understand the deep human connections that are present in music making and performing,

and who understand that these influences also exist in the context of the culture of the music and its performers.

Research Design

Lincoln and Guba (1985) declared that three questions define beliefs that characterize inquiry. The first question was the ontological: What is the form of nature and reality and therefore what can be known about it? Second, they asked the epistemological question: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or the would-be knower and what can be known? Finally, they asked the methodological question: How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? These questions shaped the researcher's paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) used these questions to help them launch their own theoretical framework for research and evaluation. These concepts are described in their book, *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Naturalistic inquiry aligns with constructionism, which is the epistemological perspective for this study. Constructionism by nature involves multiple perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, constructionism was appropriate for this study that examined varied cultures and diverse realities. Erlandson et al. (1993) implied that the design of a naturalistic inquiry is rooted in respect for context. The result is a study that is emergent in design (Erlandson et al., 1993). The emergent design character of this study allowed theories and patterns of data to develop techniques for making data collection efficient.

Participant Selection

I learned about the Enosburgh choral program through a music education colleague. I became intrigued about one of the ensembles in the program whose membership was made up of mostly Pacific Island students. What kind of repertoire did

they perform? How did they get and retain over 300 students in their full program? How did they accommodate students of diverse backgrounds?

Purposive sampling allowed me to focus the research on the two secondary choral music educators and the Enosburgh choral program. Patton (2002) characterized purposive sampling as such that provided information-rich cases. The first rationale for this method of sampling is the convenience and access of the researcher to the participants. The second is proximity, which allows for access to some knowledge of the participants' teaching philosophies. Purposive sampling allowed for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002) that existed in this setting. The purposive sampling strategies extended to data collection that included interviews, observations and artifacts

Data Collection

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the researcher is the primary instrument in gathering data. Erlandson et al. (1993) argued, "relying on all its senses, intuition, thoughts, and feelings, the human instrument can be a very potent and perceptive data-gathering tool" (p. 82). This study involved observations and interviews from one school district. I conducted four interviews and fifteen in-person observations of choral music classes. Each interview was made by appointment through email. I gave an informed consent form to each participant prior to the interview. The interviews were held via teleconference in compliance with the Center for Disease Control, Oklahoma State Department of Health and school district guidelines and restrictions that were in place at the time. The teleconference served to gather as much information about the educator's perspective and understanding as possible. The time allotted for each interview was one

hour. Before questions began, I set out to establish an atmosphere that was free of judgment, critique, and evaluation. Each question was read word for word to each participant. Field notes were taken and an audio recording was made of each interview to assist with the transcription process.

Naturalistic inquiry (Patton, 2002) includes observations. Observations were conducted in a non-intrusive manner as demonstrated in Patton's (2002) *direct observation*. The direct observation involved me sitting at the back of the classroom during observations. I took field notes and pictures as data for subsequent analysis. I also collected artifacts from each observation such as student assignments, syllabi and communication documents. Themes and patterns that related to each of the principles that are present in CRP were noted. Data was collected and backed up on an external hard drive, which was secured in a safe. Interview questions were as follows:

i) Describe some of your life experiences of making and learning music.

ii) Please explain your teaching philosophy.

iii) What instructional standards, if any, guide your discipline in pedagogy that addresses student diversity?

    (a) (If none exist) How can you implement pedagogy that addresses student diversity in your teaching methods and curriculum?

    (b) (If they do exist) How do you implement them?

iv) What other terms and education reforms are you familiar with that are related to pedagogy that addresses student diversity?

    (a) How do you define these terms?

    (b) How do you implement these ideas into your teaching methods?

v) Are you aware of colleagues in your discipline who practice pedagogy that addresses student diversity?

    (a) (If so) Describe how pedagogy that addresses student diversity is implemented in their practice.

    (b) (If not) Describe how pedagogy that addresses student diversity could be implemented in their practice.

vi) How is pedagogy that addresses student diversity supported in your school?

vii) How is pedagogy that addresses student diversity supported in your district?

viii) How was pedagogy that addresses student diversity encouraged or demonstrated in your teacher education program?

ix) In your opinion, how should pedagogy that addresses student diversity be prioritized among school reforms?

Table 2 outlines how all data collection strategies correspond to the research questions.

Table 2

Corresponding Data Collection Strategies to Research Questions

Research Question	Interview Question	Observation Goal	Artifact Goal
How does the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population?	Interview questions 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8and 9	Note the tenets of CRP as they appear in choral music classrooms and philosophies expressed.	Documentation of teaching methods to explore CRP in choral music curriculum
How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance student engagement?	Interview questions 2,3,5,6,7,8, and 9	Observe examples of teaching methods, styles and strategies and how these recognize and utilize cultural capital of diverse students.	Examples of artifacts to collect: Class assignments Video recordings of performances Communication with stakeholders Concert programs
How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance cultural literacy?	Interview questions 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 and 9	Observe how cultural literacy is cultivated.	Provide examples for future study of CRP.
How does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explain the above?			

Data Analysis

Erlandson et al. (1993) stressed that data collection and analysis in a naturalistic inquiry are intertwined. Therefore, as data were collected, they were analyzed strategically and naturally during the data gathering process. Erlandson et al. (1993) emphasized the importance of doing field notes after observations and interviews to begin

analysis. After observations, I took field notes that were saved for the analysis by making an audio recording of my notes or writing them down to study at a later date. Erlandson et al. (1993) also urged the researcher to note how data collection techniques could be modified during the process to make data collection and analysis efficient and effective. During the observations, I adjusted my collection process to include both audio and video recordings of class sessions and rehearsals. This helped me to preserve the complete picture of the settings for data presentation and analysis.

The first data collection involved interviews with choral music educators. I coded for language and issues raised by these participants. These codes were then categorized into broad ideas and concepts. Lastly, the categories were analyzed for patterns and themes. Patton (2002) described patterns as a descriptive finding and a "basis for themes" (p. 541). The theme, according to Patton (2002), is a more topical form that interprets the pattern.

I processed the second data type, observations, through coding, categorization, and pattern and theme sequence. The patterns and themes that I found were analyzed through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy. The third data type, artifacts, served as evidence for themes found in the interviews and observations. Artifact data received the same analysis procedure as interviews and observations. I categorized artifacts under types, themes and patterns.

Use of Theory in Data Collection and Analysis

The epistemological perspective, constructionism, which is embedded in CRP theory, influenced data analysis in this study (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Anfara and Mertz (2006) maintained that a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated

concepts that guide research. CRP theory informed the research questions and provided a lens to explain the results of the study. Erlandson et al. (1993) stated that a naturalistic study "relies on theory that emerges from the data (i.e., a posteriori) rather than precedes them (i.e., a priori)" (p. 50). In a later treatise on using theory in qualitative research, Harris (2015) clarified that theory can be used in a naturalistic study but should be used after initial analyses to help explain consequent emergent themes. Thus, CRP served as an ex post facto lens to explain interrelationships of themes that emerged during initial analytical coding and theming processes. CRP theory provided boundaries and structure to organize the themes.

All data collected were categorized in these three major themes: paradigms and philosophical approaches, engaging students and program norms. These themes were divided into subcategories based on patterns found in mindsets, practice, or norms. These subcategories were screened for tenets of each CRP principle. Figure 3 lists the tenets of each principle of CRP. Data analysis included an inspection for both typical and divergent practice of CRP principles.

Figure 3

The Five Principles of CRP and Their Tenets

Identity and Achievement:
Identity development
Cultural heritage
Multiple perspectives
Affirmation of diversity
Public validation of home-community cultures

Equity and Excellence
Dispositions
Incorporate multicultural curriculum content
Equal access
High Expectations for all

Developmental Appropriateness:
Learning styles
Teaching Styles
Cultural Variation in psycholgical needs
Motivation
Morale
Engagement
Collaboration

CRP

Teaching the Whole Child:
Skill development in cultural context
Bridge home, school and community
Learning outcomes
Supportive learning community
Empower students

Student Teacher Relationships:
Caring
Relationships
Interaction
Classroom atmosphere

Note. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by authors Brown-Jeffy & Coopers (2011) in Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature.

Trustworthiness

Erlandson et al. (1993) determined that establishing trustworthiness is vital to providing a foundation for a naturalistic inquiry. Moreover, the authors aligned with Lincoln and Guba (1985) in the claim that a qualitative study has a duty, by way of its paradigm, to respect the multiple realities experienced by participants, and honor and protect them from adverse effects of research (Erlandson et al., 1993). Table 3 lists procedures for ensuring trustworthiness in a naturalistic inquiry as guided by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 3

Trustworthiness Table for Naturalistic Inquiry

Technique	Results	Example
Prolonged Engagement	Build trust Develop rapport Build relationships Obtain wide scope of data Obtain accurate data	In the field from June 2020 to December 2020; follow up communication in January; avenues of communication: emails, appointments, and video teleconference.
Persistent Observation	Obtain in-depth data Obtain accurate data	Observation of several classes, rehearsals and performances.
Triangulation	Verify data	Multiple data sources: Interviews, class observations, documents, websites, performance observations and recordings of performances.
Referential Adequacy Materials	Provide context to support data analysis and	Collection of performance recordings, instruction

		interpretations	materials, curriculum documents and course communication documents
Peer Debriefing	Find alternative explanations	Received feedback on interview questions; discussed findings with peers; reviewed study with doctoral cohort member
Member Checking	Test interpretations	Participants received copies of transcripts to verify accuracy.
Reflexive Journal	Generate data and analysis	Memos following interviews and observations.
Thick Description	Use all five senses to give a detailed description of observation setting and dialogues	Reader is able to vividly picture the settings and details
Purposive Sampling	Gains maximum amount of data regarding the subject	Purposeful in the selection of a secondary choral music program that served a diverse student population
Audit Trail	Adequate record keeping Provide information on methods for data collection	Catalogued field notes and documents collected. Organized interviews and observations. Journaled throughout analysis

Limitations

This qualitative study relied to some extent on participants' ability to articulate their perceptions openly and honestly. Furthermore, the goal of this qualitative study is not to generalize to all teaching practices or settings. Having CRP as a heuristic may also be seen as a limitation of the study. To address this, an effort was made to allow themes and patterns to emerge first before using the CRP theory as a tool for analysis.

Summary of Chapter III

Chapter III presented the methodologies to be used to explore the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy by music educators. Strategies for gathering and analyzing data from choral music education settings were presented. My role as a researcher and potential bias were made transparent as they are connected to culturally responsive pedagogy. Finally, efforts to achieve trustworthiness in findings were indicated.

CHAPTER IV

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF NATURAL SETTING

This study explores how the natural setting of a selected choral class meets the needs of a diverse student population and enhances student engagement and cultural literacy. The setting of the choral music class is composed of several components, including repertoire, instructional practice, the instructor-conductor, performances, ensembles, classroom norms and rehearsals. Choral music learning and expression is not limited to designated rehearsal space in a school. Rather, choral music education can also occur at a competition location, on a school bus, in a park, on a football field, and even online. The natural setting of the secondary classroom is affected by its context and the worldviews and practices of its instructors.

This chapter offers a narrative description of a choral music program in a 6A division High School in Oklahoma. In this narrative, *classroom interludes* will portray vivid, real-life scenarios that illustrate pertinent themes and patterns found in the natural setting of the secondary choral classroom. The purpose of the classroom interludes is to place the reader in the setting in order to give a rich picture of each scenario.

The first section of this chapter explains the setting of the town, demographics and historical context of Enosburgh during the time of this study. The COVID-19 pandemic was a moderating factor in the natural setting of these secondary choral classrooms. In addition, students and teachers were working during a time of civil unrest. Both the pandemic and civil unrest had bearing on student engagement and student needs. Therefore, including both these social factors in the narrative was critical for setting the scene and painting a rich description of this learning environment.

The second section introduces the profiles of the two choral instructor-conductors, Eric and Verne. What follows is their worldviews and teaching philosophies, which are foundational to their practice. Engaging students was a recurring idea found in the data collection. Strategies for engaging students were categorized by relevance, student-centered learning, cultural competency, and relationships.

The final section explores the choral music program's norms for instruction, repertoire and performance. This part of the data presentation explores how the categories of engagement and cultural congruence explain norms revealed in this secondary choral program. Some of these are particular to the Enosburgh choral music program and others are general to the discipline of choral music education.

Enosburgh High School Choral Program: Town and School District Demographics

Enosburgh is located in northern Oklahoma more than 80 miles from two of the state's largest metropolitan areas. A drive in from southern Oklahoma provides the vista of massive wind turbines along a very rural route. The city has approximately 50,000 residents. The main industries are agriculture, oil and gas extraction, health care and social assistance, retrial trade, and manufacturing. At the time of this study, Enosburgh's

ethnic and racial population estimates were 79.3% White, 2.8% Black, 2.2% Native American, 14.6% Hispanic or Latin and 4.3% Pacific Islander (United States Census Bureau, 2019).

The Pacific Islander population is mostly Mountainese. The Mountainese migration to Enosburgh began through the Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreement in 1983, a program that compensated them for nuclear testing that was done on their native land after World War II. The COFA permitted Mountainese to live and work as "nonresident aliens" (Neal, 2018, p.). The Mountainese population is of particular interest as it has a specific role in the teaching practices, program and context of choral music education in this study. The Enosburgh school district is composed of almost one-half students of color. The high school student population is 10% Pacific Islander, 3% Native American, 23% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 4% Black, and 52 % White (Public School Review, n.d.).

The district provides financial resources for miscellaneous expenses for choral students such as meals and accommodation on contest trips and honor choir festivals. Moreover, the choral program is not reliant on fundraising for most of its expenses. The allotted budget for the choral program in the 2019-2020 school year was reported by the participants in this study to be approximately $24,000.

COVID-19 Context

Data collection for this study commenced during the summer of 2020. During this time, all of education went through major changes as the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 altered ways of life around the world. It affected some geographical regions more than others and some ethnic groups more than others. In the

wake of its havoc, COVID-19 shed light on the gaps in health and economics of citizens in the United States (Wilson, 2020). During shutdowns, educators had to resort to distance technology, which exposed the reality that all students did not have equal access to education through technology. Educators were forced to operate in a world that allowed for minimal in-person instructional opportunities in certain locations. Educators responded to a world culture that was in a desperate race to mitigate the spread of the virus. This world included families whose financial stability changed drastically in a matter of weeks. It included educators who were forced to work at home with young children nearby. This world also included teachers, parents, community members, and students with deep-seated fear of catching the virus.

Learning Modes

By July of 2020, school districts were in the midst of planning to expand learning options for students. Students were offered virtual, blended, and traditional learning modes. These options were opened to capture the mass exodus of families from public education due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19. The mode for students in the traditional learning option changed during the time frame of this study. Table 4 is the timeline and the mode of learning that was implemented in the Enosburgh Public Schools as a result of the spread of COVID-19 in its county.

Table 4

Learning Mode for Enosburgh High School Students in 2020-2021 School Year

Date	Mode for In-Person Students
August 17	In person learning for students who selected traditional/blended mode.
November 16	Remote learning for all students
January 5	In person learning for students who selected traditional/blended mode.

Note. Start date of learning modes for in-person students during time of study.

Choral Music Changes Due to COVID-19

COVID-19 changed the choral music classroom significantly. Rehearsal spaces changed. Norms for the rehearsal format changed. In many cases, content and curriculums were altered (I'm A Choir Director, n.d.). Choral directors prepared to teach with students physically distanced in classes that often were double in size compared to core curricular classes to mitigate spread. Singing with masks became a recommendation (Hertzberg et al., 2020). Instructor-conductors tried to understand how these adjustments would affect the choral sound, instruction, and the overall setting of the choral music classroom (Nix et al., 2020). The collective emotions of choral music instructors ranged from anxiety and despair to hope and determination. Some choral educators seemed fearful about the stability of their profession and artform (I'm A Choir Director, n.d.) Compounding this concern was the news that singers and wind players were considered "super-spreaders" of COVID-19 (Naunheim et al., 2020). Many considered use of other spaces in facilities such as cafeterias, auditoriums, or outdoors. Other considerations for choral music instruction included expanding non-singing music learning activities such as

music theory or playing other instruments (I'm A Choir Direcotor, n.d.; T. Wynn, personal communication, August, 2020).

The International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study became a source for music educators to find safer parameters for teaching during the pandemic (Hertzberg et al., 2020). It conducted a study that measured the emissions of aerosols from wind instruments including the human voice. The study was deemed important due to the fact that "aerosol generating activities have the potential to transmit COVID-19" (Hertzberg et al., 2020). The study findings in Figure 4 are relevant to this research as the recommendations were implemented by the participants.

Figure 4

Measures of Aerosols During Soprano Singing
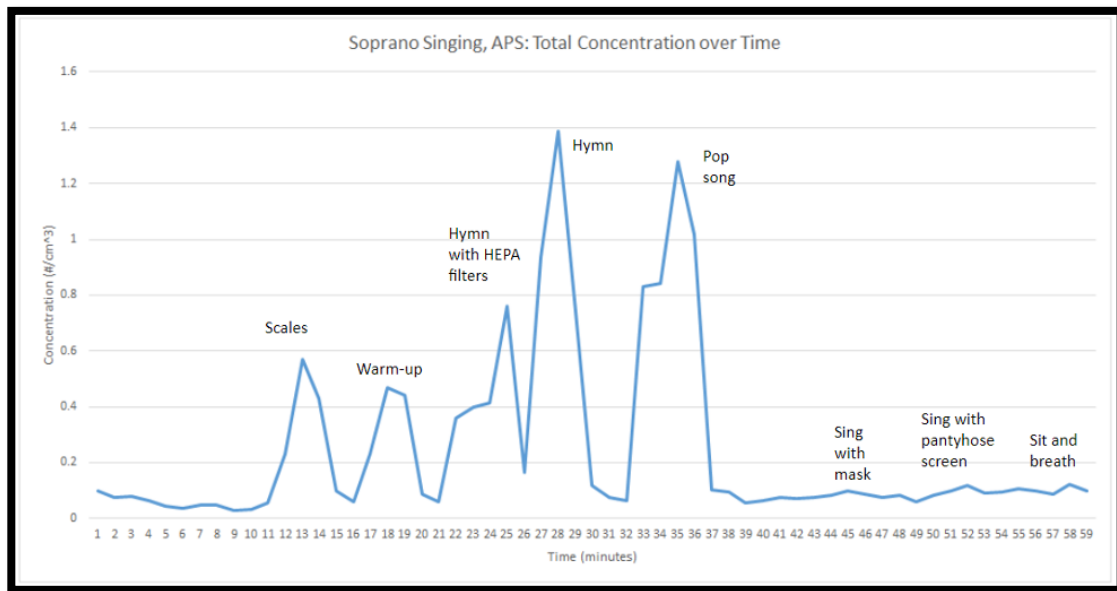
Note. Aerodynamic Particle Sizer spectrometer (APS) of a soprano singing over time
(Hertzberg et al., 2020). Reprinted from *International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study, Round 2. https://www.nfhs.org/media/4030003/aerosol-study-prelim-results-round-2-final.pdf*

Recommendations from the study that applied to choral music settings included:

- Following CDC guidance for 6-foot distancing

- Use of masks

- 30-minute rehearsal times

- Use of indoor air filtration

- Hand sanitizer available

Civil Unrest and Political Climate Context

After the COVID-19 outbreak was officially categorized as a worldwide pandemic, the U.S. encountered another major event. On May 25, 2020, a video of the arrest and murder of 46-year-old George Floyd, taken by a bystander went viral. Floyd died in police custody as a result of a Minneapolis police officer's knee on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds as Floyd repeatedly cried out, "I can't breathe" (Minnesota Judicial Branch, 2020, p.1). Protest and unrest followed in cities across the U.S. and abroad (CNN World, 2020).

The year of 2020 was also a presidential election year. The school year opened with one of the most polarized presidential campaigns in U.S. history. Many Americans considered issues of the pandemic, the national economy and racial unrest on the ballot as they turned out in record numbers to vote. This study explores the response of members of a secondary choral music education setting to these events and how their attitudes are reflected in their practice.

Participants

Eric

Eric's experience with choral singing has been anchored by his love for singing in elementary school. Although he did not sing in junior high, he picked up singing again in high school. His high school choral experiences were affirming. Two choir trips to Europe and making All-State choir were pivotal in his understanding of what a student should experience in a choral music program. His father is Verne, the other participant in this study. Eric was exposed to the choral music education community in Oklahoma during his youth via his father, a choir teacher and musician. Eric has been a choral director for eight years. His career at Enosburgh has spanned four and one-half years.

Verne

Verne is the senior choral director of the Enosburgh High School choral program. He has taught choral music at Enosburgh for 32 years. Before that, he spent three years in another district. He has worked with his son for the last four and one-half years. A native to Enosburgh, he is known within the community for the many ways he serves. His voice is recognizable as the announcer at school sporting events. He has also driven a bus for the district for five years. His earliest experiences with singing were on family road trips singing along to the radio and in children's church choirs. Verne extended his music studies to include trombone, guitar, and piano. In high school, Verne sang in choir and played in concert band and jazz band. Verne achieved All-State Choir Honors and was drum major for the band. He pursued both interests in college but eventually chose choral music as a focus.

Paradigmatic and Philosophical Approaches

Paradigm of "Choir = Diversity"

To Eric, the art form of choir itself is multicultural. He describes his paradigm of choral singing as an eclectic artform resulting from music that he studied and cultures that he came in contact with during his own choral singing. Eric enjoyed his experiences with travelling and singing abroad so much that he has taken other students on the Ambassador's Choral Trip to Europe three times. In Eric's experience, the most beautiful choirs were made up of singers who were of diverse backgrounds.

> I think travelling abroad and seeing other cultures and getting to sing in those other cultures is something that connects you more to music. Choir to me is diversity. Choir is universal, where in one setting, in one stage performance, a choir could perform a Western music piece followed by a piece from Africa, followed by a piece from Italy.

> I think the choir is best when it's not one culture. There are places in the world where you have one culture, you have one set of community of people. But I think it's so much better when you have so many different diverse human beings … that they can actually elaborate on the different cultures of the music. (Eric)

Eric's perception of choir being "diversity" is seen in his views of the Diversity Choir. The Diversity Choir, an ensemble which was created to cultivate the talents of the Mountainese students at Enosburgh, is made up of mostly Mountainese students. According to Eric, it is the least diverse choir in the program. "I don't love that it is one class and one culture," he said. He mentioned that the program could benefit from these students being incorporated more into the entire program, and that the Mountainese

students would be better served. He expressed that the Diversity Choir had outgrown the purpose in which it was created. He cited an example of an outstanding Mountainese student singer who was persuaded into joining the competitive Concert Choir after which this student "fell in love with the different types of people."

> I wish I could get the [Mountainese] community as a whole to get more incorporated into [the choral program]. There's a lot of people in the community that love that group because they are more successful at that than maybe other Western civilizations things, but as a whole it's hard for them to go to contest because of eligibility. So, it's really hard for … them to succeed more. I feel like the top kids in there get frustrated. (Eric)

Positionality and Efficacy

> I'm a middle-class white male. It's nothing I could say to a roomful of 70 Mountainese kids about understanding what they go through, understanding their culture. I can learn as much as I can about it but I'm [limited]. (Eric)

Eric recognizes his position in reference to all of his students. His exposure to cohorts in college, travel abroad, and interaction with his own students reinforced his understanding that his perspective is different than those of his students. His interview demonstrated a deference to cultural norms that may alter traditional choral classroom norms. An example of this is playing and singing the parts several times and waiting for memorization rather than music reading.

Eric referenced his limitations regarding teaching the Mountainese and other underrepresented students. He cites experiences where he would like to include different cultural traditions of music, however, he is reliant on notation. His training involved

teaching students and preparing them to perform music that has been scored or transcribed. He is aware that the oral music traditions of his Mountainese students enable them to make music that he cannot see on notation. Although he would like to include more of their traditions in his practice, he is conscious of this barrier. He makes an effort to overcome this barrier by doing what he calls "cheating," in which he finds music that the students related to but was notated. For example, music from the Disney movie *Moana* seemed to connect to many of the Mountainese students. The language and the music, although not their native island music, was similar and seemed natural to them.

Verne acknowledged his perspective as different from many of his students. He shared that he grew up in a house with two parents. His youth was "kind of easy" and "kind of privileged." He went on to say, "Some of these kids are moved from another country, thrown into a school system. I couldn't have done that if I was thrown into Germany or Spain … I didn't have to grow up that way."

Verne was reflective about his generation of teachers and the generation behind him. He spoke about how his generation had a tendency to pick repertoire that they were comfortable with and that they had done in the past. He acknowledged that many tend to choose music that isn't exciting or engaging. He was cognizant that his son and co-teacher, Eric, may appear to choose music that was "kind of fresh." Verne spoke of how his son may push boundaries of what is considered competition music.

> One of the judges did say, "Be careful when you're having a good time up there."
> I think he was well aware [of the quality of our work] ... We did it so well that he
> didn't have a choice [but to score us highly]. Eric picks stuff that I haven't heard
> of yet...so fresh or newer, more challenging. (Verne)

Understanding Students

Both Eric and Verne's efficacy as teachers is predicated on their intentionality in learning about the culture of their students. Eric has spent time learning about the cultural norms of his students whose families originated in the Mountainese Islands. This group makes up at least 10% of the students in the choral program. In an interview, Eric spoke of what he has heard Mountainese refer to as "island time." This is a leisurely regard to promptness and deadlines. He also explained that students may live in households with large extended families who are visiting for lengthy periods of time or just living together. Additionally, religious events could last several hours.

> Church could be like eight hours. They could start at 7 p.m., and the kids will be falling asleep, and we'll be like what's going on and the kid will be like, "I got out of church at like 4 a.m. "I'm like WHAT? No wonder you can't stay awake! I wouldn't be awake either." It's those types of different kinds of [cultural norms]. But that is their culture. That is where they came from and they might not have school the next day after they have a big community church session. It just might not happen. (Eric)

Eric has learned that many of the students who migrate to the U.S. from the Mountainese Islands may not have actually attended school. He studied their history and even the terrain of the Mountainese Islands. He is fascinated by the musicality of the Mountainese whose singing traditions run deep in their culture.

> The best I could equate it to is … Gaelic music. Sometimes it's very ornamental with lots of harmonies. It's almost hard to replicate unless you know what you're

doing. They are so good at hearing that they will create their own harmonies.

(Eric)

Eric has learned that his Mountainese students are accustomed to matriarchs. In the Diversity Choir, with its large Mountainese membership, a female is often the leader.

Furthermore, Eric noted a tendency for the Mountainese students to wait for total mastery before singing out. He explained that they are taught not to disrespect their family with "wrong answers." He contrasted this mindset with Western choral traditions which ask students to sing out even when incorrect so that the choir director can help them correct the notes. He explained that this makes getting them to read music a challenge.

> [They are] coming from spending most of their childhood ear-based. You'll notice in the classroom; I'll play something 4 times and sing it for them and nothing is happening. Nothing. It will be like no one is singing. And then the fifth time, all of a sudden, you'll hear it and you'll be like, okay. They are not reading it. They're just waiting… to memorize it and hear it. So, if they have something to say and it's wrong, they are taught to look down and not say anything at all. So, in music making it goes likewise. If they can't do it right, they're not going to do it. (Eric)

Although Eric has noticed patterns of behavior within the Mountainese culture, he appears to make an effort to not overgeneralize.

> I don't want to do what some people do and lump them into a category of "just because they are Mountainese they can sing or just because they are Mountainese, they are good at music." Which is not true. But music is a big part of their culture,

so a lot of them are more comfortable with it. A lot of people get that confused.

That just because they are doing it all of the time makes them better. I think

sometimes Mountainese kids get thrown into choir and they don't enjoy it because

they don't like making music. Just because they're Mountainese people think that

because it's a big part of their culture that they should do it. But those that love it

are more musically inclined through ear-based learning. (Eric)

Eric has studied power dynamics of the Mountainese community that play out in his

classroom.

There were certain leaders those first couple of years, who almost would police

the room. It was really kind of weird to come into. There were students who

would, if a student was slacking or like sitting over in a chair or if a student

wasn't participating, they would snap at each other and police the room

themselves. It's not like any one family can step out and do it. It has to be from

one of the prominent families in the community. Unless we have one of those kids

whose family is prominent and willing to snap at kids, there is a certain lackluster

about it. (Eric)

Verne understands the cultural dynamics of his students and responds to each

choir section accordingly. He referenced the idea of rolling with a somewhat "rowdy"

dynamic that can be inherent in the men's choir. The energy and chatter of the Tenor-bass

choir can be higher than the other ensembles. He considers this quality a characteristic of

the male gendered ensemble and works to channel the energy rather than minimize it. He

observes which students are friends and monitors this and their abilities. "That's probably

the wildest class. They come together. They sing. We're getting it done, so you've got to know… the crowd that you're working [with]," he said.

Verne's awareness of the Mountainese tradition of having a relaxed relationship with time is demonstrated in the grace and accommodation extended to students arriving after class has begun.

> *{Classroom Interlude 1.}* Eric prepared to lead an ensemble recording of the rhythm assignment. He sang the *Jeopardy* television show theme song as students prepared their recording devices. At this point, several students walked in late.
>
> Eric: "Welcome! Welcome"
>
> Verne: "Walk of shame, but we love you anyway!"
>
> After several minutes passed, another student comes in late and is greeted with a hearty "Welcome! Welcome." (End of classroom interlude)

Expectations

"If it's worth us meeting together, then why shouldn't we make it the best that we can make it?" This quote illustrates the paradigm of Verne's teaching philosophy. He coaches the students to do their best daily. He understands that the students who come through his door run the gamut from those who are "on the edge of their chair and respond instantly" to others who may seem indifferent. He knows that some may be drawn to the class to make music for music's sake and others may come because they have heard his voice at the football game or they have heard about his personality. Verne believes in gathering those students wherever they are and challenging them to work together towards a goal of excellence.

Verne continuously monitors for student engagement in his classroom. He spoke

of making sure that students who seem to have the least experience and skill are

participating. When students arrive sick, he asks them to look like they are singing.

"Don't just get out your book or phone." Furthermore, he mentioned that the district has a

learning mindset that involves differentiating instruction. Educational leaders in their

district encourage teachers to be mindful of students who struggle to remain engaged.

Verne's teaching style exerts a balance that swings between grace, meeting

students where they are, and high expectations based on excellence in tradition. The

choral program has a yearly participation average of 360 students. With the highest

enrollment in the school, the instructors have the luxury of being firm with expectations.

Students understand that there are daily behavioral norms and class procedures.

We're always going to do these 15-minute warm ups. We're going to follow it

with sight reading. We're going to sing. If this is what you like, [great!]. If you

don't like it, it's okay. You can switch your schedule. You've got a week or two.

Most of them are looking around like, "I don't want to switch. I kind of like this."

Most of them are that way. So, we use that to our advantage that we have so

many. (Verne)

At this point in his tenure, Verne is not concerned about retention. Rather, he was

in a position which allowed him to use the choir's success as a recruitment tool and a

means to cultivate a culture of abided expectations. He noted that students who opted to

drop other electives often chose choir.

Eric acknowledged the tendency of some community members to lower

expectations for the Mountainese students. He seemed to be wrestling with the

dissonance of trying to hold expectations for these students and with a community that was "over the moon" with them "just doing *something*." Moreover, the choral world expects certain aesthetics and these may not always be met in a classroom by a teacher who is recruiting the cultural and ethnic diversity that these students bring. Eric expressed that a choral director who does such has to walk a fine line. Yet, he stated that he felt sad that "the community doesn't know as much about their culture." He experiences a push and pull between the goals of showcasing the innate cultural beauties of the cultures within the choir and bringing them to the standards of traditional (Western) choral singing.

Engaging Students

Relevancy

The connections between student lives and the choir are nurtured whenever possible. Both directors have a purpose of enriching students' lives that extends beyond the building of the choral program or their careers. Doing so, fosters student engagement in the classroom and student ownership of the choral program.

Life Skills and Choir

Eric spoke of utilizing the choral classroom setting to do more than teach music skills and prepare students for performances and contests. He articulated a purpose that extended beyond notes and vocal technique, yet were woven into the content and curriculum. He explained his philosophy for teaching music as using choir as "more of an example of how to live life." He noted that the more advanced the group, the easier it is to teach life lessons. Eric spoke of the benefit of teaching a subject that is not

standardized tested and the freedom it brings him to incorporate learning and growth for the whole student.

> I do a lot of lessons over mindfulness. I do a lot of lessons over thankfulness. And then I [ask] "how much effort are you giving in what you do every day and does it change from activity to activity? Why does it change?" So that's really my teaching philosophy now. It's providing those opportunities, providing experiences for success and then really just adding in those small life moments because I don't have to teach to a test. This would be a scenario: A kid comes in and they are having a bad day. I'd always just say name one thing you're thankful for. And they'd sit there and think and I'm like there's got to be something. They can always come up with one thing. And it kind of gets them back in an attitude of here's why I'm doing okay or here's why I'm thankful, rather than focusing on all the bad. (Eric)

Eric's practice of mindfulness and thankfulness is connected to his cultivating a culture of success in the choral program. The attitude he worked to promote is one of an expectation of something good.

> I almost had to teach them how to win or how to be proud. Enosburgh does a lot of good. One thing bad is … school spirit. We have absolutely no school spirit. And most people would say that probably relates to your basketball and football team because those are the most public. Our football team was 0-10 last year. So, a lot of people equate school spirit to that, but it leaks into your classroom. So, I think …we gave students success. I think that drew on every type of kid. A kid

wants to feel successful and wants to have a good time. Every type of kid longs

for success. (Eric)

The Enosburgh choral program provides an annual opportunity for students to

learn about a nearby college that offers choral activities on the university campus:

{Classroom Interlude 2.} A guest from the university arrived and spoke about

how choir can be a refuge for students during the year. He shared his own

experiences as a choir student and talked with students about planning for their

future. He informed them of a $600 scholarship that would be offered to students

who sing in the university choir and that if they attend a recruiting day event, the

admission fee is waived. He gave students guidelines to use when choosing a

college. He was candid about the small-town location of the university and gave

them comparisons for college settings. Continuing, he briefly explained the reality

of the cost of higher education. The guest's visit concluded with the choir students

singing two All-State pieces along with the university guest. Students were given

a chance to individually ask questions and were given a pass to their next class

when the question-and-answer session extended past the class period. This stop

was an important one on the university guest's recruitment tour as the Enosburgh

choral program has a reputation for cultivating good singers. Before leaving, the

guest commended the Enosburgh choir program for "an authentic combination of

rigor, community, relationships, fun and humor. (End of classroom interlude)

Current Events and Choir

Verne and Eric both revealed how each of them processed the social events and

climate of the time, and what plans were or were not in place to help them and their

students navigate during this season. Verne commented that the Black Lives Matter Movement, whether-to-wear-masks debate, and presidential candidates were all politically divisive subjects:

> It's so divided, that I don't see how you talk about that in an educational setting. We're singing about love and inclusion. I think everybody wants to be loved and included no matter what side you think you're on. (Verne)

Eric also revealed:

> I don't remember who quoted … "Music gives life to words that can't be thought of" or whatever or something like that. I think the best guide through this situation is providing music that allows kids to develop their thoughts with its meaningful words and poems and songs ... just opening them up to … a different way of thinking or listening to their classmates talk about how they feel about a subject. You can teach in a choir room [that] you don't have to agree with something someone says but you have to respect what they say. (Eric)

Student-Centered Learning

Student-centered learning was practice in at least two ways. The first was a focus on current student needs in decision making. This was demonstrated in the response to the pandemic. The second element involved instruction that was guided by students. Both elements create buy-in from the choral students.

Addressing Learning During Pandemic

Verne spoke of the need for music in students' lives especially during this time. He expressed a desire to be intentional with repertoire selection.

I'm just thinking[about] songs with good meaning right now ... just something that

maybe the words have extra meaning right now. I think we can just [do] music that

will touch their heart or their minds a bit more, yet let them grow musically.

(Verne)

Eric presumed that the distancing and masks would impact the confidence and

overall choir sound in classes. He realized that his style and methods were going to

change in the upcoming months. He planned to choose music that was less rigorous than

that which he had chosen in the past.

But definitely not a dumbed down version … but [we'll do music that is] more

meaningful and impactful. We have the opportunity now to slow down and really

teach maybe what is more important than what we normally do. (Eric)

Student Leadership and Group Learning

The audition prerequisite for Jazz Choir facilitates an ensemble who has many

basic skills for teaching and learning music. Group work and student leadership is

possible as students delve into more complex repertoire.

{Classroom Interlude 3.} It was the last hour of the school day before the

weekend in Jazz Choir. There were 15 students present. Eric began the rehearsal

by playing out parts for "Santa Baby." The students were spread out around the

choir room. As they rehearsed the piece, they struggled at one point. Eric stopped

and played a recording of the piece. Then he directed the students to section off

by part. They moved to different places in the room, some to the floor in a circle,

some to the office, some to the risers, some near the piano in chairs, others to a

practice room. They began to work through their parts on their own. "Use all of

your tools," Eric directed. The alto section was the group on the floor in a circle. One of the students led this sectional. As she led, another interjected, "That is a half-step not a whole step." (End of classroom interlude)

Cultural Competency

Eric and Verne embody the idea that cultural competency is a measure of fluency in a culture other than one's own. Their efforts to understand the backgrounds of their students demonstrate cultural competency. Eric speculated that the changes that the pandemic would bring to teaching choral music would allow for more of an opportunity to "egg out more cultural diversity and find a middle ground."

Eric and Verne make efforts to engage students with study and performance of a variety of repertoire that connects to students' cultures and helps them to explore other cultures. Table 5 is a list of repertoire rehearsed by ensembles in the Enosburgh choral program for the Fall 2020 season.

Table 5

Enosburgh Choral Program Fall Repertoire

Ensemble	Repertoire
All Choirs	Peace Peace, *arr. Fred Bock* Carol of the Bells*, arr. Peter Wilhousky* Glow *by Eric Whitacre* Mary Sat A-Rockin', *arr. Greg Gilpin* African Noel, *Arr. Benjamin Harlan* **Traditional Carols:** Angels We Have Heard on High Hark the Herald Angels Sing Joy to The World We Wish You A Merry Christmas
Show Choir	Baby It's Cold Outside*, arr. Frank Loesser* All I Want for Christmas Is You, *arr. Mac Huff*
Tenor-Bass	The Morning Trumpet, *arr. Mack Wilberg* How Can I Keep from Singing, *by Gwyneth Walker*
Treble	No Time, *arr. Susan Brumfield* My Favorite Things, *arr. Mitos Andaya* (Samba)
Jazz Choir	Santa Baby, *arr. Andy Beck* Wanting Memories, *by Sweet Honey on the Rock*
Concert Choir	I Love You, What A Wonderful World, arr. *Craig Hella Johnson* It Takes a Whole Village, Joan Szymko *Great God Almighty, *arr Stacey V. Gibbs* *Die Onse Vader by *Zander Fick* *Awake the Trumpets by *G.F. Handel* *Kyrie, Tomás Luis deVictoria **Joy *by Hans Bridger Heruth*

Note: This a list of repertoire pieces of the Ensoburgh Choral program for the Fall 2020

season. *Denotes audition pieces for OkMEA Honor Choir. **Joy was also part of the

repertoire of 9th Grade Treble Choir. 9th Grade Treble learned music in "all choirs"

repertoire list .

> If you set out to find those culturally diverse pieces, you find that kids connect
>
> and that music brings about a spark in [a diverse group of students]. Don't stick
>
> [to] one type of music. You have the opportunity to branch out and show the kids
>
> different parts of the world and then you have the chance to rope different kids in
>
> and let them share their experiences. (Eric)

Another important engagement tool used by Verne is scaffolding. He described a

couple of cases where repertoire chosen was based on the student's own experiences or

connections.

> I got them to actually sing the Mountainese National Anthem. And we've sung it
>
> at a few concerts. I found some [notated] music but they did it differently, so I just
>
> went with the way they did it. In some of our concerts we start with the national
>
> anthem. They (Diversity Choir])started [with] the American National Anthem and
>
> [afterward] I [told] the audience, "Would you please remain standing as they sing
>
> the Mountainese National Anthem." Both flags [were] on the stage and they sang
>
> the Mountainese National Anthem. I did it because I felt like, you know, maybe
>
> they were bending backwards for this old white guy to sing my national anthem.
>
> Not all of them, maybe, are Americans at this minute. So, we did theirs out of
>
> respect for their culture, you know, to stand there with them. (Verne) .

Verne is attuned to the tendency of students needing to move their bodies to

facilitate learning the music and overall engagement. A daily drill is singing the major

scale in solfège while using *Curwen/Glover* hand symbols developed by Zoltan Kodály to

help students assign a physical placement to a vocal pitch (Bowyer, 2015). Figure 5

illustrates hand signs that are assigned to syllables. Verne emphasizes the need for each

student to move their hand up and down with the pitch regardless of accuracy of the hand

symbols. The movement not only keeps them engaged but also allows Verne to quickly

assess where individual students are in their understanding.

Figure 5

Curwen/Glover Hand Signs
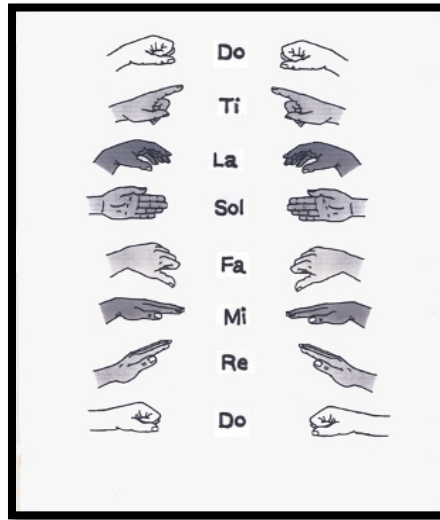
Note. Curwen/Glover solfège system and hand signs, developed by Zoltan Kodály to help

students assign a physical placement to a vocal pitch. Pinterest. Reprinted from

https://images.app.goo.gl/LDzXeDGa9XkHXGMw8

Cultural competency in practice involves expanding on tacit knowledge of

students to build connections between culture and new content. Classroom Interlude 4

illustrates this practice. Students had the opportunity to expand experience with a

Broadway musical and their knowledge of a pop tune.

{Classroom Interlude 4.} The next piece for this ensemble's rehearsal was a

samba version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things." This song,

from the musical The Sound of Music is recognizable to many in its own right. However, the tune is also familiar to this generation as a sample in the Ariana Grande hit song "7 Rings." The Mitos Andaya version of "My Favorite Things" is full of dissonant harmonies. Figure 6 illustrates the dissonance in voices and piano. Eric broke it down for the students by chunking, working small sections at a time. The students were learning new concepts and skills as they experienced that which was familiar. (End of classroom interlude)

Figure 6

"My Favorite Things"

Note. Section of "My Favorite Things," *arr. By Mitos Andaya* for SSAA.

"What Is Choir to You?" was the title of an assignment for students in the choral program. The specific question -- "What have you learned about cultures that are different from your own in choir class?"-- presented information about cultural literacy that was cultivated in the choral program (Student Responses, 2020). This assignment was done early in the fall semester. It was noted that several new students who were new to choir, primarily ninth graders, responded to this question saying that they had not had

the opportunity to learn much yet about other cultures. However, students who had one or more years of experience had a variety of conclusions about choir and exposure to diversity. Here are some examples:

- Each one deals with their struggles but, this will sound cheesy: with the power of music, they push through all odds.

- I have learned that music unites everyone. Having so many different cultures in choir makes us feel like even more of a team, something powerful that is uniting [Enosburgh].

- No matter where people come from or look like we can all make music together and it will sound amazing.

- I learned about the different types of music that people would play all around the world and how they can make a simple song beautiful and different from others.

- We sang in German for the first half of "Silent Night" and I was surprised because with the words you had to say, the end of it sounded clear.

- The dominant culture I've learned about was the Black American culture and their hardships before, during, and after civil war.

- We've sung music from different cultures and it has opened my eyes to different music around the world. (Student Responses, 2020)

Care and Relationships

The choir instructors were concerned about the effects of the pandemic on students and their families. To protect everyone from the virus, they turned their attention to what they could do in their classroom. They would adhere to the 30-minute singing

limit and put in air filtering machines that cycle approximately five times per hour. After measuring their classroom, they determined that they could fit approximately 31 chairs for students that were spaced six feet apart. They collaborated with physical education staff to use the gymnasium when student numbers exceeded the classroom capacity. Music purchases were planned to be digital so that students could view on their devices. This would reduce handling and sharing of materials. Previously, grades for students would include a class participation grade and one online assignment per week. In this season, the district required that learning be managed online. The choir directors planned to have four online assignments of which students could choose two that were due weekly. Verne and Eric planned to limit live performances. They reported that their district was concerned with the 1,000 plus audiences that their concerts typically attract. Eric said, "Basically, if we're (students) in class and singing, it's a cherry on top this year."

Verne expounded by saying that they informed students that plans could change and that any current plan was for the present. In doing so, they prepared students for the many ways that inconsistency would affect their lives. He expressed hope that the last few months of the year things would change. However, if virtual performances were to be the only mode of performance, they were willing to make the adjustment and make those happen. Verne also noted that because singing time in rehearsals would be limited, it would give them a chance to help students develop other music skills. Both Eric and Verne looked for opportunities to enrich their students' choral music education in the pandemic.

Care for students was supported by the district. The district made efforts to give all students access to technology. Pre-K through high school students were issued Chromebooks. Students received internet hot spots made available through a grant from a national service provider. In addition, the district provided extra personal protective equipment for the choral program. The choral directors felt that their district administrators trusted them to do their job well and provided support for them to do so. They cited the example of the district purchasing the three HEPA air filters at approximately $600 each. Figure 7 is a picture of one of the two air filter machines that were purchased by the district. In a normal year, the district provides the EPS choral program a budget of $24,000. Verne reported that the choir department budget was cut to $17,000 due to the pandemic. He said that he did not perceive that as a problem as they did not anticipate their biggest annual expense: contest.

Figure 7

Air Filtering Machine

Note. Air Filtering Machine. One of two in the classroom for the purpose of filtering viruses and bacteria from the air.

{Classroom Interlude 5.} There is a hum from the air filter. There were two that were placed in the classroom. One was by the piano at the front of the class. The

other was on the risers near the chairs and toward the back right side facing the front piano. (End of classroom interlude)

Eric and Verne demonstrate care in the classroom in different ways. Eric teaches with mannerisms that resemble an athletic coach. He encourages students with praise, yet pushes them to dig into the challenge of the moment. Verne's teaching style is also peppered with praise, yet differs from Eric's coaching style in that it has a nurturing component that is parental in tone. Both styles affect the classroom climate, engage students and demonstrate care beyond the classroom.

{Classroom Interlude 6.} There were 21 boys in this class on this day. As they near rehearsal singing time, Eric praised them. "You guys sounded good yesterday. Keep it up today." It was finally time to sing. "Alright, boys! Phones up, masks up, devices up, earphones out." They began vocalizing as Eric used full coaching style rhetoric. Verne reminded them to use good singing posture:

"Breathe! Come on!"

"Good, men. Keep going."

"That's what I'm talking about! Shape your mouth."

The men clearly enjoy the camaraderie of this class. There was a balance of connection with students and developing the singing craft. They followed along with a recording of "How Can I Keep from Singing" by Gwyneth Walker. Eric did an assessment of the group's mastery level and made a plan for a sectional for the next rehearsal day.

Class ended and conversations began again as Eric wished them a safe weekend.

Verne is heard saying, "I love you man."

"Keep your grades up."

"Do your homework."

A student is heard asking, "Am I doing better?" "You are!" Verne replied. (End of classroom interlude)

Verne seizes moments to have personal conversation with students throughout the day, doing so seamlessly in and out of class.

{Classroom Interlude 7.} As Verne took attendance, he would often stop to ask students specific questions.

"James, where's your sister?" "Is she at home?"

"Did you get your assignment done?"

"Is your Chromebook working now?"

A student walked in after the bell had rung. "How are you doing?" Verne asked. "Did you get caught in the crowd out there?" referring to the large group of students waiting in the hallway. (End of classroom interlude)

Before a show choir rehearsal, Verne and one of the students discussed their experiences with COVID-19. Both of them had previously caught the virus. The student explained that he became "super sick," and had symptoms, but tested negative the first two times. The experiences of the pandemic were relevant and the students needed to process them. This conversation with a student ended and another began as a student came in and announced to Verne, "I went shopping during lunch!" He asked her how she was able to leave. "When I was in school, we kind of had to go to class all day," he remarked.

Verne also utilizes humor to connect with students and engage them. The humor seemed to endear the students to him and make the class enjoyable. Below are some memorable moments of Verne's humor during observation:

- Verne finished the attendance, while noticing that one of the students did not have his mask on properly. "Cover your face, LJ. You're a beautiful man. But, cover it."

- "A lot of you got it! I don't know if you have ESPN, or whatever. But you were getting it…." This was Verne's response when students show quick mastery of a rhythm exercise.

- When students 'enthusiasm caused them to begin too quickly after the piano introduction of a warmup, Verne responded "Now wait a minute. I want to hear myself play!"

Furthermore, lightheartedness was often a part of the culture of rehearsals.

> *{Classroom Interlude 8.}* As they came to the text, "following that yonder star" they encountered some pitch issues. It was decided to focus on the tenor part. Basses were told to "look good" for a moment by Verne. Eric suggested to tenors that they slow it down to "tempo de learno." This colloquialism was used in class by Eric and Verne several times to describe taking music at a pace conducive for learning rather than the tempo for performance.
>
> "Hold your music *not* in front of your face as much as I'd like you to cover it."

A student was heard saying, "Ah, ouch." The jabs between students and instructor made their mutual respect palpable. (End of classroom interlude)

Verne conceded that part of the job of a teacher is to "do some things that the parents are not doing…. Not that they are not good parents. But you've got to cover all of that." Verne is the father of four grown children and considers his work with students an extension of the care that he gives his own children. "I think [it's important to] just care for them a lot and let them know, you're going to make [them] do this until [they] do it right." He expressed the importance of telling them that he loved them and that was the motive for the high expectations and class's rigor.

Students indicated that the mix of humor, care and hard work in the class was appreciated. Moreover, the approaches seemed to deepen their connections to both instructors and their fellow classmates. Below are student responses in the assignment, "What Is Choir to You?" that mentioned relationships with teachers and peers.

- I have THE BEST choir teachers ever. They care so much about their groups and their students. And because of that, the other students care and we all want to work hard to be the best we can be.
- The teachers, they push their students to be better every day.
- The teachers make it fun.
- I enjoy the teachers/directors because they are fun but I still learn so much. I also enjoy being with my friends.
- I really enjoy making beautiful music with [Eric and Verne] and I enjoy their positive and fun attitudes.

Several students mentioned being a part of a community, that being with friends and relationships was what they most enjoyed.

- I love the fact that we are all a family even though we are from different backgrounds

- I enjoy the bonds that choir creates for me and the opportunities it gives me! I'm a 2 year All-State [member] and I've never been prouder of myself.

- I like being a part of something and coming together to sing.

- I enjoy the relationships I get with the other students but also the relationship I've built with my choir teacher. And the music is fun too.

- I love being a choir student because it's just like one big family! Each year, it's just like a big happy family and it's so much fun.

- I enjoy the environment, the feeling that we are a family, and the variety of music we sing each year. I like the fact that we can rely on one another. (Student Responses, 2020)

Student life and triumphs outside of school were celebrated in the choral classroom setting. After the Jazz Choir class ended, Eric announced to the students that a student who identified as non-binary had successfully been able to legally change their name. The class erupted in a loud cheer. On another occasion Verne praised a student athlete for the student's accomplishments. In yet another moment, Eric announced a fundraiser for the wrestling team.

Program Norms

There are several norms that make up the choral program at Enosburgh High School including assignments, collaborations, ensemble types and performances. Most of these are traditional and are similar to those in other 6A districts. Although adjusted for the pandemic, each norm served to engage students in learning.

Assignments: A Progression of Knowledge and Skills

With the move to distance learning in the spring of 2020, public schools moved to online LMSs (Learning Management Systems). Enosburgh adopted Google Classroom as their LMS for their secondary schools. Students in the Enosburgh choral program had the option of doing two out of four assignment types online weekly. Music Theory and Aural Skills/Piano were chosen the most by students out of the four options. Each week, the instructor posted three to four options in Google Classroom. Each of these assignments keyed on a different music skill. The choice of assignments gave students agency in their learning. Aural skills, music theory and sight reading progressed from basic to intermediate for all students. This helped to capture those students with minimal music reading abilities while also reinforcing skills for advanced students.

Aural Skills and Piano

Aural skills and piano works on the listening and hearing skills that develop musicality and understanding of music. Introductory assignments involved students learning to hear and see major and minor chord structure and intervals. The chords were displayed on the musical staff, on a piano keyboard and played so that distinct color and sound of each type of chord or interval was heard. In week seven major, minor and pentatonic scales were introduced. To show mastery, students were required to identify

the sound of the major, natural minor and pentatonic scales. Basic chords, scales and intervals progressed to more complex music theory as the semester progressed. Most of the *aural skills and piano* lessons were introduced by Eric using video messaging software, Loom. A video of Eric speaking through the lesson played as the student observed his computer screen. Using Loom served as an engagement strategy that kept the human connection in online instruction. After viewing the lesson, the student was required to take a short quiz called a "challenge" on musictheory.net. The students recorded their score and submitted to Google Classroom.

Music Theory

Music theory is the next category students could choose as one of the two assignments per week. With the help of the musictheory.net program, students were introduced to music reading language. Week one started with identification of basic symbols: the staff, clef, ledger lines and note names. In week two, students were introduced to steps and accidentals. Key signatures were presented and the connection was made between key signatures and Solfége syllables used for sight singing. Table 6 illustrates the progression of lessons in music theory for the first 11weeks . The progression of the lessons served to reinforce the understanding for advanced musicians and introduce new material at an accessible pace for beginners. Verne noted that in a normal year it is a challenge to get far into instruction regarding key signatures because of performances and contests. Each academic year, the content begins on the basic level and progresses forward despite the fact that it is old content for repeating students. This repeated practice serves to support students who may be at various levels in cognitive, language and musical development.

Table 6

Progression of Lessons in Music Theory

Week	Lessons
Week 1	Music Theory lesson
Week 2	Steps and Accidentals
Week 3	Flat Key Signatures
Week 4	Sharp Key Signatures
Week 5	Key Signatures (both) Quiz
Week 6	Key Signatures Test
Week 7	Keys signatures application to Solfége
Week 8	Solfége, note identification key of F
Week 9	Solfége, note identification key of C
Week 10	Solfége note identification B-flat major and D
Week 11	Solfége note identification E-flat major and A

Sight Singing/Singing

The sight singing assignment involves a synergy of music reading skills. These music reading skills focus on an understanding of rhythm and pitch and how to produce what is notated. The assignment required students to record themselves, showing mastery of its content. In each of the first two weeks of the semester, the students were provided an eight-measure sight reading sample of which to record themselves singing. The next few Sight Singing exercises were actually rhythm exercises. Students would reproduce the rhythm with clapping. The rigor for the rhythm-only exercises increased with subsequent weeks. Students were engaged with these exercises by making individual

recordings while the group performed the exercises. These were then submitted to

Google Classroom for the grade. The individual recording during the group performance

served as a method of lowering inhibitions and getting participation. Figures 8 and 9 are

samples of sight reading and rhythm assignments from weeks 4 through 11. The figures

illustrate samples of what a student would perform with the group while submitting an

individual recording.

Figure 8
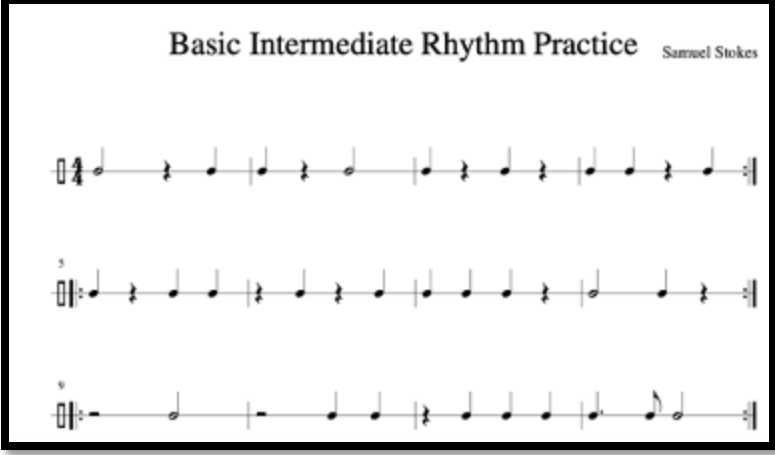
Sight Reading Sample Assignment

Note. Sight Singing Assignment. Copyright 2020 Gracenotes LLC 2020, from Sight

Reading Factory application.

Figure 9

Rhythm Reading Sample Assignment

Note. Rhythm exercise by Samuel Stokes.

> *{Classroom Interlude 9.}* Verne began the 9th Grade Treble Choir class with the
>
> rhythm assignment. He prepared them by telling them how much he appreciated it
>
> when they all participated. They worked through the rhythm, chunking it into
>
> smaller sections at a time. After focusing on the most challenging measures, he
>
> asked if they were ready to record. He reminded them that this is their opportunity
>
> to secure their A in choir. "Why would you *not* get an A in choir?" he said. More
>
> students took advantage of this opportunity and prepared their recording device.
>
> They clapped the rhythm in unison while individual recordings were made. (End
>
> of classroom interlude)

History

The first *history* lesson began with ancient Western, Medieval and Renaissance music. Eric gave a video lecture which provided an overview of Western music that progressed through Baroque, to Classical, and then Romantic eras. Eric highlighted major composers for each era. Students were given a test for this lecture that required them to name the approximate dates for the eras and the composers for the eras. The next assignment involved an exploration of choral music genres. Students were given a basic explanation of sacred, secular, spiritual and gospel, folk songs, multicultural, pop, jazz and a cappella. From these definitions, students were instructed to find a choral piece from each genre, with a link to a choir performing the piece online. Eric encouraged the students to find pieces that their choir could possibly perform. For week three, the students could do a short study of one of the pieces of their repertoire.

The final observed history assignment explored a list of American composers. The students were provided a link with articles about composers. Students were to pick three composers, read their articles and summarize what they learned. The list included a mix of composers in ethnicity and gender. The history assignments gave students an opportunity to explore the social, historical and political context of music. The questions below are from a history assignment that not only help students find the context of music pieces, but also connect them to their own experiences:

1. Who is the composer, arranger, and poet?

2. What year was the piece written?

3. What does the text mean?

4. What do you take away from the song? What does it mean to you?

5. Is there a historical meaning behind the song? What does it mean to you?

Collaborations: Cultivating Engagement

Collaborations with other disciplines increase engagement as they increase student participation and audience members. The Enosburgh choral program took advantage of collaborations as a creative way of performing despite the restrictions required for mitigation of the spread of COVID-19. The collaboration with the media department and orchestra allowed singers to create a final work, a video to share on social media.

> *{Classroom Interlude 10.}* Students began floating in and out of the chorus room as the first hour's start time neared. One student made a grand entrance, stepping into the classroom while announcing, "I'm here and I'm ready." Verne responded with, "Hey! You look scary!"
>
> "Thanks, man!" the student replied.
>
> It was clear that the choir room and surrounding area was somewhat of a social gathering spot. There was a hustle and bustle of expectancy.
>
> Eric laid out the plan of action to several students. They were preparing to record "Monster Mash" by Bobby Picket. Students had arrived donned with costumes, masks and makeup. They were energized as they anticipated the next moments. Those students followed Eric to the hallway as the first hour began. (End of classroom interlude)

Ensembles: Appreciating Similarities and Differences

There are seven ensemble types in the Enosburgh choral program: Diversity Choir, Jazz Choir, Show Choir, Tenor-bass Choir, 9th Grade Treble Choir, 10-12th Grade Treble Choir and Concert Choir. Ensembles types were created to put together students with similar voices, maturity levels and musical skills. Gender separation serves to help cultivate voices that are maturing rapidly. The most advanced groups, Jazz and Concert Choir, require auditions. Eric and Verne are able to target technical and musical needs of groups because they are grouped by maturity and skill students. For example, the treble singers begin in 9th Grade Treble Choir and can take Jazz, Show Choir, 10-12 Grade Treble or Concert Choir through auditions. Tenor and bass voices start with Tenor-Bass choir and can advance to Jazz, Show Choir or Concert Choir by auditioning. Student engagement is fostered by having peers at similar stages in skill and growth, and a shared ensemble preference. Students also have the option of taking two choral classes. For example, some students take Jazz Choir and Concert Choir. This increases the skill level of groups and thus cultivates engagement.

Group Singing: Social and Emotional Support

Much has been said about the power of group singing and its effect on humans (Clift et. al, 2010). Students cited choir as a means to decompress from the daily pressures of being a student and other life issues. The final question on the assignment "What Is Choir to You?" asked the student to describe a time that singing in choir helped to deal with a life issue. If the student was new to choir, they could use any musical experience to answer. Below are samples from student responses:

- One day I was just having a hard time in life, and when I got into class and warmed up for singing It was time to sing the song. As we sang…it hit me then that the lyrics in that specific song was just telling me to pick myself up, and that I really am worth anything and that I can make it anywhere if I just have faith and work hard.

- Whenever I am upset or stressed, I put on music to help me relax. I love to sing along and forget about all of my worries.

- It helped me come more out of my shell. It. made me more confident in my singing. [It] projected my voice.

- Every day choir helps me deal with life issues. It helps me relax and not have to get overwhelmed by my thoughts and issues it creates a safe place for me.

- I was very shy when I first started choir, but everyone around me made me feel a lot better about myself and broke me out of my shell a little bit.

- Choir has always been early in the morning, and if I ever have any bad mornings, going to choir and singing usually makes me forget about it.

- Singing makes me happy, especially with a group and songs can have good meanings to help you understand.

- Choir kind of helped me getting up in the morning even if I had some family problems. Choir would always be the class that I would always be looking forward to going to.

- Choir for me is a massive coping skill for my depression and anxiety. Singing and learning music just makes me happy. Being in choir has

massively helped me to feel better and helped me to look forward to the future rather than dread it.

Cultural Congruence

The concept of cultural congruence emerges as an integral feature in program norms at Enosburgh. Performance and assessment are summative displays of skills developed in the secondary choral music setting. Effort was made to draw connections to students' families and cultural capital.

Performances: Building Connections to Families

Performances are fundamental to choral programs as they allow for the community to share an experience in which showcases students as an integral part. Students and their families get a sense of belonging. In this manner, connections are made between student life and family life. Although the unusual school year severely limited live performances for the choral program, those that did occur were preserved on recordings. These were Jazz Choir at May Fête National Anthem at Commencement 2020 and Show Choir at half-time at a football game. The Monster Mash Video was for recording only and it featured the Concert Choir and Show Choir.

{Classroom Interlude 11.} On a windy Saturday in June, more than 500 members of the community gathered in the town's largest park to celebrate May Fête, a 105-year-old tradition that celebrates the coming of Spring. May Fête is an adoption of an old English tradition. The 2020 May Fête honored the 2020 Enosburgh High School Senior Class. Fourteen singers of the EHS Jazz Choir opened the ceremony with the National Anthem

110

during the presentation of colors by EHS Air Force Junior ROTC Color

Guard. Before the event concluded, the Jazz Choir sang a piece titled

"Maybe Someday." This song is a yearly tradition within the choir

program. (End of classroom interlude)

Assessment: Alignment to Students' Experiences

Cultural congruence was practiced in assessment of sight singing in that although

students turned in individual recordings, they did the assignment in a group. Many

students experience music making in a group setting at home, church and school. In the

chorus assignment turn-in process, showing mastery aligned with the original experience

of making music. Performances that are graded also demonstrate this practice.

<center>**Summary**</center>

In this natural setting, the selected choral music classroom demonstrated that

culture supports learning by connecting home life with school; building relationships; and

utilizing cultural capital. Chapter IV categorized themes found in data collected in the

study of the natural setting of a secondary choral music education classroom. Paradigms

of the two instructors were described. These paradigms created a frame for the

expectations for students and also for the instructors' efficacy. The instructors considered

culture in non-deficit-based thinking ways to affect student outcomes in engagement,

progress and cultural literacy. Their methods for engaging students were organized into

four categories: relevancy, student-centered learning, cultural competency, and care and

relationships. Narratives that illustrated methods in practice were presented in the form of

Classroom Interludes. Furthermore, these narratives gave a detailed picture of the natural

setting of a secondary choral music classroom. Finally, the choral program norms were

categorized as methods for engagement or contributing to cultural congruence. Because COVID-19 and civil unrest were part of the context of the study, the participants' responses to both circumstances were noted. Data from interviews, sample assignments, repertoire and performances were presented. Chapter V will analyze how this choral music education setting meets the needs of students, promotes cultural literacy and engages students through the lens of CRP.

CHAPTER V

EXPLANATION THROUGH THEORETICAL LENS

This study involved the collection of data from interviews, observations, artifacts, school website information, articles, organization websites, and school documents. Chapter Four presented a narrative description of the data, which will be the source for analysis in this chapter. The purpose of this study is to explore how the natural setting of a secondary choral music classroom promotes student engagement, meets student needs and cultivates cultural literacy. The theoretical framework of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is used to provide a lens through which to view certain aspects of the data. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) developed a CRP framework of five principles found in Gay (1997), Ladson-Billing (1994) and Nieto's (1999) principles of culturally relevant teaching, which are: identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships. Figure 10 lists the elements that are characteristic of each principle of CRP.

Figure 10

The Five Principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Identity and Achievement:
Identity development
Cultural heritage
Multiple perspectives
Affirmation of diversity
Public validation of home-community cultures

Equity and Excellence
Dispositions
Incorporate multicultural curriculum content
Equal access
High Expectations for all

CRP

Developmental Appropriateness:
Learning styles
Teaching Styles
Cultural Variation in psycholgical needs
Motivation
Morale
Engagement
Collaboration

Teaching the Whole Child:
Skill development in cultural context
Bridge home, school and community
Learning outcomes
Supportive learning community
Empower students

Student Teacher Relationships:
Caring
Relationships
Interaction
Classroom atmosphere

Note. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy called Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by authors

Brown-Jeffy & Coopers (2011) in Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally

Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature.

Manifestations of CRP

Identity and Achievement

The principle of identity and achievement involves cultural heritage, exploration

of multiple cultures and perspectives, and public validation of home community cultures.

This

principle is manifested when students are oriented in their own culture while given the

opportunity to explore at least one other culture (Ladson-Billings, 2014). The foundation

set by

including the culture of students provides a launch for new content and understanding.

District Support

Educational systems that understand and support the unique needs of diverse

students create a foundation for CRP. A public recognition of the Mountainese culture is

demonstrated in the district. The creation of the Diversity Choir acknowledged the

Mountainese people and allows them to be oriented in their own culture. The district

celebrates the Mountainese culture in an annual event called Multicultural Night where

they and all students in the school have an opportunity to explore other cultures. All

major district communication is translated to Mountainese. These commitments

demonstrate an acknowledgement of the home culture of Mountainese students.

Mindset and Practice of Eric

Eric demonstrates cultural competence by being cognizant of his own cultural experiences in comparison to those of his students. He does not allow the gulf between these experiences to hinder his exploration of music and cultural norms to help him understand and engage his students. His college and travel experiences revealed the possibilities for learning when immersed in diverse cultures. He is aware of the tendencies of the choral music education discipline to hold Western standards. He wrestles with the expectations that anchored his own choral music education, while acknowledging the need to empower his diverse students.

> You don't stick in one culture. Don't stick to one type of music. You have the opportunity to branch out and show the kids different parts of the world and then you have the chance to rope different kids in and let them share their experiences. Because of me being you know, a middle-class white male, I don't have the experiences that some of my students have. They can describe when a certain piece brings up emotions or what it means in their community. (Eric)

The principle of identity and achievement exists in Eric's conceptual understanding of his discipline and art form. His words, "choir is diversity," demonstrate that he believes that the discipline inherently explores diverse cultures, music, and people. He lives out this creed by selecting repertoire that is diverse and relevant for his students. He acknowledges that his most advanced group is the most diverse. Thus, his mindset elicits the quality of CRP teachers explained by Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) of embracing diversity and acknowledging it as an asset.

Eric respects the cultural norms of the Mountainese students without penalizing them when their norms are contrary to those traditional to secondary choral music classroom settings. He incorporates their aural based music learning style into rehearsals. Furthermore, Mountainese students who arrive late to the first hour are greeted with a hearty "welcome."

Although Eric makes considerable effort to explore diverse repertoire of various cultural origins, he acknowledges the limitations of including music of his students when their music is not notated. He works around this in a strategy that he calls "cheating." This involves finding notated music that contains familiar idioms to their culture. An example of this was the *Moana* medley. There were several additional pieces connected to the cultures of the African diaspora.

Eric's awareness of his cultural position reveals the principle of identity and achievement. Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) declared "in order for teachers to be culturally attuned to the identities of their students, they should be aware of their own identities, as well as how those identities may be divergent from the identities of their students" (p. 73). Eric is cognizant of limitations that may hinder more exploration of new cultural idioms and customs with his students. However, he is confident in his traditional teaching skills and utilizes them to affect achievement.

> That's the hard thing. You're trying to respect their culture and you're trying to learn about it at the same time. I'm a middle-class white male [who has been] taught in Western civilization education all the way through college. [I think] "How can I teach in completely [different] ways?" (Eric)

Mindset and Practice of Verne

The music of Verne's youth and travel experiences have given him the perspective of music as a "universal language." He believes in music as a unifier. It is through this lens that he takes students on journeys into learning music that they may not have experienced. However, he makes special note of music and styles to which students are drawn. This is illustrated in his desire to give students the opportunity to sing music from the African diaspora and to allow them to accompany their singing with movement. Movement accompanies singing in many cultural traditions, and therefore facilitates learning. Verne is aware that the Mountainese culture has a rich tradition of singing and movement and will add "step-touching" to the teaching and learning process in his classroom.

> They sound good singing spirituals like "Bonse Aba" [Zambian folk song] and they do better if they are step-touching. For some reason. If I don't feel like they are sounding good, we all start step-touching. (Verne)

> Verne acknowledged that his peer group and generation of choral directors may have a tendency to teach in the canon of tried and experienced repertoire. He notices that Eric, his son, often brings repertoire that he termed "fresh" and more challenging to the program. Moreover, he seemed to rely on Eric to find some of the pieces that widened the musical palate of the students in the program. Verne's self-reflective practice is the beginning of cultural competence.

> Verne is empathetic to students who have cultural norms that may be different to his own. Like Eric, he noted that many of his Mountainese students view time and punctuality differently. Instead of punitive consequences for tardiness, they are greeted

with humor and welcomed to his class. The outcome was that as he continued to connect with these students, punctuality improved.

> The principals and counselors will just be like "they'll get here when they get here." It's their culture, you know. You can't change someone's culture. And you shouldn't punish them for it. I let it go and it probably got better …. when I didn't dwell on it you know. (Verne)

Verne makes use of the Mountainese strong aural music traditions by encouraging students to demonstrate their aural skills with hand movements. He is not particular about accuracy in the use of the Kodály hand symbols. Students may simply move their hand up and down to demonstrate pitch. In this manner, he utilizes the scaffolding element in identity and achievement. The aural skill becomes cultural collateral that empowers the student. It then works as a foundation for learning to read and understand new music. Students take this basic proficiency and transfer it to music that is notated. Moreover, this serves all of his students who have a cultural music tradition that is more aurally centered.

Assignments

The students were given some agency in assignments. They were allowed to choose two of the four assignments of Aural Skills, History, Sight Singing, and Music Theory. This agency allows for the opportunity to build on their tacit knowledge. The procedure for completing the sight singing exercise helped the students achieve by using a group work cultural tradition. Many students' formative cultural music experiences involve a group tradition. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) stated that CRP is a way to "acknowledge the home community culture of the students, and through sensitivity to

cultural nuances integrate these cultural experiences, values and understandings into the teaching and learning environment" (p. 67). Students were allowed to work through the exercise in a group and then subsequently, turn in their individual assignment while recording themselves participating in the group.

The sequence of the music theory assignments made no assumption of prior knowledge. The lessons began with introduction of the basic symbols as it delved into the language of music. Advanced students could complete the assignments with ease and use brain power and energy on other school subjects. Students for whom the content was new, could progress at a methodical pace that introduces one new concept per week. This is notable in that an understanding of music theory is needed for reading notated music, which is not emphasized in many world music cultures. Curry (n.d.) stated, "African American, Latino, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander communities all have strong oral cultures" (p. 4). Eric and Verne are aware of this and plan their curriculum accordingly. This acknowledgement emphasized their cultural competence and plans for student progress. "Using information processing strategies consistent with culturally and linguistically diverse students from oral and collectivist cultures to scaffold deeper conceptual understanding is culturally responsive teaching" (Hammond, 2015, p. 139).

The history assignments gave students an opportunity to explore genres, styles, and periods that created music. These assignments connect the CRP principle of identity and achievement that compels the student to learn about at least one other culture outside of their own. The history assignment instructed students to locate dates of pieces while exploring the meaning of their text. The students were then directed to connect the text to personal experiences and their understandings with the question, "What does it mean to

you?" Drawing connections from new content to personal perspectives is indicative of identity and achievement.

Rehearsals and Class

A student's culture includes their extra-curricular activities. Eric and Verne acknowledged events that students participated in outside of choir. Moreover, I witnessed several moments where both instructors took time during class to publicize an event or praise students for achievement in other activities. The specific example of the celebration of the non-binary student's name change is further demonstration of the element of identity and achievement being present in the classroom. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) reasoned that "public validation of home-community cultures, which includes the social and cultural capital that a student brings with them" is evidence of the identity and achievement principle of CRP (p. 72).

Ensembles

The creation of the Diversity Choir created a place of belonging for Mountainese students. In this class, cultural norms are allowed to exist and drive the learning process. Brown-Jeffey and Cooper (2011) argued: "For viable teaching and learning to take place, there must be connections between the home-community and school cultures" (p. 68).

This space allowed the Mountainese identity to be a part of the overall culture of the Enosburgh program. Additionally, each ensemble offers practice of the principle of identity and achievement. The 9th Grade Treble Choir gives students who share a grade level an opportunity to make music with peers in a community within the program. The 10th through 12th Grade Treble Choir does the same with upper-class students. The

Tenor-Bass choir serves as an opportunity for male students to bond and work together on music as they navigate through the many changes of the male voice in adolescence.

The Show Choir gives students a chance to perform music that is relevant to their contemporary popular culture while incorporating movement. Movement is notably an accepted part of pop culture's singing and music-making aesthetic. The movement makes the music culturally relatable and helps students make connections in their learning. Hammond (2015) noted that culturally and linguistically diverse students who have strong oral traditions "make the most of the brain's memory systems by using movement and emotion as strong cognitive anchors."

Performances

Perhaps the most profound demonstration of the principle of identity and achievement was during the performance of the Mountainese national anthem in concert. This was a very public validation of home-community culture. The Mountainese students were given an opportunity to express pride in their homeland and share an important cultural treasure with the Enosburgh community. Shaw (2012) noted that music repertoire that is inclusive of the cultural experiences of its students cultivates relevance. This is demonstrated in the inclusion of any music which has familiar rhythm patterns, harmonies, and dynamics of students' cultural music traditions. Much of the Enosburgh choral program repertoire during this year drew on cultural experiences.

Equity and Excellence

Ladson-Billings' (1995) teacher investigations highlighted teachers who were driven toward helping their students to succeed. This principle of CRP maintains that all students can succeed. It challenges ideologies that blame underserved students' social

conditions for their challenges and rejects deficit-based thinking. Equity and excellence also involve the inclusion of multicultural content in curriculum and instruction.

District Support

Support was made evident by the financial budget of the program. On choral trips to competitions and other performances, student meals are provided. Students are given the opportunity to participate in choral activities without consideration of individual financial resources. For example, if a student makes one of the All-State or district honor choirs and is unable to afford the registration, participation, hotel and meals, then their costs are covered by the allotted music budget. Moreover, the district's effort to meet the academic needs of its English language learners and its coordination of cultural liaisons for students is a demonstration of a basic understanding of inequities present. Finally, the Enosburgh Public School mission states a goal of recognizing "talents of our diverse community." Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) declared that embracing the reality of diversity was critical for cultivating an equitable learning environment.

Mindset and Practice of Eric

Eric expressed cognitive dissonance about the outcomes of the Diversity Choir. "I don't love that it is one class and one culture." His desire to foster the richer experience that a diverse choir would yield demonstrated his focus on equity for all of his choral students. In one conversation, he explained a plan to restructure the choral program by dissolving the Diversity Choir. Eric's experience has demonstrated that the more ethnic groups that are represented in choirs, the higher the skill level. Therefore, he is motivated by the idea for growth for all of his students when diverse perspectives are present in a choral group. Eric drives the rigor of the program by seeking challenging and varied

music for the ensembles. This drive has yielded positive results in competitions and program recognition in the Enosburgh and the Oklahoma choral music community. Eric's work to help students be motivated and understand what it means to win is an example of his rejection of deficit-based thinking regarding his student's capabilities.

Mindset and Practice of Verne

The balance of humor and expectations found in Verne's practice demonstrates his understanding of the need to meet students where they are, yet challenge them toward growth. Although he is cognizant of students' needs, he refuses to sacrifice the standards for rehearsal efficiency and decorum that he has established in his tenure.

> We're always going to do these fifteen-minute warmups. We're going to follow it with sight reading. We're going to sing. If this is what you like, [great!]. If you don't like it, it's okay. You can switch your schedule. You got a week or two. Most of them are looking around like, "I don't want to switch. I kind of like this." (Verne)

His jovial manner of instruction does not conflict with his expectations. In fact, it is often used as a tool to engage students and monitor comprehension.

Assignments and Repertoire

Student agency in the assignment choice is a move toward equity for these choral music students. The assumption is that each choral music student arrives to the program with different tacit knowledge around music-making or education in general. The assignment choice allows students to explore their own understanding and choose to work in that area. Moreover, the group completion and turn-in option used in the sight-

singing assignments allowed for students who are less developed to make progress as they work with more skilled peers.

The diverse repertoire of the Enosburgh choral program not only aligns with the principle of identity and achievement but it also illustrates the equity and excellence principle of CRP. Ladson-Billings (1994) stressed that the content of curriculum needs to be inclusive of cultures represented in the classroom. Not only does this help students relate to the content but it also helps break down hegemonic canons in the discipline. "Multiculturalism in the curriculum can turn racism on its head and use race as the springboard for equality" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Rehearsal and Class

The art form of choral music innately practices equity and excellence. The group effort is elevated beyond the individual. According to Hammond (2015) "many African American, Latino, Pacific Islander, and Native American communities lean toward collectivism" as opposed to individualism (p. 25). This inherent quality of the choral music setting positions it to address the principle of equity and excellence in CRP with a focus on group outcomes. The choral sound itself is composed of various music skills and vocal techniques that are combined to achieve a beautiful outcome. Students find that although they may have limited individual achievement, the group yields more.

Developmental Appropriateness

This principle of CRP emphasizes the foundational aspect of cultural congruence (Garcia & Chin, 2016; Howard, 2013; Sleeter, 2011). Cultural congruence is present when the learning process validates cultural ways of doing and learning. Development appropriateness uses a holistic approach to student learning that includes development of

critical thought. It moves beyond the banking method of teaching and incorporates student driven learning environments where students are often the source of knowledge.

Assignments

Assignments collected as artifacts in this study gave students an opportunity to validate cultural dispositions. Students are able to share personal perspectives as it relates often to the texts found in choral music. "Knowledge that students bring with them to school must be acknowledged, explored, and utilized" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 75). The history assignment instructed students to do this while challenging them to find meaning in the poetic texts.

Rehearsal and Class

Walter (2018) determined that CRP is relevant because it is student-driven rather than curriculum-driven. The developmental appropriateness principle was displayed in the Enosburgh classroom dynamics in that students in several classes were observed as guiding instruction and were involved in decision making about performances. Students are empowered to lead the search for knowledge while the instructors facilitated the process. Prodding questions were asked that invoked critical thought about challenging musical passages. Eric mentioned that exploration of choral music texts offered students a chance to develop their perspectives and then opened them up to other perspectives.

During several rehearsals, students were not assumed to be literally "on the same page" of the music at any time when reading music. Consideration was given for the various levels of music reading as the instructor called out page numbers. Students who are more aurally inclined musicians were not excluded and given the opportunity to develop their music reading skills.

Ensembles

Besides the Diversity Choir, several of the ensembles are filled with students of the same grade level or gender. As the students mature, the mixed ensembles -- Concert Choir, Show Choir and Jazz Choir -- are available to them. The different ensemble types allow students who are similar in voice maturity and developmental capabilities to work together. Instructors target appropriate repertoire and assignments for their skill levels in each ensemble. Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) maintained that when instructors "respond to developmental appropriateness, they, in effect, cultivate students who want to learn instead of the students who will just engage in rote memorization and regurgitation" (p. 76).

Teaching the Whole Child

This principle of CRP involves engaging the student in ways that are positive and relevant. It has overlapping tenets with the previous principle of developmental appropriateness. Walter's (2018) assertion that relevancy exists in student-driven curriculum is evident in this study. Assignments, procedures, repertoire, teaching practice, and ensembles are all shaped by student needs for relatable content and experiences in the choral music classroom.

Mindset and Practice of Eric

A disposition to teaching the whole child is demonstrated by Eric's use of the choral classroom as "more of an example of how to live life." His mindfulness and thankfulness activities engage students in strategies to cope with stress and increase motivation, thus they are relevant to students. The choral classroom lends itself to these opportunities as there is no pressure to prepare students for a standardized test. Eric

continues to search for opportunities of success for his students with the understanding

that the feeling of accomplishment is a basic need for students. "Every type of kid longs

for success," Eric said. The overlapping of the principles of teaching the whole child and

developmental appropriateness is demonstrated in the way Eric has included cultural

norms in his teaching strategies to make the content relevant to his students.

Mindset and Practice of Verne

Verne has a focus on engagement of students. He works hard to create an

enjoyable atmosphere where students are learning. He is sensitive to when they need a

change from sitting to standing and from seriousness to fun. He welcomes the

opportunity to utilize movement in rehearsal and performance. He understands that

variety in instruction engages the students. Like Eric, he seizes on repertoire that students

connect with and searches for similar content to increase relevance.

> Most of the teaching nowadays is motivating them to continue going forward.
>
> You can't just do one [style of music] and not expect them to get bored. So, I kind
>
> of compare it DJing. To keep it interesting you've got to change your styles.
>
> (Verne)

Ladson-Billings (1995) explained that CRP goes beyond caring for students to

"concern for the implications their work had on their students' lives, the welfare of the

community …" (p. 25). Verne's teaching paradigm centers around a concern for students'

entire wellbeing. He expressed concern for the effects of the pandemic on the emotional

wellbeing of his students and believed that choral music education had an opportunity to

ease pressure and soothe students through the power of music. Moreover, observations of

his instruction included many affirming words like "I love ya! You're doing great! We'll

get through this." In one observation, Verne used his humor with the sarcastic question, "Does anybody here like the pandemic?" All of this is evidence of a practice of teaching the whole child.

Student Responses

The Enosburgh choral classroom demonstrated evidence of teaching the whole child in the data provided by the "*What Is Choir to You?*" assignment. Students provided examples of how their needs were being met in the choral classroom. This included confidence building in abilities, support from peers, and release of stress. Several students noted singing in general or singing in the choral program helped them to cope with life challenges.

Performances

Although several performances were cancelled due to the need to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, students were able to perform outside and in the gymnasium for a recording that was posted on social media. The effort put into this project demonstrated a commitment to continue the performance element of the choral program despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Student performances serve their community in several capacities. Students get an opportunity to share a glimpse of their classroom and rehearsal experiences with their families and the community. Once this experience is shared, a connection between the choral music classroom and family is established. The connection provides relevancy for students as they become aware that part of the class purpose is to share with their family and community.

When attempting to achieve the goal of practicing CRP, teachers must remember the needs of the total child. Influences from initial cultural socialization

experiences in the family and community shape the academic identity of students who enter our classrooms. These cultural influences affect how students and their families perceive, receive, respond to, categorize, and prioritize what is meaningful to them. (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p 76-77)

Furthermore, performances that display student exploration of culturally diverse music can be an opportunity for public modeling of cultural competence. The Enosburgh choral music program is deliberate about this culturally diverse content and community connection of its performances. As a result, the principle of teaching the whole child is on display at performances.

Performances create memories and open up new experiences. The student responses noted memories of contests and trips that they enjoyed. The experiences that were created become the students' reality and then serve to foster relevancy.

Student-Teacher Relationships

Teachers are considered by researchers as an important variable in student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Gay (2000) explained that caring relationships are integral in CRP. Observations of both Eric and Verne in the classroom and at performances validate that these student connections fostered learning, affected classroom and program culture, and cultivated engagement. Both instructors invest in understanding their students' lives in and out of the classroom. "Students' recognition of teachers' desires to learn about them beyond the classroom can have tremendous power to motivate and invite learning" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p.77). Furthermore, students' responses in the "*What Is Choir to You?*" assignment illustrated that their teachers were a large part of their appreciation for the program.

Mindset of Student-Teacher Relationships and Eric

Eric cultivates a coach-like rapport with his students. The students are comfortable having non-school related conversations with him and respond to his instruction with enthusiasm. When students were doing individual assignment work, he took the time to conversate with many of them. He cultivates a classroom in which he pushes students to learn and uses strategies to give them agency in their learning. "A lot of times kids will just connect with the lyrics so I'll ask what does this mean and that usually is all it takes for them to express their feeling or what it means deeply to them." (Eric) Students indicated in the assignment "What Is Choir to You" that they regarded his teaching style as rigorous but appreciate the process.

Mindset of Student-Teacher Relationships and Verne

Verne's interview illustrated a deep care for his students as if they were his own. "I think if you just care for them a lot and let them know, you're going to make [them] do this until you do it right. We love you. If we didn't love you, we would just go on," he said. He, too, makes many personal connections with students in the course of the day. In each class, he expressed his appreciation for the students and their hard work. Verne was generous with praise and affirmation. His humorous manner builds a connection with his students by setting students at ease, making the class enjoyable. "We're always smiling. We're having a good time! That's the key, I think … to keeping them engaged." (Verne)

Student Responses

Ladson-Billings (1994) noted that teachers that practice CRP "demonstrate connectedness with all their students and encourage that same connectedness between the students" (p.25). Several responses from students in the "*What Is Choir to You?*" assignment indicated the teachers as contributing to the enjoyment of the class. Students noted that learning was coupled with fun. There was a palpable student-teacher connection in all of the observed classes and performances. Positive relationships in general seem to be cultivated in the choral program. Students mentioned having friendships in the choir and having the feeling of being in a family.

COVID-19 and CRP

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a response to a push to mitigate the spread of the virus. The impact on the choral classroom required structural changes to curriculum, instruction, and performance. Eric and Verne made adjustments to the physical space, the repertoire, and the flow of the rehearsal in response to the pandemic. Efforts were made to continue offering the space for students to belong and be a part of something larger than themselves during this time.

Four of the five principles of CRP were observed in the Enosburgh choral program's response to COVID-19. The first principle that emerged was equity and excellence. The choral program was supported by the district in providing personal protective equipment for the choir room in the form of air filtering machines. Eric and Verne both expressed concern about the inconsistency in learning modes and the accessibility issues this posed for families. However, they refused, in Eric's words, to "dumb down" the curriculum content in the process of adjusting to pandemic life.

The CRP principle of developmental appropriateness calls for collaboration. Collaboration with other departments such as band and football did not begin during the pandemic. However, the "Monster Mash" project was created as "something to do during COVID," Eric stated.

Eric and Verne responded to the pandemic with an intentional focus on teaching to the whole child and student-teacher relationships. These two CRP principles were demonstrated in their repertoire selection and maintenance of connections with individual students. They seemed committed to providing an atmosphere that held learning and fun in a balance. Hammond (2015) encouraged CRP in the classroom, "practice creating time to just hang out in class – socializing with no other purpose but to connect to nurture relationships" (p. 85). Eric and Verne utilized the required non-singing-time to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to do just that.

Summary of Chapter V

Chapter V explored data collected from interviews, observations, artifacts and documents. This information was processed through the lens of Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) conceptual framework for CRP and explored these principles: *identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child,* and *student-teacher relationships*. Strategies for instruction, engaging students and program norms revealed in the study were categorized under the five principles. Figure 11 illustrates the categorization of participants' teaching paradigms and practices into the five principles of CRP. Chapter VI will answer the research questions and explore how CRP explains the findings. Suggestions for theory, research, and practice will also be presented.

Figure 11

Analysis of Data Collected from Enosburgh Choral Program Through Lens of CRP Framework

Identity and Achievement:
Relevant content/repertoire
Class discourse about repertoire
Embraced Mountainese cultural norms and their music
Instructor/Conductors's awareness of positionality
Instructors used home-community cultures as learning tools

Equity and Excellence:
Balance of rigor and fun
District resources for choir students
High expectations for all students
Multicultural content
Instructors embrace diversity

Developmental Appropriateness:
Cultural congruency in ensembles
Cultural congruency in performances
Instructors' focus on student engagement
Cultivation of class climate
Collaboration with orchestra/band/media/sports

CRP

Teaching the Whole Child:
Use of teaching strategies that are culturally congruent (i.e. aural music traditions and movement).
A place to belong, learn and succeed.
Social and emotional support
Instructors care for students
Balance of rigor and fun
Instructors learn about students' lives beyond the classroom

Student-Teacher Relationships:
Teachers make connections with individual students
Classroom atmosphere is enjoyable for students
Students appreciate the rigor of class and care of instructors

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of a secondary choral music program provided a narrative description of how the natural setting of a selected choral class meets the needs of a diverse student population and enhances student engagement and cultural literacy. Interviews, observations, artifacts and documents provided illustrations of teacher mindsets, program structure, classroom norms and student attitudes. The narrative was explained through the lens of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive pedagogy as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective" for students (p. 31). This study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, elements of the natural setting of the choral classroom were adjusted: singing, instruction, repertoire, spacing and performances. Therefore, the act of adjusting to these elements of practice demonstrated principles of CRP.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how the natural setting of selected secondary choral music classroom promotes student engagement, meets student needs and cultivates cultural literacy. The following research questions directed this study:

1. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population?

2. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance student engagement?

3. How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance cultural literacy?

4. How does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explain the above?

Research Question One: How does the natural setting of selected secondary choral classes meet the needs of a diverse student population?

The natural setting of the Enosburgh choral classroom consists of several elements. The elements extend beyond the dedicated rehearsal space where risers, chairs, a piano, large mirrors and a computer projector screen can be found. It extends to the auditorium, the gymnasium, a football field and a city park. During the pandemic, it included the internet and moved into students' homes where they completed assignments. The natural setting encompasses classroom rehearsals, norms, and culture. It also includes teacher attitudes and instruction strategies.

Relevancy

To answer this first question, one must understand what constitutes the needs of a diverse student population. All students need to find relevance in their studies. Ladson-Billing (1994) posited that relevance in education will increase engagement and improve

outcomes. Relevance starts with a validation of students' cultural references. For example, the Enosburgh district validates the cultures of diverse students by including translations of major communication into their languages in publication. The district also provides an opportunity for cultural bearers to share in the educational setting and provides liaisons to help make sure basic human academic needs of students are met. With this basic need established, there is a foundation for students to build new knowledge.

The Enosburgh choral program incorporates relevance in repertoire, teaching methods, and performances. For example, music from the African diaspora repeatedly made connections with students in the Enosburgh choral program. Both students and teachers alike noted "Great God Almighty," an African American Spiritual, as a student favorite. Student responses in the assignment "What is Choir to You?" pointed the rhythms and stories behind the music. Stone (2019) argued that African-American Spirituals are as relevant to the American experience as to the African-American experience. The idioms in Spirituals are foundational to many contemporary American music styles such as pop, rock, rhythm and blues, country, and jazz. This, coupled with the many lyrical messages, makes these songs relatable for students. The Enosburgh choral directors are aware of this choral genre's relevancy. Therefore, they program Spirituals often.

A Place to Belong

All of the classes offered in the Enosburgh choral music education program are electives. Since students have several electives as options, most have chosen the choral program because they have a love for singing. Student responses in the assignment "What

is Choir to You?" indicated that many of them found friendship, peer support, and a family-like atmosphere in the choral program. Those students, who were members beyond one year, had memories that strengthened their ties and sense of belonging. In addition, the atmosphere prior to the starting bell for the ensemble classes was often very social. It was clear that the choral program provided a social outlet for several students.

The Diversity Choir was created to serve the Mountainese students. It began as a space for students to make music with others who have similar cultures and backgrounds. Both choir instructors capitalized on cultural treasures and norms of the community by imbedding them into learning. The cultural congruence caused the ensemble to become a sustainable element to the Enosburgh choral program.

A Place to Learn

I observed the balance of learning and fun that students noted in the assignment "What is Choir to You?" Students recalled the rigor but appreciated that it was coupled with enjoyment. The natural setting of the choral classroom is set up for group learning. Students at various levels of musicality and vocal technique work together on pieces. Those who are the least skilled are advanced as the whole group advances. Students demonstrated mastery as they recorded their individual rhythm sight reading assignments during the class performance of the exercise.

Deficit-based thinking is rejected in many aspects of the EHS choral program. Students are met where they are, then urged toward improvement. Cultural music learning differences revealed in the Mountainese community are utilized as foundations for new learning. Assignment choice serves to give students agency in their learning.

A Place for Success

Eric explained that he is motivated to "find opportunities to find successes" or "teach [the students] how to win." He finds these opportunities in competitions, trips, or collaborations with other school programs. Moreover, both Eric and Verne push students to excel. The Enosburgh choral program enjoys notoriety within its district and within the Oklahoma state choral community. Membership is a source of pride for students. Performance opportunities serve as a place to showcase students, celebrate their accomplishment and establish their place in the community. Student-centered learning environments give students an opportunity to lead and learn from each other and thus make progress.

Financial Resources to Provide Opportunities

The district provides financial support to the choral program that allows students to experience trips, competitions, and honor choir opportunities. This support creates choral experiences for students of limited financial resources. Students' responses in the assignment "What is Choir to You?" noted an appreciation for adventures in the choral program.

Social and Emotional Support

Students receive social and emotional support in the choral program from three sources: the music, peers, and teachers. Several students spoke of the class as a coping mechanism. Students expressed that choir class soothed anxiety and expunged depression. Some students indicated that their choir peers had helped them to develop confidence. The fact that the class is not a standardized tested subject lends itself to instructors taking class time to care for students' social and emotional needs.

Both instructors/conductors are sources for edification and praise. Eric and Verne are sensitive to the temperature of the classroom and take moments to intentionally support students with activities or conversation when the need is discerned. Furthermore, they recognized that the pandemic increased the need for social and emotional support of students and sought to find ways to meet this need in their classroom with student connections, special performances, collaborations, and repertoire choices.

Research Question Two: How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance student engagement?

Students must be engaged in order to learn. This study revealed that there are many elements of the natural setting of the selected choral classroom that engage its students. The Enosburgh choral music program utilizes strategies that range from traditional to unique to enhance student engagement.

Relevancy in Content and Instruction Methods

Ladson-Billings (1994) tied engagement to relevancy. The content of the course has an inherent relevance to students in that it is music. "Everybody loves music, regardless of [their] political views" (Verne). However, Eric and Verne were not content with this basic premise. They sought to provide musical experiences for their students that were varied and originated from diverse cultures, styles, and genres. Shaw (2012) maintained that music repertoire that is inclusive of the cultural experiences of its students perpetuates relevance.

Music is often expressed and understood through the use of movement. Incorporating movement increases relevancy because of the many cultural ties of movement to music. Moreover, there is an increase in student engagement when

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movement is coupled with music making, becoming dance. Burzynska et al. (2017) maintained that dance increases motor, cognitive, social, and emotional engagement. Movement is utilized in various ways in the setting of this choral music program in vocal warmups, sight singing, learning repertoire, and in the Show Choir ensemble.

Excellence

Students in the choral program have high expectations for the group. The high expectations are fostered by their director's expectations but also by experiences of past performances and the legacy of the program. Schuler (2011) purported that music programs must have high-quality ensembles and attractiveness to students who are not already in the program. The high quality maintains a standard of excellence as students matriculate. This creates a culture of engagement of students with the overall choral music program as well as in class.

Classroom Climate

The climate in and around the Enosburgh choral program is festive and intentional in its purpose to bring people together. Students connect with each other and their instructors. As a result, students are engaged. Though the pandemic changed the flow and format of rehearsal, students continued to be attentive. The balance of the rigor with fun was an element that was noted by students in the assignment "What is Choir to You?" Its presence was felt during observation. This atmosphere keeps students engaged with positive expectations for class every day.

Performance Opportunities

The performance orientation of the choral music class sets it up to be goal-oriented. Students are engaged with the concept of displaying efforts of learning to an

audience. Moreover, when that audience involves friends and family, it increases

engagement. Performances become family events and thus strengthen the congruence

between home and school life. Figure12 illustrates the cultural congruency of

performance and the cyclical influence of each entity.

Figure 12

Cultural Congruence of Performance
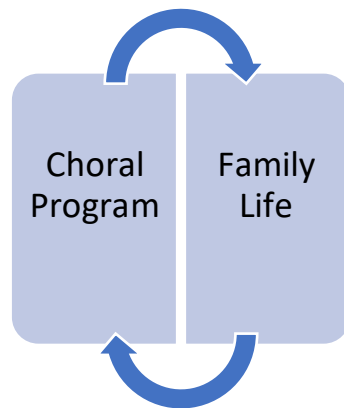
Note. Cultural congruence of performance. Each entity influences the other.

Student-teacher Relationships

The relationship of the choral instructors with the students was central to the

engagement level of the students. Both choral instructors cultivate connection with

students. Students were often found having conversations about personal experiences

outside of choir activities about their home life with the choral directors. The student

assignment "What is Choir to You?" indicated a perceived care for the choir's progress

and them as individuals. One Enosburgh student summed up the relationship between

caring teachers and student engagement, "They care so much about their groups and their

students. And because of that … we all want to work hard to be the best we can be."

Research Question Three: How does the natural setting of selected choral classes enhance cultural literacy?

Diverse Literature and Diverse Musicians

Cultural literacy is seen by both instructors as inherent to the discipline of choral music education. They see it as imperative that their content move beyond the traditional and be inclusive of a diversity of styles, cultures, and composers. The exploration of the different styles helps students develop cultural competency, an experience in culture besides their own. Students learn about cultural influences that spawn a piece as well as idioms that are specific to certain cultures. Connections are made to tenets of their own cultures and experiences. Eric noted that his most advanced groups were the most diverse. He sought to embrace and cultivate diversity in all of his groups. The more diverse the group, the more students had an opportunity to share perspectives and cultural capital.

Performances

Choral performances help to foster cultural literacy among students in the choral program and among its audiences. Audiences of the Enosburgh choral program are exposed to a diversity of music styles and cultures as the choral students perform. When Enosburgh shared the musical talents of the Diversity Choir in performance, it gave the community an opportunity to observe those students' pride in their culture and identity.

Student-Centered Learning

Cultural literacy is also fostered in the choral classroom setting as student-centered learning takes place. Students are encouraged to share their perspectives and solve musical problems as a group. The Show Choir and Jazz Choir demonstrated student

leadership and group work that facilitated understanding and sharing of ideas between students.

Research Question Four: How does Culturally Responsive Pedagogy explain the above?

Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Student Population

In this study, the CRP principle of identity and achievement explains how the needs of students are met through the provision of relevant content and learning strategies. Equity and achievement were the goal in Eric's efforts to offer a place for success and both instructors' balance of rigor with enjoyment. Gay (2000) purported that CRP teachers are "demanding but facilitative, supportive and accessible, both personally and professionally" (p. 48). In addition, the district supported the choral program in providing resources for all choral students. Developmental appropriateness was exhibited in the cultural congruency in ensembles and performances.

As students are given a place to belong, a place to learn and a place for success, the CRP principle of teaching the whole child is demonstrated. Moreover, the social and emotional support that students in this study reported in their assignment "What Is Choir to You?" gave evidence of this principle. Finally, as Nieto (1999) stated, the "nature and the extent of the relationships between teachers and their students are critical in promoting student learning" (p.167). Students need connections to their teachers. Eric and Verne were deliberate about making these connections with their students.

Enhancing Student Engagement

Student engagement is enhanced in the Enosburgh choral program as relatable content is provided. White et al. (2014) defined CRP as using cultural capital as a means

to resource students' ways of doing and knowing. Eric and Verne seek out ways to engage students by connecting learning to student experiences, thereby demonstrating the CRP principle of identity and achievement. The principle of equity and excellence was revealed in the high expectations by Eric and Verne. Eric's rejection of deficit-based thinking in regards to the Mountainese students reinforces the notions of CRP and the students' appreciation for rigor indicated engagement.

The cultural congruency between school and family life that is perpetuated in choral performances utilizes the CRP principle of developmental appropriateness. Students are engaged as they prepare to share their music with their families. The teaching the whole child principle exhibited by Eric and Verne provides authentic care for students and overall wellness and enjoyment that keep the students looking forward to choir class. Student engagement is reinforced by the rapport that each instructor has with students. This rapport solidifies the presence of the student-teacher relationships tenet of CRP.

Cultivating Cultural Literacy

CRP explains the promotion of cultural literacy by connecting teaching and learning to culture. Cultural literacy or cultural competency is practiced by the instructors while meeting student needs and engaging them. Cultural literacy is further enhanced among students as instruction is centered around students' culture and experiences. In this setting, students and teachers embark on a journey of learning together as new content is explored. Students are empowered by scaffolding as new content is anchored on their cultural capital. Their perspectives become a part of the learning process. The overall cultural literacy of those in the educational setting is expanded.
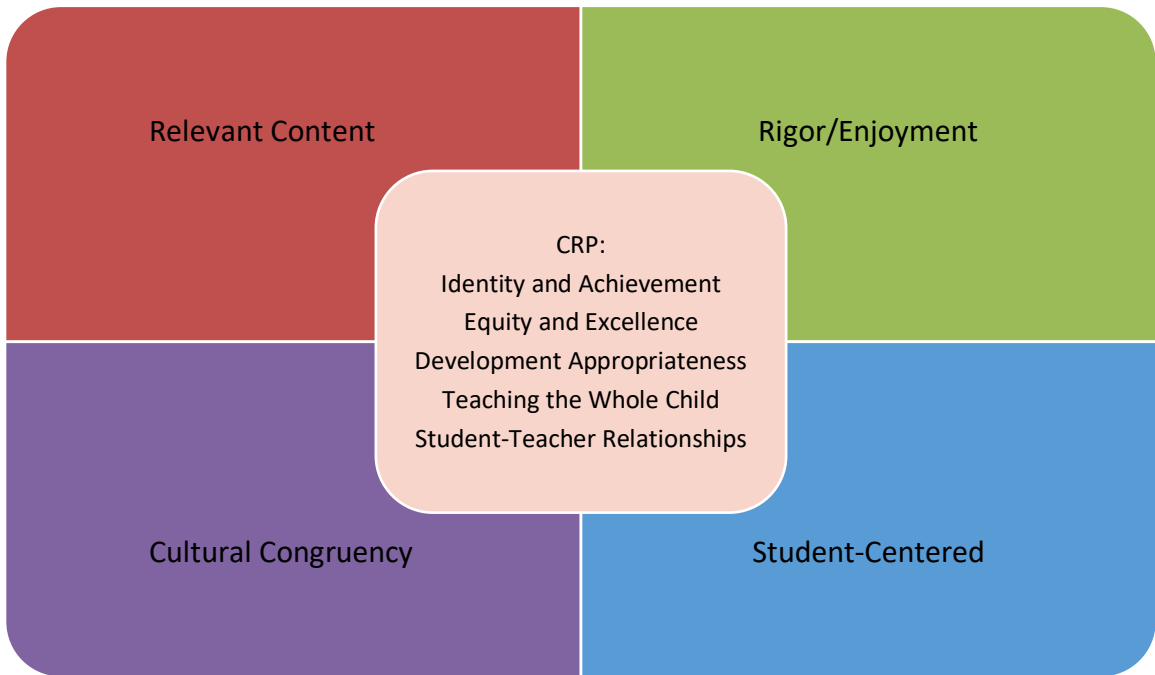
Multicultural content is an important element in CRP. Students in the Enosburgh choral program are introduced to choral music from cultures around the world. This promotes curiosity, empathy and understanding about cultures other than their own.

Overlapping Categorization

A finding in this study was that teaching methods and strategies often overlapped in categorization of the CRP principles. Moreover, four elements of the Enosburgh choral department teaching methods can be tied to all five CRP components. An example of this phenomenon is displayed when examining the use of relevant content in the choral music classroom. This teaching strategy uses the identity and achievement component of CRP by connecting learning to heritage and home cultures. It also practices equity and excellence by allowing tacit knowledge as cultural capital to become the foundation for new content. It utilized development appropriateness through the cultural congruency that exists when content is relevant. Teaching the whole child is demonstrated when using relevant content as perspectives and worldviews are affirmed. Student-teacher relationships are strengthened with the use of relevant content as students appreciate efforts of teachers in facilitating learning experiences that connect to their world. Figure 13 demonstrates that teachers who provide relevant content, balance rigor with enjoyment, practice cultural congruence and have a student-centered approach utilize all five of the CRP principles.

Figure 13

Four Elements of Practice in Enosbugh Choral Program

Relevant Content	Rigor/Enjoyment
CRP: Identity and Achievement, Equity and Excellence, Development Appropriateness, Teaching the Whole Child, Student-Teacher Relationships	
Cultural Congruency	Student-Centered

Note. Four elements of the Enosburgh secondary choral music setting teaching practices that utilized all five CRP principles.

Conclusions

Through its ensembles, performances, and teaching and learning strategies, the Enosburgh choral music program met the needs of students, cultivated student engagement, and promoted cultural literacy. This was done in a manner that was organic as it was considered necessary to the discipline by its instructors. Eric and Verne are conscious of their own limitations and the limitations of traditions in practice, yet, they push boundaries with strategies that are culturally congruent and culturally relevant to their students. The creative nature of the choral music discipline and its position as a non-tested subject in secondary education allows for innovation. Eric and Vern moved beyond

traditional choral teaching methods and repertoire by incorporating the students' cultural ways of doing and knowing. Hammond (2015) stated that "culturally and linguistically diverse students come to school with well-developed neural pathways for actively processing information under the right conditions" (p. 127). As a result, students in the choral program were engaged through a variety of ways that promoted cultural literacy and understanding.

In this natural setting, relevancy in content and instruction functions as a method for meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Shaw (2012) articulated that music repertoire that emphasizes the experiences of its students perpetuates relevance. Students are offered a place to learn, and a place to succeed through culturally congruent strategies. The district provided financial support to cover students' travel expenses when performing and competing. The presence of social and emotional support was revealed in student responses, instructor's paradigms and observations.

Student engagement is enhanced in the Enosbugh choral program by several of the same strategies that meet student needs. Relevancy in content and instruction methods served to empower students in the learning process as well as keep their focus. Gay (2002) summarized, "When academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (p. 106). Enosburgh students appreciate the high expectations of their instructors and are encouraged to work hard. Students reported the balance of rigor and fun as an attribute that contributed to their enjoyment and motivation. Performances served as a catalyst for

student engagement as they connected family life with the choral program. Additionally, students were engaged through connections to their teachers and their peers.

Cultural literacy in the Enosburgh choral program is anchored by the philosophical paradigms of Eric and Verne. Both music educators consider the discipline of choral music education to be one that is inherently multicultural and diverse. Their students' cultural capital is valued and utilized in the program. Cultural literacy is facilitated in their student-centered approach for learning in which students are often leaders in the learning process. Shaw (2015) determined that the term *responsive* in CRP implied a student-centered focus. Performances also serve to foster cultural literacy in the community and cultural congruence in which family life and the choral program have influence on each other.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for the choral program to focus on meeting students' needs caused by the disruption to normality. The need to mitigate the virus caused changes in the instruction, classroom setup, rehearsal space, and performances. However, instructors turned their focus toward providing students with a learning atmosphere that provided enjoyment, reduced stress, and served to strengthen student and teacher relationships while learning. In doing so, they modeled Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

Brown-Jeffy & Cooper's (2011) CRP framework provides a lens to understand how this setting meets the needs, enhances engagement and fosters cultural literacy among a diverse student population. Several of the elements of practice fell into more than one principle of CRP. This served to underscore the inclusive paradigm of the Enosburgh choral program.

Implications

"No two social settings are sufficiently similar to allow simplistic, sweeping generalization from one to another" (Erlandson, 1993, p. 13). This study has findings that have implications for research, theory and practice. However, the implications are not intended to generalize to other contexts. They may have some transferable elements based on likeness of similar context.

Implications for Research

Naturalistic inquiry has implications for research in that it values context as integral to the knowledge produced in the study (Erlandson, 1993). The Mountainese culture and the pandemic were unique factors requiring exploration for understanding of how students' needs were met. The naturalistic paradigm will be useful for future studies with distinctive contexts. In addition, the naturalistic inquiry allows for multiple realities that exist among participants and the researcher to be tools for a holistic investigation (Erlandson, 1993). This permits the expertise of diverse researchers and various settings to expand knowledge in the subject area.

This study adds to the body of research that claims that teachers are the strongest component that affects student outcomes (Chetty et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2000; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The practice of CRP was demonstrated a choral music setting with examples that could be explored with implementation in other disciplines. There is a need for more research that draws connection of theory of inclusive curriculum and pedagogy to the practice of music education (Abril, 2006; Chen-Hafteck, 2007; Green, 2002). Furthermore, CRP looks different in every classroom, district, and discipline. More studies are needed that provide

illustration of its practice in a variety of disciplines in order to help educators understand its practice and its effect on student outcomes. Research that measures outcomes of CRP practice is needed to validate its promotion as an important method for preparing teachers for classrooms that are more culturally diverse and students for a world that is globally connected.

The cultural connections that are found in music rooted in African traditions emerged as a pattern in this study. More research in the study of its relatable idioms to diverse students is warranted. Furthermore, inquiry of inclusion of music from the African diaspora in music education and their contribution to student engagement and cultural literacy is merited.

Implications for Theory

The CRP theoretical framework was effective for use in this naturalistic study. Exploration of the natural setting through the five principles provided a strategic process for organizing and understanding phenomena in the Enosburgh choral program. The tenets for each of the five principles provided clarity when elements of practice and paradigms were examined.

This study reinforces the concept that culture is inextricably linked to learning. CRP theory considers cultural congruency as integral to positive student outcomes (Gay, 2002). This study shed light on principles of CRP as they were demonstrated in practice in the natural setting of a selected choral music classroom. It exposed the cultural norms that reinforce certain music skills for students. It also showed how exploration of those norms can provide bridges for student understanding and open the door for wider knowledge for all students. Cultural congruence, as displayed by the choral music

ensembles, performances, and teaching methods, served as tools to engage students, promote cultural literacy, and meet their needs. This study illustrates the principles of CRP and its significance in educational settings that are increasingly more diverse.

Hammond (2015) ascribed that student outcomes could be tied to CRP and its connection to neuroscience. She expounded on CRP and brain-based learning to create a framework that explains culturally and linguistically diverse student processing. Hammond's (2015) neurological approach to CRP could also explain the phenomena of this study.

Implications for Practice

This study has implications for educational practice to the discipline of choral music education and beyond. There is a need for more inclusive and diverse repertoire and teaching strategies in secondary choral music settings. When students learn about at least one other culture besides their own, they cultivate cultural literacy. Moreover, they draw connections to their own cultural experiences that may increase empathy and understanding between students. Teachers that use CRP informed practice may provide learning experiences that engage students and meet their needs

This study also revealed traditions in the practice of music education that may cause barriers to exploring content from cultures that do not have a notated music focus. A shift in the heavy emphasis on reading notated music for choral music education could open up more of the world's music traditions. In order to pursue this avenue in the choral music classroom, music teacher preparation programs would need to prepare teachers to teach and learn music that is not notated.

The natural setting of the choral music classroom disclosed some tools for engagement that may not be customary to some disciplines but, with exploration, could promote student engagement in those disciplines. For example, the choral music classroom utilizes kinesthetics through movement and spatial orientation for learning. It also uses the component of group performance as a final goal for community involvement in student learning. Moreover, rigor is balanced with enjoyment for both teachers and students creating an atmosphere where students look forward to class.

Summary

Now, more than ever, music educators are charged with the task of serving diverse student populations (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Two Enosburgh choral music directors demonstrated seizing this opportunity in through inclusive curriculum and teaching methods in the midst of a global pandemic. This study explores how their methods served a diverse student population but also guided their response to student need in the pandemic. This study also investigated how culture interacts with education to produce outcomes for students. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy theory was a lens to discover how choral music educators respond to educational needs, cultivates engagement, and promotes cultural literacy of diverse students.

Chapter II reviewed literature that explored music education as a discipline in which relevance and student engagement could be increased using methods that consider the link between culture and education. It explored examples of inclusive music education as well as traditions that may be barriers to its practice. Chapter II introduced Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and its origination as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as a

practice "that empowers student intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Chapter III explained the qualitative naturalistic inquiry method that was used for this study. The purposive selection of the Enosburgh High School choral music program was used to explore the natural setting of the secondary choral music classroom. Data collection began in the Summer of 2020. I observed performances, rehearsals, and classes. I conducted interviews of two choral instructors who run the Enosburgh choral program. As the COVD-19 pandemic became an emergent variable in my research, I conducted additional interviews to understand how the pandemic affected instruction, classes, repertoire, and performances. Collected data included recordings of performances, school website information, and class assignments. All data was analyzed through triangulation methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) conceptual framework for CRP theory was used as a lens to analyze the data.

The epistemological perspective for this study was constructionism. Constructionism was appropriate for this study in that it had a purpose that involved exploring multiple perspectives. This research observed how these diverse realities interacted in teaching and learning. The data from these observations were presented in Chapter IV using a narrative format to provide a thick and rich description. Chapter V analyzed the data from interviews, observations and artifacts with the lens of CRP theory and its principles: identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student teacher relationships. Elements of practice from data collection were categorized under their corresponding CRP principle.

Findings revealed that professional organizations provided some guidance and frame for repertoire selection, which is a part of the content of the curriculum. The mindsets and formative experiences of the two directors informed their teaching methods and attitudes. Furthermore, the pandemic became a variable which required response in meeting the needs of the students. The Enosburgh High School program illustrated a school supported by a district that recognized some of the needs of its diverse students. The two choral directors demonstrated CRP at place in their teaching methods. They also demonstrated an awareness of traditions of their discipline that challenge the practice and may create barriers for serving students. They demonstrated a release of some norms of the practice in the midst of the pandemic and in efforts to serve students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Study of their navigation of these challenges presented questions about the future of choral music education and how its pedagogy should be adjusted to include diverse students' needs.

Chapter VI answered each research question and illustrated how CRP theory can explain the Enosburgh choral program's strategies to meet the needs of students, cultivate engagement and promote cultural literacy. A finding in this study was that four occurring teaching practices utilized all of the principles of the CRP. An additional finding was that the COVID-19 Pandemic compelled Eric and Verne to focus on two principles: teaching the whole child and teacher student relationships. Chapter VI concluded with implications for research, theory and practice of CRP in the choral music education and other disciplines.

Researcher's Comments

As I narrowed in on my research focus, I learned about a secondary choral music program in Oklahoma that served almost 360 students in a high school of about 1900 students. The proportion of students that participated in the program seemed impressive. I was also very interested in their Diversity Choir that reached out to their Mountainese population. I was interested in how the students were recruited and engaged in the choral music program.

I expected to learn of a strong understanding of inclusive pedagogy and how the instructors purposefully utilized choral music education as a tool for embracing diversity. What I found instead was a sensibility about the discipline that fostered an organic implementation of methods for teaching and running a high school choral music program. For example, when asked about how they would respond to the issues of race that surfaced before the fall semester, they responded with a plan to choose music with text that would encourage thought and conversation in an indirect way.

Gay (2000) ascertained that caring interpersonal relationships are a hallmark of CRP teachers. This is certainly the core of what my study revealed. This statement seemed obvious to me before I observed the Enosburgh program. However, as I watched the educators interact with students and emphasize care during the pandemic, I began to better appreciate the place this care holds in the art and science of teaching. Student-teacher connection was central to all of the teaching methods observed.

My familiarity with the discipline of choral music education prepared me for witnessing the hurdles of tradition that Eric and Verne would overcome while meeting

student needs. They were creative in navigating the push and pull of new versus old teaching techniques, canons of choral repertoire, and their own efficacy.

During the course of writing this dissertation, I transitioned from choral music educator to administrator. My new responsibilities continue to deepen my belief in the need for CRP principles in teacher education programs and throughout all of education. Cultural perspective informs how we teach and learn. The more we understand this concept, the more we empower students with cultural capital on their educational journeys. Moreover, all students need to be given the opportunity to explore how culture interacts with knowledge in order to understand our changing world and prepare to solve problems of the future.

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APPENDICES

Letter of Introduction

Dear ███████████,

My name is Evelyn Kwanza and I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, pursuing a Ph.D. in degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree, and your site has been selected for my study. I have been a music educator for 22 years.

The purpose of my study is to explore how the natural setting of selected choral classes meets the needs of a diverse student population, enhances student engagement and fosters cultural literacy. The primary method of data collection will be audio recorded interviews, supplemented with direct observation of choral music classes and rehearsals, collection of instructional materials (such a repertoire and music programs) and public data including student demographics. While students in grades 6-12 may be present during observations during the school day, they will not be interview subjects. All data collection is confidential. If you desire, I can also provide a copy of the entire research proposal.

Upon receiving approval of the Institutional Review Board, the study will commence in the summer of 2020. I plan on conducting approximately three interviews with three teachers and the building principal. Interviews will be conducted at the convenience of the participants and take approximately an hour. Any necessary follow-up contact will be to ensure credibility. Member checks of the transcribed interviews will ensure accurate representation of the subjects' words and ideas. I expect data collection to conclude before December 2020.

If you have any further questions about this study, respond to this email or call at ███████████.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Kwanza

Letter of Permission for Access

██████████████████
██████████████████
██████████

████████

████████

In fulfillment of the research component required of students in Oklahoma State University's PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies degree, I am seeking your permission to gain access to the staff, directors and administrators of the choral music program.

The purpose of my study is to explore how the natural setting of selected choral classes meets the needs of a diverse student population, enhances student engagement and fosters cultural literacy. The primary method of data collection will be audio recorded interviews, supplemented with direct observation of choral music classes and rehearsals, collection of instructional materials (such a repertoire and music programs) and public data including student demographics. While students in grades 6-12 may be present during observations during the school day, they will not be interview subjects. All data collection is confidential. If you desire, I can also provide a copy of the entire research proposal.

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If you are willing to allow me to proceed with this research, please indicate so with your signature below. If you require additional assurances, please contact me for further discussion.

Email address: ████████████████   Cell phone: ██████████

Sincerely,

Evelyn Kwanza.

_____

Informed Consent

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Choral Music Education

Investigator: Evelyn Kwanza, Oklahoma State University Candidate for PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Purpose:

You are being invited to participate in a study on the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy in choral music education. The purpose of my study is to explore how the natural setting of selected choral classes meets the needs of diverse student population, enhances student engagement and fosters cultural literacy.

Procedures:

As a participant in this study, you have been purposefully selected to participate in a survey, observations, and interview, where you will be asked questions regarding general information about yourself, the factors that have helped you remain in the district, and what supports have been available during this time. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes and will be conducted in the location of your choice. I will record the interview on my iPhone so that I can later transcribe the interview. I will provide a copy of the transcribed interview to you so that you can verify the accuracy and content of the interview.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to you. The results of this study will inform university music education programs, districts and administrators of effective practices for music education.

Confidentiality:

The records and results of this study will be kept private and confidential. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants in the study and used for interview recordings and field notes. Consent forms will be kept separate from all other documents. Your employer will not know whether or not you agree to participate in the study. If you do agree to participate, only aggregated data will be included in any written reports.

Compensation:

No compensation will be provided for participation in research.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time. The alternative is to not participate. You can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable at any time.

Contacts:

If you have any questions about this study, please contact:

Evelyn Kwanza		Dr. Ed Harris, Advisor
PhD Candidate		OSU, College of Education and Human
	or	308 Willard Hall
		Stillwater, OK 74078
		(405) 744-7932
ekwanza@okstate.edu		ed.harris@okstate.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact:
OSU IRB

219 Scott Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-3377
irb@okstate.edu

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered. I consent to participate in the study.
Indicate Yes or No:
I give consent to be audiotaped during this study. ___Yes ___No
I give consent for my data to be used in future research studies: ___Yes ___No
I give consent to be contacted for follow-up in this study or future similar studies: ___Yes ___No

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date
I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	05/11/2020
Application Number:	IRB-20-232
Proposal Title:	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Choral Music Education
Principal Investigator:	Evelyn Kwanza
Co-Investigator(s):	
Faculty Adviser:	Ed Harris
Project Coordinator:	
Research Assistant(s):	
Processed as:	Exempt
Exempt Category:	

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which <u>continuing review is not required.</u> As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

Evelyn Kwanza

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: EXPLORING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IN A
SELECTED CHORAL MUSIC SETTING: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Major Field: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Biographical:

Education:
Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education
Leadership and Policy Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,
Oklahoma in May, 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Music in Vocal Pedagogy at New
England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA in 1994.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance at
Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, OH in 1991.

Experience:
Assistant Principal, Norman High School, Norman, OK, July 2020-Present

Choral Director, Owasso Public Schools, Owasso, OK, August 2014-August
2020

Professional Memberships:
Oklahoma Alliance for Arts Education
American Choral Directors Association
Oklahoma Music Educators Association