

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WHAT MUSIC EDUCATORS KNOW ABOUT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

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SPRING 2019

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Music Education
with honors in Music Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine what music educators know about culturally responsive education and how they relate it to their everyday teaching. A survey sent to the Baltimore Public School music teachers was used to conduct this study. Data were collected through this survey from October-November 2018. The teachers' identities remained anonymous and were asked a series of questions. Survey questions addressed the teachers' basic demographic information and more specifically about their teaching style. Additionally, teachers were asked about the area they teach in, their students' demographics, how long they have been teaching, and what they think culturally responsive teaching is. The data gathered in the surveys were summarized and analyzed by the researcher, looking for common themes, ideas, or patterns in responses. The results indicated that the majority of teachers believe that meeting students where they are, understanding their students, and including and representing all students, are all essential in being an effective and culturally responsive music educator.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the following groups and individuals for their support of my efforts in the pursuit of scholarship in music education:

My family for their unwavering love and support in everything I do.

Dr. Linda Thornton my thesis supervisor and academic advisor for being the most guiding, helpful teacher I could have hoped for. Thank you for inspiring me to be a better educator and researcher with your leadership and knowledge.

Dr. Sarah Watts, my honors adviser, for showing me the incredible world of general music. Dr. Watts' passion and love for teaching children inspire me every day.

Dr. Naomi Seidman, Professor Dennis Glocke, and Professor Gerardo Edelstein for making me the musician I am today. They have inspired me with their leadership and musicality, and I am forever grateful to have studied with them.

The Pennsylvania State University, the Schreyer Honors College, and the Penn State School of Music for providing me with incredible education experience.

The Williamsport Area School District and my cooperating teachers Don Fisher and Jennifer Wright for helping me cultivate my passion for music education and allowing me to grow as the music educator I have envisioned myself becoming. I am forever thankful for having the opportunity to teach in an urban area while gaining valuable teaching experience.

Thank you.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Within the last twenty years, the United States' demographics have drastically shifted. The 2000 census reported that the demographics of the United States were becoming incredibly more diverse. At that time, one in every three students enrolled in grades K-12 was of a racial or ethnic minority background. Additionally, "more than one in seven children between the ages of 5 and 17 spoke a language other than English at home" (Villegas, 2002, p. 20). These statistics regarding the proportions of ethnic minorities were expected to show an increase throughout the 21st century and have increased within the 18 years since this census (Villegas 20). Now more than ever it is crucial for music teachers to be responding to the unique racial and ethnic identities in their classrooms.

Culturally responsive teaching is when an educator adjusts their mindset to teach students of all backgrounds and cultures. Geneva Gay defined culturally responsive education in her book, "Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching" as, "pedagogy that validates and affirms students' cultural backgrounds, while teaching to and through their diverse strengths and lived experiences" (Gay 2018). K-12 music teachers' responsibilities have shifted in terms of addressing the diverse cultural and ethnic identities in their classrooms, and redefining what receiving an education in music means. When students come into a music classroom, they bring with them their deep and personal life experiences, especially their musical ones. Every child deserves to have music education, but not every child is receptive of the traditional European canon of music education. This is where culturally responsive teaching comes into music education because the conventional model has been recognized as not applicable to all students.

Students often get turned off from school music programs because they do not see parts of themselves reflected in the Eurocentric curriculum.

I have been passionate about social justice for many years. Being Jewish, I have often felt a deep connection with others who were also discriminated against for who they are. While there are similarities, I empathize with and listen to minority groups since I will never fully know what it is like to be in their situation. Throughout my public school music experience, I realized how few minority students were involved in the music programs, especially at my high school where 45% of the students identified as black, African American, or Hispanic. These proportions were not reflected in the band or orchestra program, for example, where there were 100 total students involved including fewer than ten minority students. I have found that it is essential that white teachers ask what they can do better, how to recognize privilege and see how this privilege carries over into the classroom. This is an issue because music has often been advocated as an activity for everyone, but it does not reflect the identities of everyone in my school, as one example.

Music teachers often teach what they feel comfortable teaching or music from their background. Music is a unique part of every culture, but often, students have musical experiences that do not translate to the music classroom, and there is a distinction between a home music life and a school music life. Finding elements to incorporate and teach daily in the music classroom that reflect the students' personal experiences helps bridge the gap between home and school.

Students bring these unique cultural experiences into the classroom, and when they do, it is a teacher's job is to actively educate themselves on how to include these experiences properly and practice explicitly "dismantle the status quo" (Gay, 2018, 14). This can be concerning

students who may speak different languages at home, or when a teacher is teaching in an area where the demographic is not reflective of theirs. When a teacher sees and recognizes their students' personal experiences, and when the student sees that these are being incorporated into the classroom, the student becomes more “energized, intellectually engaged, and verbally fluent” (Gay, 2018, 15).

I am interested in how to make music education more accessible to students of various cultural backgrounds. Research has shown the positive effects of teachers who know the personal and social identities of students. Often, children are ridiculed and mocked for their non-Eurocentric identities and will result in silent and passive behavior (Gay, 2018, 15). Geneva Gay (2018) says that culturally responsive teaching is validating and affirming to students because it acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of various ethnic groups, builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school, uses many different instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles, teaches students to praise their own and other people's cultural heritage, and incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in what is taught in schools.

Constance McKoy (2016) defines “knowing your students” as being a culturally caring teacher. This means viewing your students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in an affirming way and acting on these beliefs in your daily teaching. Similarly, Geneva Gay (2018) says that teachers who demonstrate culturally responsive teaching in a caring way will assist academic and psychological growth.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore what music educators know about culturally responsive teaching. For this thesis, my focus was on music teachers in urban settings, specifically Baltimore, MD.

The following questions guided this research:

1. What do music teachers in urban areas know about culturally responsive pedagogy?
2. How often do music teachers in urban areas evaluate their teaching to benefit the cultural identity of their students?
3. How aware are urban music teachers of the identities, cultural backgrounds and emotional well-being of their students?
4. What advice do music teachers in urban areas have for other music teachers in cities on the topic of culturally responsive teaching?
5. What do music teachers in urban areas do to make their classrooms culturally responsive?

Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter, I will review various writings that show the importance of understanding the students that you are teaching and the critical role the music teacher plays in creating a welcoming environment for all students.

Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) explains that the opportunity gap is a much greater explanation of the disparities between students in comparison to the achievement gap. The opportunity gap refers to the systems that have been in place for generations that ensures that there are disparities in education among students of different races, ethnicities, languages, and social class statuses. Similarly, there are more commonalities than differences in how parents of low- and high-income raise their children. The differences, however, are in how low- and high-income parents prepare their children to act in institutionalized settings, such as public schools. Parents of higher-income have the means to involve their children from a younger age in organized activities that reflect the morals and values of the education system.

The culture of power in each classroom is something students must learn. Sometimes, students have a basic understanding of a classroom's perception of control due to their background and upbringing. An upbringing that differs from that of the teacher can potentially include a drastically different culture of power in the home. This may involve but is not limited to when to speak or stay silent, and what to do when being confronted about actions. In the mind of the students, this culture of power is correct. Misinterpretation of these actions by the teacher can quickly happen, and teachers may be offended by what the student is saying and may react in ways that are unproductive and unhelpful to the situation. In the student's mind, what they are

doing is natural for them to express themselves as they know best. To prevent these misunderstandings at any degree, it is best for the teacher to explicitly articulate and explain their rules and expectations of the classroom, so the students feel successful. In addition to the culture of power, teachers can stop to ask themselves how they can improve what they are doing to fit the needs of their students best. A simple checking in with the student can often clear the air and show the student that you care about them and their well-being.

Race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are important to consider when understanding your students. Researching and understanding the historical and current race relations in the United States allows the teacher to empathize how their students are still affected by these today. Additionally, there are many "institutional disparities" in educational settings among white students and students of color. Ethnicity is more specific than the sometimes broad terms associated with people of color, such as Latinx, Hispanic, Black, or Asian. More specific terms would be ones such as Guatemalan, Haitian, Mexican, or Chinese. Doing research and being respectful of the different cultures your students come from, getting your students involved, and promoting a safe learning environment are ways to ensure that students of different ethnicities feel welcome in your classroom. By getting to know your students in addition to their culture, such as through surveys, or inviting students to have lunch with you, you are promoting a safe learning environment. Socioeconomic status refers to two things: the resources that people have and their social class. There are many misunderstandings about people who are living in poverty. People of all classes have similar "beliefs, values, and behaviors" (Fitzpatrick-Harnish 34). As music programs require extra fees and have recently been experiencing many budget cuts that require families to invest their money into special expenses has led to active music programs at

the secondary level to be present in areas with adequate socioeconomic status and school size (Fitzpatrick-Harnish 35).

Benedict (2016) in Chapter 17 of the *Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* discusses multicultural education, which "advocates the design and delivery of a comprehensive and culturally responsive education from kindergarten through secondary school" (Roberts-Campbell, 2016, 273). When teachers are multiculturally aware, they may have better intentions of embracing the needs and interests of students from diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and cultural communities. According to Roberts-Campbell (2016), Banks elaborates on multicultural awareness topic by providing five dimensions of multicultural education: the contributions approach, adaptive approach, additive approach, transformative approach, and social action approach. The contributions approach is where the experiences of diverse groups are incorporated into the learning experiences as a supplement to the typical, mainstream-centered curriculum. For example, a teacher could teach a song about Martin Luther King Jr. in an elementary music class during the month of December, but not discussing why we celebrate Martin Luther King and his civil rights legacy in the United States. In an additive approach, the teacher incorporates more materials that foster an understanding of social justice topics, but the materials are still viewed from a "mainstream or privileged perspective" (Roberts-Campbell, 2016, p. 280). An example of an additive approach would be a secondary history class discussing European settlers in the United States, but the topic is only viewed through the eyes of the settlers. This type of learning creates underlying bias in the curriculum, leading to a "privileged" understanding of historical, social justice topics. The transformative approach takes the additive approach one step further by viewing issues from the perspective of different groups. Students, in turn, can understand that knowledge is a social construct and are challenged to find out how

various groups were able to contribute to a certain topic. For example, on the topic of the European settlers and Native Americans, the students can think about the Native Americans' beliefs about these events in addition to the Eurocentric views often projected in the United States' education curriculum. The social action approach builds on the transformative approach because it focuses on encouraging students to act "related to a concept, issue, or problem" (Roberts-Campbell, 2016, p. 282). Possible activities may be performing in small or large ensembles at political rallies as well as "using music as an opening to conversations with [people] following their performance" (Roberts-Campbell, 2016, p. 282).

In his book, *Marginalized Voices in Music Education*, Brent Talbot compiled a collection of narratives from people of marginalized backgrounds and their experiences in the United States music education curriculum. Designed to "bring light to inequalities in the music field and accounts from K-12 music experiences," this book highlights the stories that are often muted and untouched in American music education. The contributors represent and tell the stories of people of various races, religions, genders, sexualities, and disabilities. As music educators, there is pressure to succumb to the white and Eurocentric tendencies of music education that have been present for many decades. When teachers challenge the systemic forms of oppression in school, a more inclusive classroom is built using culturally responsive pedagogy (Talbot, 2018, p. 6). This book can help music teachers avoid these tendencies because it recounts the first-hand experiences of inequalities in the education system that translate to the music classroom. Reading this book is a way for music teachers to educate themselves about their students.

In her article, *Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum*, Ana Maria Villegas challenges collegiate teacher preparatory, collegiate programs to require multicultural education by having all students to take courses on multicultural, bilingual and

urban culture. Often, schools make these courses optional. Similarly, many music schools do not require their music education students to enroll in courses with these topics, and students can graduate without receiving this sort of preparation. Multicultural teachers have advocated for an "infusion strategy" where issues prevalent in multicultural education will be addressed and talked about in all courses. This is a positive, potential step in the right direction, but some argue that this will make dealing with multicultural education issues a "superficial treatment" (Villegas, 2002, p. 21).

Villegas goes on to describe the six characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher. While she is explaining this type of teacher in a general education setting, culturally responsive music teachers demonstrate the same qualities. The characteristics are being socioculturally conscious, having affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change, understanding how learners construct knowledge and knowing how to promote their knowledge growth, knowing about their students' lives and using their knowledge about the students' personal lives to design instruction based on what they know and scapegoating to build on this knowledge (Villegas 2002). When these aspects are "consciously and systematically woven throughout the learning experiences" (p. 22) of students in teacher preparatory programs, teachers will be better prepared to teach in a culturally responsive way.

There is a large amount of racial and socioeconomic diversity throughout the United States, not exclusively in major cities. When schools prepare teachers to be culturally responsive teachers, they are in turn preparing teachers to work in a diverse society. When there is a greater dialogue about "teaching and learning in a multicultural society" (Villegas, 2002, p. 30), change will start to be made in the way the future generations are participating in music class in schools.

In "Considering Culturally Responsive Teaching, Children, and Place in the Music Room," Wiens (2015) talked about the relationship between culturally responsive teaching and the idea of a place. When teachers show students that their cultures are accepted and when the teachers give their students a platform, to showcase their culture is monumental in culturally responsive teaching and music education. Wiens references Ladson-Billings' three categories for teachers to reference when being culturally responsive. The first is the conception of self and others, which is the fact that teachers must evaluate who they are and their unique background. When educators become self-aware, they can reflect on how their music background affects how they view their students. Teachers can ask themselves: how do I better serve my students and their unique environments? The conception of knowledge is about how teachers must always be changing and evolving their curriculum for it to reflect our consistently developing world. Social relations at its core is authentically educating. Freire says that, "authentic education is not carried on by "A" for "B" or by "A" about "B" but rather by "A" with "B," mediated by the world—a world that impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it" (Freire, 2013, p. 160).

Place refers to the sense of belonging that one feels when they feel "at home." The six characteristics of place are attraction, diversity, comfortableness, invitation, distinctiveness, and attachment. When these elements are distinguished in the music classroom, memories and cultural ties to this place will be created.

Abril observed a general music classroom where the teacher was teaching a unit on Peruvian music. The teacher said that she was doing this because many of her students spoke Spanish, many of them being Peruvian. The students learned to sing native Peruvian songs and perform them on Orff instruments such as xylophones and recorders and make their

arrangements using panpipes and various percussion instruments. After this experience, he began to research the difference between teaching about culture and being a culturally responsive teacher.

Abril wrote in his 2013 article *Toward a More Culturally Responsive General Music Classroom* that culturally responsive teaching is “dynamic, multidimensional, learned, socially constructed, and influenced by sociopolitical factors” (Abril, 2013, p. 6). Because of this, teachers should ask themselves how their students’ culture can be used for a more significant and personal classroom music experience.

Most music teachers in the United States are white and were most likely exposed to Eurocentric classroom music while growing up. This European music emphasis still has cultural roots. There are now new cultures that encompass the United States that have a right to be validated in the music classroom. To progress towards a more culturally responsive music education curriculum throughout the entire United States, Abril suggests that teachers do the following: see and know students, create a social learning community, recognize multiple perspectives and positions, connect beyond the classroom, and select multicultural music and materials (Abril 8). Elements such as seeing students as individuals sometimes seem commonplace in teachers, but white educators can always do more to gain a better understanding of their diverse classroom populations, and their distinctive strengths that are to be built on. This extends to a social learning community where teachers actively and frequently take in feedback from their students and what they want to learn about in the music classroom. When teachers recognize their position and validate their students' positions in the music classroom, they are in turn recognizing the students’ personal experiences and feelings towards music and putting them

into the curriculum. With the selection of diverse music and materials, the gap between home and school music will begin to compress.

Jorgensen (2009) challenges music educators in her article, "School Music Education and Change" to think about how their music programs can be altered to reflect their students' highest potential better. She goes on to acknowledge the frequently limited time music teachers are given with their students, and how this allows the music teachers little time to implement the overall goals of the school, school district, and national music standards. This short time paired with long hours under stressful conditions and low wages, music teacher burnout happens frequently. By affirming that music "is part of a greater cultural education" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 22), it is vital for teachers to react to the varying needs and interests of their students. Teachers may be uncomfortable with the fact that students may not want to learn the way they were taught to teach. Jorgensen says,

we can be forgiven for any resistance to changing the ways in which we do things because there is some security in sticking with what we already know how to do, and it is natural to desire security in our work as much as in the rest of our lived lives. (2009, p. 22)

In all settings, whether urban, rural, or suburban, public schools are beginning to be areas for poor or disadvantaged students. Private, charter and home schools are ways of heightening the getaway of privileged students and widening the gap between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

In music, we have a unique opportunity to connect our material and lessons to another subject that students may be learning about. Additionally, music can expose students to world

cultures that, as we become familiar with various types of music, allows us to "better understand our own culture and ourselves" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 23). For about 180 years, music education has become a staple of American life. Music can affect anyone's life, and most likely has, from listening to it on the radio to hearing it in a house of worship. There have been generations of music teachers who have instilled the standards of music, and it is essential to uphold these standards while adapting them to meet the needs of diverse populations of students.

DeLorenzo (2016) brings up the importance of music teachers "continuously renegotiating the practice of teaching music, to form and reform the materials and the pedagogy every day" (DeLorenzo, p. 218). In the chapter entitled "Democracy, Canon, and Culturally Responsive Teaching: Blurring the Edges in the Music Classroom" from the book "Giving voice to democracy in music education: Diversity and social justice," she discusses how many people who are born in the United States believe that immigrants must assimilate to their culture. The American society must become aware of the positive impact of "renegotiating identity on a continuous basis" (Kelly-McHale, 2016, p. 218) for minority and immigrant people instead of implying that immigrants need to be Americanized. Rethinking what it means to be American parallels the importance of music teachers reevaluating their pedagogy and the goals of music instruction. Through a culturally responsive lens, music teachers can eliminate placing Western art music materials as the central focus of music education. Alternatively, teachers should focus on "using the experiences and referents of students to build understanding and knowledge" (Kelly-McHale, 2016, p. 218). Kelly-McHale also brings up the positive influence of classrooms that are based on student-centered models. These classrooms may create a more democratically minded class. To prepare students to be contributing members of the American democratic society, music teachers must also emulate a working classroom like democracy. This can be

accomplished by allowing students a say in the selection of elements of the classroom, such as repertoire and activity ideas.

Through these readings, I learned about the importance of understanding students, building a curriculum around what the students are interested in, and the importance of understanding the community one works in. When one takes the time to ask questions and know their students as people, they begin to understand what the students are interested in. This is how teachers meet students where they are and can build up students' understanding of musical concepts. The local community and school have a significant effect on students as well as their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Understanding the community, in turn, helps teachers to understand students better.

Chapter 3 Method

The purpose of this research was to explore what music teachers in urban areas know about culturally responsive pedagogy, and how much they implement it into their everyday curriculum. This is something important for all educators to know so they can better serve their students. Participants were asked to answer a series of questions about their demographic information as well as information on their knowledge of culturally responsive teaching if they implement it, and how often they apply it.

Participants and Context

I surveyed all public school, K-12 music teachers in the city of Baltimore. Throughout the summer of 2018, I interned with OrchKids, an after-school and summer music program in Baltimore. OrchKids is sponsored by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and provides lessons, ensemble playing, and travel experience to students in the Baltimore public schools. This teaching experience made me curious to learn more about public school music teachers in cities, especially Baltimore, and what they know about culturally responsive music education.

Baltimore's recent history has been complicated, racially charged, and has likely affected the population numbers in the city. In 2018, Baltimore had an estimated population of 611,648. According to a Baltimore Sun article published on October 18, 2018, Baltimore has not experienced a weekend without a shooting since the murder of Freddie Gray. The article continues by citing that when the Freddie Gray riots occurred in April of 2015, there was a 40 percent rise in violent acts in Baltimore. Since then, the statistics have lowered but are notably higher than before April of 2015. Baltimore's population has been dropping off since the 1970s, but the spike in 2015 is highly notable. According to a Wall Street Journal article from May

2015, Baltimore's black population has remained somewhat stagnant and rising slightly from 48 to 56% since the 1970s, while the white population has continued to lower from 51 to 26%.

As of 2018, Baltimore's demographics are 63.7% black, 29.6% white, 2.3% Asian, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2.1% two or more races, 1.8% other races, and 4.2% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish of any race. Even though white is not the majority race in Baltimore, white people in Baltimore are almost half as likely to be in poverty than any other race; 12.71% of white people in poverty while 20.66% of Asian people are in poverty. The numbers continue to increase, with 25.74% of Hispanic people and 26.47% of Black people living in poverty. The number is hugely concerning for the 44.88% of Native peoples living in poverty, while there are only 1,805 Native people in Baltimore. About the United States as a whole, Baltimore's poverty rate was 6.5% higher than the national average and 13% higher than the Maryland average in 2010. While Black is the majority race of Baltimore, Black people also have the highest unemployment rate at 13.9%. White people are the second largest race in Baltimore, but they have the second lowest unemployment rate of 4.4%, followed by Asian people with 3.4%.

According to the Major Cities Chiefs Association's Violent Crime Survey, Baltimore had one of the highest homicide rates in the major Northeast cities in 2017. This was a survey of the national totals and year-end comparison from January 1 to December 31, 2017, and 2016. Additionally, a Baltimore Sun article published on October 18, 2018, reported that Baltimore has not had a weekend without a shooting since the infamous death of Freddie Gray in April 2015 which sparked riots and international news coverage. Music teachers who teach in locations other than a major city in the United States, as well as music teachers who teach in cities other than Baltimore, were excluded from this survey. All teachers who teach subjects other than music were also excluded.

Procedure

The participants of this study were the music teachers in K-12 schools in Baltimore. To reach these teachers, I contacted the Arts Director of each school district and sent them both information on my survey as well as the link and directions for how music teachers are to answer the survey. These directors were identified through the specific school district's website. In the email, I requested that they forward the information to the music teachers in their public school district. Email reminders were sent as appropriate based on the responses I received from the art directors.

The recruitment materials were emails that were sent to each director of the arts in each city's public school district which will then be forwarded to the teachers of their school district. For the study, I used Google Forms to collect the data. There was no identifiable information in the data, and I included in the consent form that this is not a secure platform.

The survey was created and based on the following research questions:

1. What do music teachers in cities know about culturally responsive pedagogy?
2. How often do music teachers in cities evaluate their teaching to benefit the cultural identity of their students?
3. How aware are urban music teachers of the identities, cultural backgrounds and emotional well-being of their students?
4. What advice do music teachers in cities have for other music teachers in cities on the topic of culturally responsive teaching?
5. What do music teachers in cities do to make their classrooms culturally responsive?

The questionnaire gathered information about the teacher's basic demographic information including how long they have been teaching, how long they have been at this specific school, what grades they teach, their race, and gender they identify with. These were followed by a series of questions which included the following: Do you know what culturally responsive teaching is? How often do you take your students' opinions into account when lesson planning/deciding on future pieces to work on? How often do you see your students? What are the demographics of your students? How do you employ empathy in your daily teaching? How often do you evaluate your teaching and curriculum so that it better reflects the cultural identities of your students?

Chapter 4 Data and Results

From this survey, I had the opportunity to learn what working urban music educators think and know about culturally responsive music education, and how they implement it into their classroom. The data from the survey was downloaded once a week. When the survey was closed, I had received useable responses from 11 Baltimore city teachers. Most of the teachers surveyed were teaching for at least six years in Baltimore and had a master's degree. They have all been teaching in an urban environment for at least six years as well and are all public school music teachers.

Below, I provide a snapshot of each teacher's response with pseudonyms to identify each of them. These answers are organized in the most to least privileged in the United States. The answers go from white male teachers to white female teachers to African American for Black male teachers to African American or Black female teachers.

Teacher A has been teaching elementary (K-5) music in an urban setting for over six years, and in the Baltimore Public School District for 4-5 years. He holds a master's degree and identifies as a white male in the age range of 25-34 years old. He sees his students twice a week, and for each lesson, he takes his students opinions into account when planning for music class activities. The race of the majority of his school and his classroom's students is black or African American. When asked for his definition of culturally responsive music education, he said, "To place value in the interests and knowledge that students bring to the classroom to build new understanding and connections from that interest knowledge." He describes his classroom as "student-driven," being led by their interests and opinions.

Furthermore, he says, "Because everything is built around this community, empathy naturally occurs." Teacher A says the most important qualities for teachers in urban settings to have been having an openness to the interests of students and placing educational and cultural value in the music that they are interested in. He says that "The same musical concepts that music educators were taught at universities to teach their students are just as prevalent in the music that students are interested as they are in old folk songs and the classical canon." For future urban educators, he recommends being open to exploring musical concepts with current music. This can be done by drawing connections between concepts in "current music and historical or "exemplary" music." Nonetheless, he does not believe that the current political climate has affected his music students or classroom environment. The most prominent ways that Teacher A evaluates his teaching for it to reflect the cultural identities of students are repertoire, teaching strategies, classroom environment (such as posters), instruments, games, and classroom management.

Teacher B is also a white male with a master's degree, teaching in a majority Black for African American school with this reflected in his music classroom. He has been teaching in an urban setting, in Baltimore, and the Baltimore city public schools for over six years. As a high school (9-12) music teacher, to him, culturally responsive music education means, "to include repertoire that is relevant to the population I teach while educating them about music that is less familiar to them." He sees his students every day and incorporates his students' opinions when planning future music classroom activities weekly, with some of each weekly lesson. When asked what some of the essential qualities are that music teachers should have when teaching in an urban setting, Teacher B responded, "know your students" for the students to "learn to appreciate different music. First, they have to have the music they are familiar with validated."

He does not feel as though the national political climate has affected his music students or classroom environment, but he does “sometimes include selections that speak to social issues of the day.” Furthermore, he advises future urban educators to include repertoire the students choose as “you will have more buy-in from students.” As he is a white male in an urban setting, he does his best to employ empathy and says, “I understand the circumstances that many of my students come from and try to accommodate them.”

Teacher C is also a male with a master's degree, did not disclose his race, and is between the ages of 35-44 years old. He has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. He teaches elementary (K-5), and intermediate/middle (6-8) music and has heard of culturally responsive music education but did not provide his definition. He says that he "rarely" takes his students' opinions into account when completing daily lesson plans and deciding on future music class activities and says that he does not evaluate his teaching, so that reflects the cultural identities of his students. He sees his students every day, and his students are mainly Black or African American, as is the school's population. He believes that patience is one of the essential qualities for urban educators to have and does not think that the national political climate has personally affected his music students and the classroom environment.

Teacher D is a white female with a master's degree between the ages of 45-54 years old. She has been teaching in the city of Baltimore and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. She teaches elementary (K-5 music) and has heard of culturally responsive music education before. She describes it as, "Presenting songs, stories, and activities that give a voice to people from all walks of life." She sees her students once a week and incorporate her students' opinions into her weekly lesson planning and deciding on future music class activities. Most of her school's population and music classroom population is white. She does her best to employ

empathy into her daily teaching with things such as "holidays and current events." To better reflect the cultural identities of her students, Teacher D uses her classroom environment (such as posters), games, and classroom management. When asked if she feels that the recent national political climate has personally affected her music students and classroom environment, she responded: "we communicate more frequently about how people are feeling." When teaching in an urban setting, she believes that music teachers should have, "tolerance, empathy, understanding, and flexibility" which teach children to "also exhibit these qualities." Lastly, she advises that listening and modeling are vital in meeting the perceived needs of students.

Teacher E is a white female with a master's degree between the ages of 35-44 years old. She has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. She currently teaches elementary (K-5) and intermediate/middle (6-8) level music. When asked what it means to be a culturally responsive music teacher and if she has heard of it, she said that she has heard of it and that it means to, "Meet my students where they are academically, socially, and emotionally," and "connect with them using musicians/music who represent their cultures/heritage." She sees her students every other day. For each class, she takes some of her students' opinions into account when planning lessons and deciding on future music class activities. Most of her school's population is white, and the majority of her classroom's population is Black or African American. When asked if she feels she employs empathy daily, she responded, "Yes. My students come from a variety of situations and home lives, and I try to take that into account." She uses repertoire, the classroom environment (such as posters), and classroom management when evaluating her teaching strategies so that it reflects the cultural identities of her students. When asked if she feels the current national political climate has

personally affected her music students and her classroom environment, she responded, "Yes. I have had black students tell me that their parents said they don't need to listen to white teachers."

Moreover, when asked what some of the most important qualities music teachers should have when teaching in an urban setting, she responded, "I think the most important thing is to remember that your students are different from you. They didn't grow up as we did. They often come with trauma and emotional difficulties, and they can be judgmental and don't trust easily. I'm not exactly sure what quality I would call that - maybe being empathetic, or non-judgmental." She says these qualities are important because "Students come from a variety of situations. Many of them are in a box when it comes to music. They only know what they hear/like, and if you try to shove something else down their throat, it won't work. Being able to connect with your students through what they already are familiar with will help them understand what you want them to learn and why it's important to learn it." The next question was, "If you frequently adjust your music teaching to meet the perceived needs of your students, what advice do you have for others to do the same?" She responded, "Do it and do it often. If you don't know how to, find resources that will show you. It makes a huge difference in the way you see your students and the way they see you."

Teacher F is a Black or African American female between the ages of 35-44 years old and holds a master's degree. She has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. She teaches high school (9-12) music and has heard of culturally responsive teaching. When asked what it means to her, she said that culturally responsive music education "means to meet the students where they are by studying the subcultures they're surrounded by, listening [to] the needs of their particular community and planning lessons in which students can actively see themselves in." She sees her students every day and every week.

For some of each lesson, she incorporates her students' opinions into the lesson planning and ideas for future music class activities. She says she does employ empathy daily, and her school's students and music classroom students are mainly Black or African American. Repertoire, teaching strategies, classroom environment (such as posters), instruments, and classroom management are the ways that she evaluates her teaching so that it reflects the cultural identities of her students. She does not feel that the national political climate has affected her music students and her classroom environment. In her opinion, some of the most important qualities music teachers should have when teaching in an urban setting are to be engaging and relevant because "students who feel like you have taken the time to know you will respect you more."

Teacher G is a Black or African American female between the ages of 45-54 years old. She holds a master's degree and has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. She is currently an elementary (K-5) music teacher. Teacher G has heard of culturally responsive music education, and when asked what it means to her to be a culturally responsive music teacher, she responded that it is "teaching that includes other cultures outside of the 'dominant' (i.e., European). Students are exposed to music from other parts of the world.

Additionally, if the student population is primarily African American, then those students are exposed to music from that culture in addition to the dominant." She sees her students one time a week but says she incorporates her students' opinions into her daily lesson planning and decisions for future music class activities every week and most of each lesson. Most of her students at her school are white, and the majority of her students in her classroom is white. When asked if she feels she employs empathy in her day-to-day music classroom, she said, "Yes. There is a large ESOL population, and as such, I have to be mindful of how I communicate." Teacher G

uses repertoire and classroom management to evaluate her teaching so that it reflects the cultural identities of her students. She responded, "I am not sure" when asked if she feels the current political climate has personally affected her music students and her classroom environment. One of the most important qualities she believes music teachers should have when teaching in urban settings is "EMPATHY, not sympathy." For other urban educators looking to adjust their music teaching to meet the perceived needs of their students, she suggests, the teachers "take surveys to know what your students are interested in. Incorporate their music into lessons when appropriate (I have taught the Nay Nay on recorder...!)."

Teacher H is a Black or African American male with a master's degree between the ages of 35-44 years old. He has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. He currently teaches high school (9-12) music and has heard of culturally responsive teaching. When asked what it means to him to be a culturally responsive music teacher, he said that it is, "to understand the demographic you teach and build relationships based on it and use the information to inform your instruction." He sees his students every day, and most of each daily lesson plans and decisions on future classroom activities include students' opinions. He feels he employs empathy in his day-to-day music classroom, and the majority of both his school and classroom students are Black or African American. Teacher H uses teaching strategies to evaluate his teaching so that it better reflects the cultural identities of his students.

Additionally, he does feel the national political climate has affected his music students and classroom environment and said that his "Latino students wish to make more music from their country to show pride and honor their relative left behind." Moreover, "cultural awareness and sensitivity" are two of the most important qualities he says urban music educators can have. These qualities are important because "You never want to offend and you want to be respectful

and inclusive of all." Teacher H suggests building relationships and being authentic when advising music teachers who are looking to adjust their teaching to meet the perceived needs of their students better.

Teacher I is a Black or African American male with a bachelor's degree between the ages of 25-34 years old. He has been teaching in Baltimore for over six years, and in the Baltimore public schools for 4-5 years. He teaches intermediate/middle (6-8) music and has heard of culturally responsive teaching. When asked what it means to him to be a culturally responsive teacher, he responded that a culturally responsive music teacher is "what makes the difference to see optimal growth in the students. It makes absolutely no sense to teach things that the students deem irrelevant. They won't be interested, they won't retain it, and as a teacher, prepare for challenges in the classroom setting. However, a socio-emotional and culturally responsive teacher will understand what the student enjoys, how the student learns and will be proactive with connecting the required content to what's happening in the world around the student. I always say that a student does not naturally care about Bach. So how can I make connections for my students to be motivated about learning Bach?

Moreover, I begin doing research and discovery about content that can connect 2018 or the like to ideas, beliefs, and music, media, etc. that can open the musical mind to prepare for the beauty of the Baroque period and Bach." He sees his students every day and incorporates his students' opinions into some of each day's lesson and music activity planning. The majority of both his school's and classroom's populations are Black or African American. When asked if he feels he employs empathy in his day-to-day teaching, Teacher I said, "Most definitely. However, I'm naturally an empathetic person, so it spills out in my day to day interactions. It's just how I am. I don't have any specific examples, but they understand that I have feelings and opinions just

like they do. Also, that helps when I identify the importance of something, and why I want them or need them to feel passionate about it."

Classroom management was the most significant way he evaluates his teaching so that it reflects the cultural identities of his students. When asked if the national political climate has personally affected his students and classroom environment, he responded, "Absolutely. My students feel the weight of being black. I say that because they feel attacked by society, and are more afraid of the police than ever before. Things like that." Being personal in nature, and "definitely awareness of socio-economic needs" are two of the most important qualities he believes music teachers should have when teaching in urban settings.

Teacher J is a Black or African American male with a master's degree between the ages of 35-44 years old. He has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. He teaches high school (9-12) music and has not heard of culturally responsive teaching. To him, culturally responsive music education is, "the importance of speaking and communicating cultural experiences in the classroom. This style of teaching allows us to discuss current topics." He sees his students every day and takes their opinions into account of his monthly lesson planning and ideas for future music activities. Most of the school's population and his classroom's population is Black or African American. Teacher J uses repertoire, teaching strategies, classroom environment (such as posters), and classroom management when evaluating his teaching so that it reflects the cultural identities of his students. He does feel that the recent national political climate has personally affected his music students and classroom environment. He has adjusted his resources and content because of this. When teaching in urban settings, he believes it is important for music teachers to have management skills and "tools for success" because "you can speak to the student and grow the individual and self." He again emphasizes

"knowing your content" when advising other music teachers who are looking to adjust their teaching to meet the perceived needs of their students.

Teacher K is a Black or African American male with a master's degree between the ages of 35-44 years old. He currently teaches high school (9-12) music and has been teaching in an urban setting and the Baltimore public schools for over six years. He has heard of culturally responsive teaching but did not list his definition of what it means to be a culturally responsive music teacher. He sees his students every day and responded "rarely" to the question of how much of his daily lesson planning and deciding on future music class activities takes his students' opinions into account. The race of the majority of his school's students and his music classroom students is Black or African American. Teacher K responded, "N/A" to the question of if he feels he employs empathy in his day-to-day music classroom. His teaching strategies, classroom environment (such as posters), and classroom management are ways that he evaluates his teaching so that it reflects the cultural identities of his students. He does not feel as though the national political climate has personally affected his music students and his classroom environment. For music teachers in urban settings, he believes that important qualities are, "Strict but fair. An understanding that all students are capable if they are given the correct tools to be successful. Hold students accountable no matter their background." Teacher K believes that these qualities are influential to the student's musical experiences because "instruments/ vocal ability does not favor race nor gender. If a student wishes to take on music they must be willing to commit to practicing to become better." He then provides the quote, "We can only be better than the musician we were the day before."

From this survey, I found that many music teachers in the Baltimore City Public Schools have heard of culturally responsive teaching. As stated in the snapshots of teachers A, B, D, E, F,

G, H, and I, teachers in Baltimore have a central idea of what culturally responsive teaching is. Of the nine teachers who elaborated on what culturally responsive music education means to them, six mentioned valuing or including what the students find important in the music curriculum.

From the survey, I found that most of the teachers surveyed were teaching for at least six years in Baltimore and had a master's degree. They have all been teaching in an urban environment for at least six years as well and are all public school music teachers. Teaching is an art form that takes many years, if not decades to master. Music is alive in every culture, and I believe that there is no one right way to teach it. Things such as repertoire selection lead to student buy-in, as Teacher B stated, which allows you to meet students where they are and build musical knowledge.

Words often used were "understanding," "including," and "meet students." One of the aspects of an influential teacher is their ability to understand their students. By understanding the community one is going into, a teacher will do a better job of meeting students where they are. Meeting students where they are is critical in building their knowledge and growth. An example of this could be relating what students already know to what you want them to know. This relationship makes it more interesting and more impressionable on them. The music teachers I surveyed from Baltimore have a clear understanding of the fundamentals of culturally responsive teaching.

Chapter 5 Discussion

From this data, the common themes were a community, the type of population a teacher is serving, and choosing activities and repertoire that students are interested in. Many of the teachers surveyed mentioned the importance of communicating openly with your students to create a community in the classroom. Understanding the demographics in the area that you are teaching in has the power to help foster this classroom community. Lastly, meeting students where they are, and understanding what they already know and are interested in helps to create continued interest in music.

Community

A community is what defines a group of people and what brings them together. This can be the people, what students like to do outside of school, the values of the community inside and outside of school, what people do for fun in the community, what kind of music students are interested in inside and outside of school, and how people celebrate, perhaps in public ways. Every community has unique qualities with different values. It is vital to research the community and bring people in from the community to showcase certain musical traditions of that area (McKoy, p. 121). Community groups can bring their knowledge of the history of the community to the music classroom. Bringing in members of the community can also be beneficial when searching for role models that are more reflective of your students. McKoy cites an example in her 2016 book of a female teacher looking for a vocal model for her male students. By bringing in community members, these male students now had role models that were like themselves.

Parts of Baltimore, for example, are mainly Black or African American. As Teacher I mentioned, his students currently feel the weight of being black "more than ever before." This is most likely from the influx of police brutality and gun violence in the city of Baltimore throughout the last four years. To be effective, all teachers must reflect on the community and what has affected the community in emotional and social ways. A teacher may be going into a community that is entirely different from the community they were raised in, and the community may not initially be trusting of them. Nonetheless, by being an authentic version of yourself who shows they want to understand their students, a teacher will be successful in creating meaningful and trusting relationships with their community.

By researching the community that a teacher is in, they can better understand their students, anticipate their needs, and better understand the environment they are going into. I believe that cities with abnormally high homicide rates affect the well-being of children. When children are exposed to these conditions, they are emotionally, socially and environmentally changed negatively, which could lead to a need for music teachers to be culturally responsive to these challenges. When a teacher is aware of their community, they may create a place of belonging for their students in the classroom. In a child's development, having a place of belonging both in and out of school allows them to grow without particular social and emotional barriers. When a person feels "at home," they feel a sense of place is created. The music classroom has a unique ability to create a place of belonging with ties to diversity, comfortableness, invitation, distinctiveness, and attachment (McKoy, 2016). Whether in an ensemble or a classroom, music can build positive, meaningful memories that shape students into future adults. When children are given a place to feel free to express themselves, paired with a community of like-minded people, a sense of belonging is created.

Change of Population

From 1980-2010, the U.S. census showed that there was a 158.2% rise in people who speak a language other than English in the home. The languages with the most significant change were Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, Persian, and Spanish. Most everyone in the United States is a descendant of an immigrant coming from a different part of the world. Because the United States is a melting pot of many different cultures from various regions. This cultural, demographic shift is also notable in Baltimore where the white population has significantly declined since 1970 while the minority populations have increased considerably.

When teachers are demographically different from their students, it is their job to be even more understanding and empathetic. A teacher can make a positive impact on their students if they are aware of their internal bias and privilege they have and bring to the classroom. When teachers do this, they build a trusting relationship with their students, regardless of whether they look like their students or not. As Freire writes in his fourth letter in "Those who Dare to Teach," he writes that humility is crucial in understanding students and straying from an authoritarian teaching pedagogy. Humility allows us to take a step back and realize that our teachers are our students as well (Freire, 2006, p. 208).

An interesting find was the teachers who responded "no" to the political effect question. Students in Baltimore are most likely aware of the spike in violence in Baltimore throughout the last several years. This paired with the national political tension that has been felt since November 2016 has the chance of making students feel unsafe, unheard, and misunderstood. During times where students do not see themselves reflected in the current political makeup of the United States, it is essential for teachers to be reflecting on their own biases and how they can alter these to reflect the interests of their students better. Several Baltimore music teachers

who participated in the survey addressed the importance of knowing your students and how individual perceptions of students alter the view the education system has of them.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

For future research, I suggest exploring what teachers in suburban and rural areas know about culturally responsive teaching. While these areas are geographically different from urban areas, there are societal and economic inequalities that are deeply rooted in suburban and rural areas. I hypothesize that similar issues exist in these areas, and the overlap between what urban, suburban, and rural music educators know about culturally responsive teaching would be worth researching.

Furthermore, I suggest that teachers in urban settings research the area where they teach. While it is simple to generalize urban areas versus rural and suburban areas, each community has its values and cultural norms that make it unique. The political and demographic history of Baltimore, for instance, is not the same as the political and demographic history of another large American city. While the population shifts may be similar in nature, each community is unique to each specific area. When teachers, especially teachers who do not look like the demographics of their students, are in unfamiliar communities, it is their job to understand the community and figure out how they can better serve their community through their occupation.

My student teaching experience in Williamsport, PA was in a school where 65% of students are economically disadvantaged. This number can be considered low when comparing it to other cities, but it is rather high for central Pennsylvania. Going into this experience, I wanted to be someone who was approachable and could positively fit into the school community. I have found that regardless of location, being aware of your students' backgrounds leads to better

teacher-student relationships. What music teachers in large cities do to make their classrooms more culturally responsive are the same things that teachers in smaller cities do.

In my experience in the 6th-grade general music classroom, I took the song ‘Havana’ by Camila Cabello and arranged it for classroom instruments for a unit on Latin American music. My goal was for the students to experience Latin American rhythms, African-influenced Cuban styles of music, and how our American pop music relates to other cultures’ music. By meeting the students where they are, I related a song that the students listened to on the radio to what they were learning in music class.

Overall though my teaching experience and research, I have found that children need supportive, caring adults in their lives who set positive examples. I believe that if a music teacher sincerely cares about the well-being and growth of their students, they will take pride in being a culturally responsive music educator.

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