“AM I RACIST OR ARE MY ACTIONS RACIST?”: EXPERIENCES OF FOUR MUSIC EDUCATORS WHO LEARN ABOUT CRITICAL RACE THEORY

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Music Education—Doctor of Philosophy

2021

ABSTRACT

“AM I RACIST OR ARE MY ACTIONS RACIST?”: EXPERIENCES OF FOUR MUSIC EDUCATORS WHO LEARN ABOUT CRITICAL RACE THEORY

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In this study, I critically examined the experiences of four music teachers who learned about critical race theory (CRT) in a professional learning community (PLC) in an effort to enhance teachers’ understandings of race and racism in music education. The participants engaged in readings, online reflections, discussions, and interactive lectures based on the five central CRT tenets: *counternarratives, ordinariness, Whiteness as property, intersectionality, and interest convergence*. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do the music teachers’ perceptions of CRT evolve within the professional learning community experience?
2. How might an understanding of CRT influence music teachers’ practices/pedagogical choices?
3. How might participation in the PLC transform their approach toward race and racism? What, if any, transformations took place?

These questions highlight teacher growth and reflection—a tool necessary for liberation (Lorde, 2007). Additionally, understanding race and racism in music education provides an opportunity to address racism through philosophical shifts and pedagogical changes.

For this study, I employed an instrumental embedded case study (Yin, 2009) with multiple units of analysis in order to capture a deeper understanding of the participants’ experience. I used transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) as an analytical lens to examine and explore if and/or how the participants experienced transformation throughout the

PLC. I centered my analysis on the disorienting dilemmas (situations that challenge participants' world views) the participants experienced during the PLC.

The findings from this study suggest that learning about CRT in the context of a PLC can create an opportunity for participants to experience a foundational shift in understanding race and racism, both as music educators and in their individual lives. As participants expanded their understanding of racism, they critiqued common practices in music education such as the dominance of Western European classical music. Through deep, critical reflection, they questioned if they or their practices were racist. During this experience, the participants identified how their understanding of racism expanded in a way that recognizes racist structures in addition to individual racist acts. This expansion can shift perspectives and change actions inside the classroom to center and create music teaching practices that challenge structural racism.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather, Jay McShann, and my ancestors for their contributions to my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this study was a challenging journey filled with incredible support. I would not have completed this study if it were not for the never-ending encouragement, advocacy, and care from the following people.

To my advisor, Dr. Juliet Hess, I am profoundly grateful for your presence in my life. Your strong advocacy and direction helped me fully recognize my abilities and potential. You encouraged me to think big and to speak my mind. Your guidance truly helped me develop my scholarly voice. You continuously took the time and provided the consistency needed to help me grow and establish my academic presence.

To my committee members, I deeply appreciate your support throughout this entire experience. To Dr. Sandra Snow, I am grateful for your uplifting presence and for encouraging me to emphasize my voice. To Dr. Mitch Robinson, thank you for your thorough direction and discernment. To Dr. Michael Largey, thank you for your persistent encouraging words during my time at Michigan State University (MSU) and beyond. Each of you have significantly helped me complete this dissertation!

To Ty, Beth, Jesse, and Angela, (pseudonyms), thank you for joining me in this journey. Your participation in this study provided great insight. I am grateful that music teachers like you exist.

To Dr. Deb Bradley, thank you for prioritizing my work and serving as copy editor on this dissertation. I am grateful for your notable insights and encouragement.

To all of the friends I cultivated throughout my life and in Lansing, I am grateful for your friendships and continued support. To my fellow MSU cohort members, Dr. Latasha Thomas-

Durrell and Dr. Adrienne Rodriguez, I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from and with you during our time at MSU. I look forward to seeing our professional lives grow. We did it y'all!

To my new colleagues, friends, and support system at James Madison University (JMU), I thank you for the guidance provided through the Preparing Future Faculty program (PFF) and beyond. To Dr. Jesse Rathgeber, I would not have known or considered the PFF opportunity if you had not invited me to be a visiting scholar at JMU. For that, I thank you.

Thank you to my parents, siblings, aunts, cousins, nieces, and nephews (all of y'all)!! You have been a consistent foundation throughout my life. You all told me that I can achieve absolutely anything, and I had the nerve to believe you. Mama, you made incredible sacrifices to ensure I had access to multiple avenues to learn and develop my love for music. I cannot say thank you enough for your love and for championing me throughout my life! Daddy, thank you for your ongoing multifaceted support. Our breakfast conversations that focused on the critiques of capitalism created a desire for me to better understand inequities in our society. To my twin sister, Dr. Tiffany Bourgeois, I am beyond grateful to have a sister as caring and dedicated as you. Your unwavering presence and support, in addition to your ability to provide motivation, reassurance, and unsolicited advice, truly helped me reach the finish line.

Finally, to my future wife, Quinn Allegra Jiles, you began this journey with me by taking a leap of faith and moving to Lansing, MI. Together, we created a strong foundation filled with steady encouragement and support. Your perspective and presence have helped me grow in unimaginable ways. You, our two fur babies, Cardboard and Sir Madam Goddess Aslan Box, plus our various plants create so much warmth and love. I am grateful and excited to continue my life with you. I love you

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
Critical Race Theory 5
Ordinariness 7
Whiteness as Property 9
Interest Convergence 10
Counternarratives 11
Intersectionality 12
Tenet Summary 13
CRT and Music Education 14
Ordinariness 16
Whiteness as Property 16
Interest Convergence 17
Counternarratives 18
Intersectionality 18
Summary 19
A Professional Learning Community Drawing upon CRT 20
PLC Research 20
PLCs in Music Education 22
Theoretical Framework 25
Reflective Learning and Critical Reflection 27
Transformative Theory in Education and Music Education 27
Transformative Learning Theory and the Current Project 29
Need for The Study 29
Summary and Purpose Statement 30

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW 32
The Tanglewood Symposium 32
Multicultural Music Education 37
Social Justice in Music Education 41
Democracy in Music Education 42
Critique of Musical Hierarchies 44
Culturally Responsive Music Education 47
Critical Perspective 48
Embracing Critical Pedagogy 50
Critical Perspectives of Race 51
Critique of the Democratic Approach 55
Decolonizing Music Education 56
Addressing Positionality 58
Pushing Forward 59

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 61
Project Design 61

Case Study Definition and Approaches ... 61
Professional Development Case Studies in Music Education ... 65
Data Collection and the Professional Learning Community ... 67
Interviews and Participant Journals ... 67
The Professional Learning Community ... 68
Participant Selection ... 69
Role of the Researcher ... 69
Data Analysis ... 71
Memos ... 71
Coding Process ... 71
Trustworthiness ... 73
Introduction of Participants ... 74
Beth Crosby ... 75
Angela ... 77
Ty ... 78
Jesse ... 80
Summary ... 83

CHAPTER FOUR: ENGAGING CRITICAL RACE THEORY AS MUSIC EDUCATORS ... 84
Counternarratives ... 85
Questions ... 86
Reflections ... 88
Challenges ... 88
Revelations ... 91
Summary ... 92
Ordinariness ... 92
Questions ... 93
Reflections ... 94
Challenges ... 95
Revelations ... 96
Summary ... 97
Whiteness as Property ... 97
Questions ... 98
Reflections ... 98
Challenges ... 100
Revelations ... 101
Summary ... 102
Intersectionality ... 102
Questions ... 103
Reflections ... 105
Challenges ... 106
Revelations ... 106
Summary ... 107
Interest Convergence ... 107
Questions ... 107
Reflections ... 108
Challenges ... 109

Revelation 110
Summary 111
Chapter Summary 111

CHAPTER FIVE: APPLYING CRITICAL RACE THEORY TO MUSIC TEACHING PRACTICES 113
Critical Self-Reflection 114
Noticing 115
Critiquing Common Teaching Practices 118
Summary 123
Highlighting Student Narratives and Stories 123
Constructing Counterstories 125
Storytelling as Empowering Community 128
Summary 130
Chapter Summary 131

CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING TRANSFORMATION 133
Transformative Experiences 135
Understanding Racism as a System 136
Am I Racist? 139
Responsibility to Address Racism 144
Summary 147
Future of Music Education 148
Dreams for Music Education 149
Hopes for Themselves as Music Teachers 151
Reflection on Initial Goals 153
Summary 156
Chapter Summary 156

CHAPTER SEVEN: CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE THROUGH FOUNDATIONAL SHIFTS 158
Discussion 158
CRT in Music Education 158
Ordinariness 159
Counternarratives 160
Intersecting Identities 161
Understanding Whiteness 162
The Interests that Must Converge 163
Summary 163
Implications 164
Beyond Awareness—Toward Transformation 165
Expanding Music Education 171
Challenging Current Barriers 173
Implications Summary 174
Suggestions for Future Research 175
Concluding Thoughts 176

APPENDICES 179
APPENDIX A: Research Participant Information and Consent Form 180
APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol 184
APPENDIX C: CRT Curriculum Calendar 186

REFERENCES 188

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It was a cold winter afternoon near the end of February 2012. I was driving home, listening to the radio, when the desperate pleas of a grieving mother about her murdered son caught my ear. I turned the radio volume up so I could clearly hear her words of desperation. The grieving mother's voice belonged to Sabrina Fulton, Trayvon Martin's mother. She boldly exclaimed that earlier that week, her teenage son had been murdered in cold blood, and the murderer was released from jail without any charges due to the "stand your ground" laws in Florida. As I listened to this grieving mother, I almost had to pull the car over because I was in such a state of shock. I could not understand how a man that murdered a young teen could be released without any type of investigation. As soon as I arrived home from what seemed like the longest drive from work, I began searching for articles and scrolling through social media to see what others had said about Trayvon Martin's murder. What I found confirmed my suspicions. Trayvon Martin, a teenage Black boy, was murdered by a White-passing adult male, and the police astonishingly decided that the murder was justified. They unjustly released the murderer. Trayvon Martin's murderer was finally brought to trial years later and was ultimately acquitted. In the immediate wake of the acquittal, Alicia Garza wrote an open love letter to the United States and, alongside Opal Tameti and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, coined a simple hashtag: #blacklivesmatter (Garza, 2013 as cited in Jennings, 2020).

These stunningly unimaginable events, the murder and the acquittal, forced me to realize that my role as an educator bears the responsibility to address racism and all forms of oppression, not only with the students I teach, but also with my fellow colleagues. As racial unrest increased following Trayvon Martin's murder, I immersed myself in books and articles about present-day

oppression. I became more overt and explicit in conversations and lessons regarding current societal issues and the importance of community with students and colleagues.

As one of few Black employees in a MidWestern suburban school district, experiencing the rise of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement significantly shaped my identity as a teacher. When I spoke to individual colleagues about Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, mass incarceration, or police brutality, some would listen, others would try to provide any explanation besides racism; few were enraged and engulfed with emotion, and many seemed to passively ignore the current racial unrest within our society. I was consistently shocked by the unbothered reactions from many of my colleagues.

Frustrated by the lack of acknowledgment of the Black Lives Matter movement, I decided that I was going to speak up at an upcoming staff meeting. During the end of every staff meeting, the principal provided an opportunity for staff members to speak openly about anything they believed to be important. As this particular staff meeting began winding down, I thought about what I would say to my colleagues. My heart began to race, and my hands began to sweat. When the floor opened for me to speak, I calmly and directly stated that the Black Lives Matter movement is not going away any time soon and cannot be ignored. I also encouraged my teacher colleagues to embrace and learn about the BLM movement in order to best facilitate conversations and questions from students regarding the current movement and the systemic oppression of Black people. The silence in response thunders in my ear to this day. There were no follow-up comments or questions to my statement—just an uneasy silence. The meeting ended hastily and awkwardly.

I could not understand their reticence on such a timely, relevant, and important topic. I questioned if their response indicated that they did not know how to respond to such a

suggestion, felt too uncomfortable to respond, or shied away for a multitude of other reasons. At that moment, I pondered the many possibilities to incorporate Black Lives Matter into my music classroom and wondered if any other teachers were similarly reflecting. This experience prompted the desire to pursue my Ph.D. in order to explore ways to engage educators on difficult topics like the Black Lives Matter movement.

When I moved to a different mid-western town, my involvement in Black Lives Matter evolved from being an advocate to becoming a dedicated member in the local chapter. I helped organize rallies, orientations, and candidate forums with that particular BLM team. I often combined my scholarly efforts with my participation in BLM through conference presentations and my involvement with Election 20XX—an electoral justice educational platform.[1]

My experience with BLM provided a platform to investigate potential ways to engage colleagues in discussion and prompted several questions such as: Why are teachers hesitant to talk about Black Lives Matter? What understanding or vocabulary is necessary to sustain conversations about race and racism? How can educators and music educators better understand racism and systems of oppression? How can music education innovate ways to consider and discuss racism in their practices? Why is discussing racism still considered taboo? These questions led me to explore ways educators and scholars understand race and racism in their classroom. I sought to better understand how educators can best recognize racism and racist practices in their teaching and in education.

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[1] Election 20XX provides electoral education through forums, debates, and community events. See https://www.election20xx.com/ for more information.

These questions prompted considerations of how educators can expand their understanding of race and racism. If my fellow educators did not have the language to have a conversation about race and Black Lives Matter, then perhaps an immersive professional learning community (PLC) could help teachers to engage with race in the classroom. Professional learning communities provide opportunities for educators to gain new knowledge and experiences in order to best support student learning and growth (Hord, 2009; Stoll et al., 2006). In such a learning environment, music educators might explore how they can best learn to recognize and understand racism in their classrooms. Recognizing that discussing race and racism can be an uncomfortable conversation and that many teachers have not engaged in direct courses about race or racism in their teacher education courses, a well-facilitated professional development community might support the discomfort needed for understanding race and racism.

This desire to better understand race and racism for myself and fellow colleagues led me to explore critical race theory (CRT) as a framework to understand, recognize, and fight against forms of systemic oppression such as racism (Bell 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson & Anderson, 2014 Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solózano & Yosso, 2002). Although I have experienced racism as a Black woman, CRT expanded my understanding of racism on a systemic level. CRT has influenced my career, teaching practices, and the impetus for this project—a professional learning community for music educators focused on critical race theory. This project aims to establish a better understanding of race and racism in music education.

I define CRT by introducing tenets I explored with practicing teachers, and I examine CRT's presence in music education. These tenets form the PLC content and comprise the basis

for all discussions. I also explore the literature on professional learning communities. Understanding PLCs provides a foundation for the project's structure. Next, I elaborate on transformative learning theory as the theoretical framework for this study. Transformative learning theory analyzes change, growth, and transformation of thought for adults. According to Mezirow (2003), "Transformative learning involves critical reflection of assumptions that may occur either in group interaction or independently" (p. 61). I chose to use transformative learning theory because it emphasizes critical reflection, an important part of the PLC. I conclude this chapter by explaining the need for this study and detailing my research questions.

Critical Race Theory

Taylor (2016) defines structural racism as "the policies, programs, and practices of public and private institutions that result in greater rates of poverty, dispossession, criminalization, illness, and ultimately mortality of African-Americans" (p. 8). The damning effects of structural racism also permeate our education system in many ways, including suspension rates, funding resources, and standardized tests. Love (2019) discusses how Black girls are more than twice as likely as White girls to be suspended throughout the entire United States. With structural racism so prevalent in our society, educators cannot ignore its presence.

Critical frameworks like CRT, antiracism, abolitionist teaching, and Black feminist thought provide lenses to understand, recognize, and fight forms of systemic racism. They each address racism, power, and oppression and function to disrupt and destroy oppressive systems. Since their goals are similar, they share scholarship and many characteristics, including the salience of fighting against racism and the recognition of different intersecting identities and how they influence oppression. With regards to education, these frameworks and concepts provide a deeper understanding of inequity in schools.

Although these frameworks share core values, they have unique origins and conceptualize the fight for equity slightly differently. Black feminist thought centers the fight for equity and liberation around Black women's experiences and stories and critically considers multiple layers of oppression such as sexism, racism, and ageism (Collins, 1990/2000). CRT originated in critical legal studies in the United States during the 1970s as a way to better expand, explore, and understand race and racism from the jurisprudence perspective (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, 2017). Antiracism establishes an action-oriented fight against oppression that challenges educators to embrace practical ways to fight oppression (Dei, 2014). These frameworks have produced rich scholarship that pushes toward liberation and are necessary in the field of education in order to challenge racism and create a more equitable society.

While each of these theories include similar goals and characteristics, I choose to use CRT for this project because its tenets include elements of both Black feminist thought (Collins, 1990/2000; Collins & Bilge, 2016) and antiracism (Dei, 2014), and the tenets are commonly used in education and music education (Carter-Andrews, 2009; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004 Hess, 2018; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McCall, 2017; Vasil & McCall, 2018). CRT tenets embrace intersectionality and the importance of centering Black female voices, similar to Black feminist thought (Crenshaw, 1990). CRT characteristics also embrace considerations of Whiteness and the salience of racism similar to antiracism theories (Harris, 1995). Although CRT originated in critical legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, 2017), it expanded to the field of education over 20 years ago (Ladson-Billing, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2002), and I hope to continue to widen its reach by applying its tenets in music education, as have other music education scholars (Hess,

2018; Hoffman, 2013; McCall, 2017). It is important to note that although I primarily use CRT, I also lean on scholars and activists that use Black feminist thought (Collins, 1990, 2000; Lorde, 2007) and antiracism theories (Bedard, 2000; Bradley, 2007, 2015; Dei, 2014; Hess, 2015).

Critical race theory provides a mechanism for researchers to critically consider how race affects everyday life. Scholars from across disciplines use CRT as a lens to better understand race and racism inside and outside of law. The main tenets include *ordinariness* (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998), *interest convergence* (Bell, 1995; Dixson & Anderson, 2017), *counternarratives through storytelling* (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2004), *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1990; Crenshaw, 1995; Collins, 1990; Collins, 2016), and *Whiteness as property* (Harris, 1995). Additional tenets include social construction and differential racialization (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). While acknowledging CRT as ever evolving and constantly growing, I chose to focus on ordinariness, counternarratives, intersectionality, interest convergence, and Whiteness as property because of the ways they connect to education research, music education, and this project. In the following sections, I detail the tenets that comprise the foci of this PLC.

Ordinariness

The first major tenet involves the understanding that racism is an ordinary facet of society, also known as *ordinariness* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Williams & Land 2006;). As Bonilla-Silva (2018) states, “When race emerged in human history, it formed a social structure (a racialized social system) that awarded systemic privileges to Europeans (the peoples who became ‘white’) over non-Europeans (the peoples who became ‘non-white’)” (p. 8). Lorde (1992) defines racism as “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance” (Lorde, 1992, p. 496). Ordinariness

claims racism is an endemic part of society, so common that it is normalized and excuses racist behaviors and policies that create drastic inequities in society (Corbado, 2011 as cited in Dixson & Anderson, 2017). CRT emphasizes racism's normality within society.

In education, students experience ordinariness through separate and unequal resources and access to quality materials and teaching (Tatum, 2017). Ladson-Billings (1998) provides a critical reflection on racist structures and explicitly identifies the educational system as a structure that sustains racism as a normal aspect of U.S. society. Colorblind notions refuse to acknowledge that these inequities are based on race. DiAngelo (2018) states, "According to this [colorblind] ideology, if we pretend not to notice race, then there can be no racism" (p. 40-41). An understanding of ordinariness critiques and challenges colorblind notions sustained in society and in education. Colorblind perspectives establish race as irrelevant and claim that people have the same opportunities for success regardless of race (Gotanda, 1995). From biased standardized tests to inequitable resources, education systems perpetuate a false narrative that all students possess the same educational access and opportunity for success. Ordinariness includes these inequities as an accepted norm and critiques colorblind ideologies that further ignore how these inequalities are based on race. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) state that colorblind and race neutral ideologies set the stage for the illusion of a meritocracy. Recognizing racism as an ordinary facet within society challenges colorblind ideology.

In addition to a critique of colorblindness, ordinariness manifests in society through mechanisms such as White privilege. As ordinariness is so endemic and normalized in society that it almost goes unnoticed, White privilege operates similarly. McIntosh (1998) describes the invisible nature of White privilege such that White people experience privilege as a norm. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) lean on Delgado and Stefancic (2017) to define White privilege as a

"system of opportunities and benefits conferred upon people simply because they are white" (p. 27). Common examples of White privilege include existing as the norm or standard and not experiencing policies such as housing discrimination from redlining.[2] For example, during and after the civil rights era, banks would not provide loans in communities for Black families to purchase, and realtors would not sell homes to Black families in particular neighborhoods. DiAngelo (2018) writes, "Whiteness rests upon a foundational premise: the definition of Whites as the norm or standard for human, and people of color as a deviation from that norm" (p. 25). Although white privilege may manifest as a subtle or unconscious type of racism, it affects communities of color and functions as a part of a racist norm in society.

Whiteness as Property

Whiteness as property furthers the concept of White privilege by comparing the rights of property ownership to the rights afforded to White people. Harris (1995) describes property as including

> not only external objects and people's relationships to them, but also all of those human rights, liberties, powers, and immunities that are important for human well-being, including freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, freedom of bodily harm, and free and equal opportunities to use personal faculties. (pp. 279-280)

She highlights how property ownership extends a sense of freedom. Property rights include the right of disposition, the right to use and enjoyment, and the right to exclude others. In

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[2] Redlining excluded Black people from the "most legitimate means of obtaining a mortgage" (Coates, 2014, np).

CRT, these property rights reflect the freedoms and rights possessed by White people. In essence, “the law has accorded ‘holders’ of Whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded holders of other types of property” (p. 281). Whiteness extends property rights to human actions such as the right to enforce segregation.

Interest Convergence

The next tenet, identified as *interest convergence*, suggests that dominant, White society only fights for racial equality when it benefits from the object of the fight (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Delgado (2013) defines interest convergence as “a concept that holds that White elites will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when these also promote White self-interest” (p. 3). Bell (1995) introduced this term in a critique of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling— the groundbreaking case that criminalized segregation. He claims that White self-interest, as opposed to desired racial equity, resulted in the ruling to desegregate schools in the United States. In his essay, Bell (1995) asks, “What accounted, then, for the sudden shift in 1954 away from the separate but equal doctrine and towards a commitment to desegregation” (p. 7)? He suggests that White self-interest included economic and political benefits, such as the United States winning the hearts and minds of emerging “third world peoples” [sic] in its struggle with communist countries, and that segregation was “viewed as a barrier to further industrialization in the South” (p. 8). Interest convergence questions dominant culture’s efforts to address the rights of the most marginalized when they receive benefits themselves.

Effects from the Brown v. Board ruling can be seen decades later. Dixson and Anderson (2017) describe interest convergence through St. Louis desegregation efforts:

> In particular, Morris (2001) notes that the White county schools were the primary beneficiaries of the desegregation plan, through increases in overall revenue. In

this way, the self-interests of the largely White school systems were served by taking in African American students. (Dixson & Anderson, 2017, p. 126)

This example aligns with Bell's (1995) assertion that White society supports racial equality efforts only if White society benefits from those efforts. In this case, white schools benefited from the revenue that African American students brought with them to the school.

Interest convergence can also apply to entities outside of education, such as corporations. Nike, a large sports corporation, used activist and National Football League athlete, Colin Kaepernick, as the face of their campaign to suggest that the company's interests align with Kaepernick's fight against police brutality and systemic racism. Nike's profit interests converged with this particular platform and stance on social justice. Similar to Bell's (1995) assertion that white (or dominant) society supports racial equality efforts only if the dominant society benefits from those efforts. In this case, Nike represents white society because it is the dominant entity that maintains power and control. Nike's incentive to embrace a social justice campaign aligns with the probability of increasing profit, as opposed to actually addressing social justice concerns or attempting to change oppressive structures. In this case, Nike "supports" social justice efforts as long as they benefit by increasing profits.

Counternarratives

Counter-storytelling and counternarratives establish the importance of highlighting voices and stories that challenge dominant, stereotypical narratives (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). "Counter-storytelling is a means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes" (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004, p. 27). Explicit storytelling from non-dominant narratives provides a perspective that helps to share the experiences of people from targeted populations.

Counter-storytelling is not fictional and is based on data, empirical evidence, lived experiences, and on the realities of society (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

Counterstories function in many ways. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) describe four functions of counterstories as a way to

1. build community among those at the margins of society;
2. challenge dominant society by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems;
3. show possibilities of reality to those at the margins beyond the ones they live and show that they are not alone; and
4. construct another world that is richer than the story or the reality alone.

Both education and music education scholars highlight counternarratives in a way that challenge harmful stereotypes by emphasizing student narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p 32).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognizes the deep intersections of many identity points (Crenshaw, 1995; Collins, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Political intersectionality focuses on the unique political needs of Black women when analyzing both feminist and antiracist politics. Crenshaw (1991) states, "I consider how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourse of either feminism or antiracism." (p. 358). Intersectionality considers power, influences, and experiences of the intersections of all identity points including (but not limited to) race, sex, class, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability.

In considering the complexity of how power relates to intersecting identities, Collins (1990) highlights the "matrix of domination" to describe how certain identities and intersecting

identities yield points of both privilege and discrimination. The matrix of domination challenges oppressive, dichotomous concepts—where either/or categories are generally ranked—and expands that concept to include more of a both/and stance (Collins, 1990). In this case, the both/and concept provides a more complex and nuanced understanding by recognizing multiple points of privilege and discrimination rather than examining one at a time. This idea challenges individuals to reflect on their own points of privilege and discrimination in order to understand the matrix of domination.

Understanding intersectionality and the matrix of domination can help fight against oppression in education by challenging assumptions about different identity points. Gillborn (2015) explores the intersections of Black, middle class families of students with disabilities and their school experiences in the United Kingdom. He suggests that intersectionality provides ways to understand how particular inequities occur in places like schools (Gillborn, 2015). He and the research team observed how many of the Black, middle class families they interviewed had to draw on their economic, social, and cultural capital in order to best support their children because the education system disregarded their needs. A lack of understanding of intersectionality may perpetuate oppression and inhibit the fight for equity and liberation. For example, although the Black families in Gillborn's (2015) study possessed economic and social capital by being in the middle class, they still experienced racial discrimination in their school settings. In understanding intersecting identities and the matrix of domination, educators possess the potential to address oppressive practices in the education profession.

Tenet Summary

These tenets serve as a central focus of the PLC. Understanding race and racism through CRT in the music classroom can potentially create additional possibilities for teaching music in

an equitable way and to help teachers meet the needs of 21st century learners. While the tenet list I use does not include the entirety of CRT, I chose these tenets because education and music education scholars have set precedence for their use in education and music education. In the next section, I discuss how CRT manifests in music education practice and scholarship and how CRT provides a necessary lens in order to practice racial equity.

CRT and Music Education

CRT expanded into multiple disciplines in the 1990s. Dixson and Rousseau-Anderson (2016) claim that education is not saved from racial inequities after 20 years of CRT. If general education needs to continue to expand CRT research, then music education must be part of that expansion. In this section, I detail CRT's expansion into education and music education scholarship and provide examples of how ordinariness, Whiteness as property, interest convergence, counterstories, and intersectionality manifest in music education.

DeCuir and Dixson (2002) credit Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) as among the first scholars to explore CRT in education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) use CRT tenets to understand racial and social inequities in the U.S. education system. In discussing the purpose of CRT in education, Dixson and Rousseau (2005) state, "The CRT legal literature offers a necessary critical vocabulary for analyzing and understanding the persistent and pernicious inequity in education that is *always already* a function of race and racism" (p. 24, emphasis in original). By leaning on tenets such as counternarratives, ordinariness, intersectionality, and Whiteness as property, education scholars fight for racial equity in education (Andrews, 2009; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

It is important for music educators and scholars to understand CRT specifically in the music education context because critical race theory in music education provides a way for music educators to recognize how race and racism function in their classroom. Music education scholar, Hess (2017) states, "CRT allows music educators to recognize the Whiteness and Eurocentricity present in school music at all levels and the ways in which masking systems serve to perpetuate these facets of institutions" (p. 17). From choosing repertoire for performance ensembles to elementary general music methodologies, music education can benefit from understanding and analyzing its practices through CRT. By being able to acknowledge how Whiteness and racism exist in music education, music educators can challenge those harmful practices.

An increasing number of music education scholars explicitly discuss race and racism. CRT provides a lens through which to critically analyze common practices that inhibit equity in music education. Bradley (2007) emphatically encourages music educators to address race and racism by acknowledging the problematic presence of Whiteness:

> Until we are able to break the silence that maintains music education's complicity in perpetuating racism by leaving Whiteness the undisturbed and undisputed cultural norm, our concerns about social justice in music education will amount to little more than lip service. (Bradley, 2007, p. 143)

Although Bradley's theoretical perspective draws on antiracism education, her sentiments reflect concepts within CRT such as critiquing Whiteness. Similarly, Koza (2008) challenges music educators to recognize racist college audition practices but does not explicitly use CRT as a lens. Even though neither of these examples utilize CRT, they both establish an understanding of the importance of discussing race, particularly Whiteness.

Ordinariness

Ordinariness challenges colorblind ideology and contends that racism is a normal facet of society. In music education, ordinariness provides a unique lens to recognize inequitable practices. Ordinariness in music education manifests as prioritizing Western classical music-making styles (Bradley, 2007, 2017; Hess, 2018), inequitable racial demographics in high school performance ensembles (Elpus & Abril, 2011), and practicing unfair college audition protocols (Koza, 2008). When music teachers center their teachings and curriculum on Eurocentric, Western classical musics, they effectively push other styles of music into the periphery (Bradley, 2006, 2007, 2017; Koza, 2008; Hess, 2018). Although these examples may seem innocent and unintentional, they prioritize hegemonic Whiteness. With an understanding of CRT and ordinariness, music educators can recognize and challenge common practices that perpetuate racism.

Whiteness as Property

Whiteness as property manifests in music education through assumptions of whose musics belong to whom. Wahl (2018) discusses her experience as a Black, female choir director whenan adjudicator assumed that her choir would be most successful singing the song that was "in the style of" an African piece, rather than the songs she and her choir prepared that were composed by White, male European composers, Anton Bruckner and Johann Sebastian Bach. Since Harris (1995) asserts that Whiteness as property functions through the right to possess, control, and even exclude, the adjudicator's assumptions and comments "demonstrated an inherent White ownership of classical music, a deliberate right to exclude me from the traditional, White classical music we had performed" (Wahl, 2018, p. 510). This example

demonstrates how people signify ownership of Western art music as exclusively for White people.

In arts education, Gaztambide-Fernández et al. (2018) examine how Whiteness as property relates to aspects of the performing and visual arts. The authors in this book use CRT to "examine how Whiteness and White supremacy manifest and are legitimated through discourses, visual representations, and practices of the arts in education" (p. 4). Gaztambide-Fernández et al. (2018) discuss the social constructions of Whiteness through practices and particular genres as the pinnacle connection to Whiteness in the arts. For example, Western European classical music is seen as the standard or norm and deemed superior, whereas other forms of music or notation is seen as a deviation from that norm and inferior. Harris (1995) describes how property and the right to own establishes a social hierarchy wherein Whiteness is placed at the top. In this sense, the right to possess legitimacy belongs to Western European classical music. Conversely, the legitimacy of non-Western forms of music is based on comparison to Western classical music.

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence is an essential consideration of social justice efforts because it considers any underlying insidious intent from the dominant culture or the people with power. Hess (2018) uses interest convergence as a point of analysis to describe and question the possibilities of cultivating a revolutionary activist music education. She states, "Revolutionary activism . . . targets structures and systems that oppress minoritized bodies and works to transform them" (p. 37). She draws on Bell's (1995) interest convergence concept to consider if revolutionary activism only occurs when the interests of the dominant culture —in this case the school—converges with the aims of the revolutionary activism. The interest convergence principle provides an opportunity to question and analyze dominant culture's intent and actions.

Counternarratives

Some music education scholars explicitly use CRT to highlight counternarratives as a practice and an analytical tool (Hess, 2018; Hoffman, 2013; McCall, 2017). McCall (2017) analyzes her experience as one of few Black women in music education as a counternarrative in order to explicitly emphasize an experience that is commonly overlooked. Hess (2018) and Hoffman (2013) use creative music-making experiences such as composition as a way for students to express their own narrative and story. Counternarratives are a useful tool for music educators to highlight their students' stories in order to provide engaging practices and a more equitable education. With an understanding of counternarratives, music educators can make intentional decisions to highlight stories and narratives that are commonly overlooked.

Hess (2018) and McCall (2017) use counterstories as a way to amplify narratives that are commonly overlooked through songwriting and self-reflection. Hess (2018) uses counterstories as a way to explore the musical and lyrical content of songs created by youth in Detroit. McCall (2017) examines her personal narrative of being one of few Black academics in music education through a counterstory lens. Later in this chapter, I provide more details regarding counterstories in music education to show how they allow unheard stories to come to life.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality provides an opportunity to acknowledge and address intersecting oppressions and identity points. Antiracism, CRT, and Black feminist thought scholars share this concept. As mentioned earlier, Collins' (1990/2000) matrix of domination provides further understanding of intersecting oppressions. In music education, Hess (2015) discusses how an understanding of intersectionality and the matrix of domination can prevent certain voices from being privileged. She suggests that an understanding of intersectionality helps music educators

"understand that students have or lack various degrees of privilege in relation to other students, and that recognition of the distribution of privilege is fundamental to engaging in an education rooted in justice." (Hess, 2015, p. 74). She also suggests that understanding the matrix of domination "allows music educators to recognize that students are situated on uneven terrain where a combination of systemic factors co-mingle and influence what is understood to be a student's so-called 'merit' or 'ability'" (p. 74). Challenging the concept of merit and ability through the lens of CRT and intersectionality allows music educators to recognize students' intersecting identities and to question common notions of who is most successful in their ensembles. Music educators can benefit from understanding the intersections of class and ability when participating in college admissions processes. Koza (2008) echoes this notion by discussing how the students most successful in college auditions are a reflection of systemic issues that include class and race.

Summary

These tenets manifest in music education in different ways and is the central focus of the PLC. A basic understanding of the CRT tenets allows music educators and music education scholars to critically examine power, racism, and systemic oppression. In order to challenge and address inequities in music education, there must be an understanding, recognition, and acknowledgment of these inequities. CRT tenets provide an understanding of race and racism in society and how that understanding can be transferred to the music education classroom. These tenets are potentially quite challenging; learning about each tenet and how it relates to music education practices may cause participants to change or transform their teaching practices. I use transformative learning theory as an analytical tool to examine any possible changes or

transformations among participants. In the next section, I describe PLC research and how they are appropriate for this study.

A Professional Learning Community Drawing upon CRT

I argue that CRT can be a useful tool for K-12 music teachers to better understand race and racism in their everyday classroom practices. An understanding of CRT may help educators not only recognize and adapt to changing racial demographics but can also help educators understand and challenge racist structures and policies. I created a professional learning community for four music teachers, focused on five main CRT tenets. For the duration of the PLC, participants engaged in deep dialogue about CRT and reflected on how CRT could be applied to their music classroom practices. In this section, I discuss professional development research, define professional learning community, review professional development and PLC research in music education, and describe the relationship of the professional learning community concept to my current project.

PLC Research

Research on professional development spans a range of methodologies including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods and covers a range of different subject areas across early career, mid-career, and late career educators. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to reflect upon and improve instruction. Resnick (2005) reviewed many professional development studies and describes two waves of professional development research in education. The first wave emerged in the 1960s and focused on building generic skills related to assessment and use of instructional time. The second wave of professional development research highlights the importance of subject-specific content in professional development settings.

PLCs are a facet of professional development for educators that continue to develop as a way to improve schools, teaching, and student achievement. Although no singular definition for a PLC exists, many researchers highlight the importance of collective learning with peers in PLC settings. Stoll et. al (2006) state,

> There seems to be broad, international consensus that it [PLCs] suggest a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Toole & Louis, 2002); operating as a collective enterprise (King & Newmann, 2001) (p. 223).

Five common characteristics of effective PLCs include shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, and promotion of group and individual learning (Stoll et al., 2006). Hord's (2009) PLC description places emphasis on learning together with peers: "The professional learning community models the self-initiating learner working in concert with peers" (p. 41). PLCs provide an opportunity for educators to collaboratively learn and grow in a way that positively affects both themselves and their students. A PLC focused on race and racism provides a space for teachers to interrogate how they contribute to racist systems, in order for them challenge racism to meet the needs of students who are most affected by racism.

In their literature review exploring PLCs, Stoll et al. (2006) highlight how the term PLC emerged from those working in the education profession. They note that PLC features include notions of inquiry, reflective practitioner, and self-evaluating schools and that certain PLC aspects were evident in works by education researchers like Dewey (1916) and Schön (1983). It is important to note that some researchers use the term professional learning community and

others use professional development community. The research reviewed indicates that PLCs and professional development communities (PDCs) function similarly. For the purpose of this project, they are considered interchangeable (Stoll et al., 2006). Following the majority of the literature, I choose primarily to use PLC.

PLCs in Music Education

Research on professional development and PLCs suggest that content-specific learning opportunities increase teacher knowledge (Garet et al., 2000; Resnick 2005). Resnick (2005) states that in order for professional development to be effective, it must "provide teachers with a way to directly apply what they learn to their teaching" (p. 2). Professional development opportunities with subject-specific content allow teachers to engage and grow with educators who share similar experiences. Garet et al. (2000) describes how content-specific PD enhances knowledge and skills that can lead to changes in instructional practices. Fewer in-district opportunities for content-specific professional development exist for art, music, foreign language, and physical education teachers because there are typically only one of each of those teachers per school. Providing professional development such as a PLC for a subject such as music gives music educators an opportunity to focus on learning with fellow music educators.

Music education scholars similarly describe the importance of having content-specific professional development opportunities with fellow music educators focused on music education, due to the lack of PD options in districts (Blair, 2007; Conway et al 2005; Kastner, 2012). Music educators often do not have the opportunity to learn with other music educators as they often do not have peers in their building and sometimes in the district, due to a lack of funding or the academic structure within the school district (Blair, 2007; Conway 2005; Kastner, 2012). Since many music educators may be the only music teacher in their building or in their

district, their opportunities for subject-specific professional development are limited. Schmidt and Robbins (2011) argue for more opportunities for music educators to have PDCs focused solely on music education. Although the PLC content in the current study focuses on critical race theory rather than music education content, it is comprised entirely of music educators, is facilitated by a music educator, and creates direct connections to subject-specific content in music education. Music teachers in this PLC were able to benefit from learning with other music educators.

Music-specific PLCs for music educators can give support and potentially influence retention and attrition. Findings from Madsen and Hancock's (2002) study on music education attrition and retention post (undergraduate) graduation suggests that the interactions and learning opportunities with fellow music educators at conferences and other professional settings "should not be underestimated" (p. 15). In addition, Bell-Robinson (2014) conducted a research study on an online professional development community for novice music instructors to determine the degree to which the community served as a source of emotional support for its members. She found emotional benefits of the online PDC:

> The practice of sharing thoughts, feelings, and day-to-day occurrences in the virtual space helped the teachers cope with their questions and struggles by helping them know they were not alone, giving them a forum to talk about unique needs and topics, and contributing to a sense of altruism and feeling helpful when they could assist a peer in a similar circumstance. (p. 446)

My project provided an experience from which music educators benefited by sharing space, thoughts, and reflections with fellow music educators.

PLCs provide continuing education opportunities for teachers to grow and expand their practices. Educators benefit from PLCs that closely relate to their teaching. Because many schools only have one music teacher, music-specific PLCs can provide additional opportunities for growth. In this project, a music education PLC focused on CRT allowed music educators to discuss and experience topics focused on race and racism. This PLC aimed to continue and extend current dialogues on race and racism in music education.

Professional learning communities provide an opportunity for educators to learn and grow together. Louis and Marks (1998) state, "it is reasonable to expect that teachers who extend themselves professionally and work in concert with others to improve their practice will become 'better teachers' in the sense of being more effective with pupils" (p. 534). They cite multiple research studies (Byrk & Driscoll, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Rosenholz, 1989) that show how effective schools maintain "professionally enriching workgroups as a major facilitator of commitment and effort with the potential to improve student learning" (p. 533). Similarly, Resnick (2005) suggests that "participating in professional learning communities optimizes the time spent on professional development" (p. 4). Professional learning communities or PDCs provide a space where educators can learn with their peers on subject-specific content so that students benefit by improved student learning.

Storytelling and reflection were central to this PLC. Participants were able to reflect on their experiences and explore how storytelling can be beneficial for their students and themselves. PLCs provide an opportunity for participants to share stories and experiences with fellow music teachers (Bell-Robinson, 2014; Blair, 2007). Blair (2007) uses narrative inquiry to emphasize her participants' stories in a music education professional development community. In CRT, storytelling is a critical component for sharing and reflecting on experiences that are

commonly overlooked. In discussing race, racism, and equity, the PLC provided an opportunity for participants to share their stories, personal reflections, and to embrace vulnerability on a sensitive topic, in order to be able to recognize and challenge racism and racist practices.

Potential benefits for the current PLC focused on CRT included an opportunity for music educators to engage a difficult topic like racism with fellow music educators. Not only did they have an opportunity to grow as music educators with fellow music educators, they also participated in sensitive conversations about race as they learned about how racism manifests in music education. Further information about the logistics of the PLC can be found in Chapter 4. In this PLC, I employed critical race theory as the focal point and utilized transformative learning theory as the theoretical lens for exploring how the participants experienced the professional development community. In the next section, I detail transformative learning theory and discuss how I employed it in the study.

Theoretical Framework

Typically used in adult learning, transformative learning theory centers reflection and critical perspective themes (Cranton, 2011; Mezirow, 1991, 2003; Taylor, 2007. "Transformative learning is a deep shift in perspective during which habits of mind become more open, more permeable and better justified" (Cranton, 2011, p. 76,). Transformative learning theory offers a way to understand how adults change perspectives, learn, and grow. Through this PLC, I examined and explored how the participants engaged with CRT, their teaching, and each other. Discussing race, racism, and oppression in a PLC may lead to participants experiencing dissonance or disruption of their ideology or perspective. I utilized transformative learning theory as an analytical lens to examine and understand the participants' PLC experiences.

Originating from Mezirow's (1991, 2000) conceptualization of critical pedagogy and constructivism, transformative learning theory establishes a perspective to understand how adults change. "Specifically, it [transformation theory] seeks to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what processes the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed" (p. 10). Constructivist notions suggest that a person's understanding of the world and reality is shaped by that person's experiences (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow (1991) identifies a critical theory perspective, conscientization—"the process by which adults 'achieve a deepening awareness of both the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and . . . their capacity to transform that reality through action upon it'" (Freire, 1970, p. 27 as cited in Mezirow, 1991, p. 12)—as central to the learning process. Constructivism, critical pedagogy, and critical theory comprise the foundations of transformative learning.

Transformative learning theory involves an understanding of how meaning structures (meaning perspectives and meaning schemes) may change for adults when past biases and assumptions are acknowledged and challenged through critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 2003, 1991). Meaning perspectives are predispositions that result from assumptions, which then determine expectations of a situation or person. Meaning schemes represent knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that shape a specific interpretation (Mezirow, 1991). Individuals are socialized through their experiences, which generate meaning perspectives and meaning schemes. Transformation occurs through practices such as reflective learning and critical reflection. Researchers use transformative learning theory across many disciplines. In the following subsections, I detail different elements of transformative learning theory, as well as

describe how music education researchers have used transformative learning as an analysis tool to understand how adult transformation occurs in a learning environment.

Reflective Learning and Critical Reflection

Mezirow (1991) identifies reflection as the central dynamic involved in problem solving, problem posing, and transformation of meaning structures (p. 116). He describes three different forms of reflection: reflection on content of a problem, the process of problem solving, and the premise on which the problem is predicated. These reflection processes allow space to open up and learners to embrace new or challenging perspectives.

Reflective learning and critical reflection provide space for cognitive dissonance that can lead to transformation and paradigm shifts. Taylor's (2007) literature review highlights many studies that foster transformative learning and critical reflection. Reflective learning and critical reflection can lead to transformation. Mezirow states, "reflective learning involves assessment or reassessment of assumptions," and "reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic or otherwise invalid" (p. 19). In order for adult education to be effective, the educator must help learners acquire the skills and understandings essential to become critically reflective of assumptions and to participate more "fully and freely" in discourse (Mezirow, 2003, p. 62).

Transformative Theory in Education and Music Education

Scholars use transformative learning theory to analyze the learning and paradigm shifts that takes place over a particular time period or experience. In music education, VanDeusen (2017) used transformative learning theory with a social justice premise to analyze how her participants, pre-service music teachers, experienced a cultural immersion trip. She states, "By participating in the immersion experience, pre-service teachers can transform their beliefs and

assumptions and reframe their worldviews toward greater empathy and cultural understanding, allowing them to better meet the needs of their students" (VanDeusen, 2017, p. 42). In this case, VanDeusen used transformative learning theory to help understand how the preservice music teachers transformed through the cultural immersion experience.

Similarly, Perkins (2019) uses transformative learning theory as a way to analyze students' perceptions while taking a choral dialoguing social justice course. This course purposefully engaged students in discussions about race and racism, religion and spirituality, gender and sexuality, and immigration (or the concept of "welcome"). These topics created what Mezirow calls a "disorienting dilemma" and challenged the students to expand certain considerations in music education. Through transformative learning theory, Perkins (2019) explored students' perceptions throughout the course and found that critical forms of learning could "foster transformative social justice education and may broaden the goals of music education" (p. 72). My project, comparably, explored music teachers' experiences of learning and engaging critical race theory, which may have disoriented their previous understandings about music education.

Salvador, Paetz, and Tippetts (2020) use transformative learning to understand a significant ontological shifting experience for the participants. The purpose of their study was "to investigate processes that led practicing music educators in a graduate course to examine their beliefs and practices regarding inclusion, responsiveness, equity, and justice" (p.1). Their study emerged out of a graduate level music education course in which they explored social justice themes. The researchers "theorized transformative learning processes for practicing music teachers encountering social justice as an explanatory framework for experiences that led this group of participants to work on becoming more inclusive, responsive, and equitable" (Salvador,

Paetz, & Tippetts, 2020, p. 6). By using transformative learning, the researchers analyzed the transformative experiences they encountered.

Transformative Learning Theory and the Current Project

The current project places an emphasis on collaborative learning, critical reflection, and self-reflection. Similar to other music education scholars (Perkins, 2019; VanDeusen, 2017), I used transformative learning theory as a tool to analyze participants' possible transformation through the shared PLC experience. PLCs provide a space for participants to engage in transformative leaning practices, such as self-reflection and critical discourse, while centering topics like race, racism, and oppression. Each participant engaged in dialogue and reflective learning practices that promoted self-reflection.

PLCs provide a foundation for transformative learning to take place. Hord (2009) describes PLCs as a model for constructivist learning and highlights the importance of reflective learning practices. Since reflective learning and critical self-reflection are central to the current project, transformative learning theory as an analytical lens pairs well with the PLC.

Need for The Study

Although multiple music education scholars have centered CRT in their studies, none explicitly examined practicing music educators exploring CRT through a professional development community. This PLC functions as a way for music educators to formally learn about CRT. In the PLC, participants asked difficult questions and engaged with uncomfortable topics. Potential benefits of this project include expanding the dialogue and research focused on race and racism, designing a practical and adaptable curriculum for music teacher educators, and developing strategies to address racism and equity concerns in music education.

The final activity I facilitated with the participants in the PLC focused on their dreams for the future of music education. I asked them to describe their dream for a most equitable future in music education. This study provided an opportunity for all of us, in music education, to dream about what we desire for our field, to identify how we can fight against racism and embrace teaching practices for students in the 21st century. It may also offer an opportunity for music educators to reflect and identify ways that we perpetuate racism in order create the dream world we desire.

Summary and Purpose Statement

Critical race theory provides a framework to understand race and racism. CRT tenets including ordinariness, Whiteness as property, interest convergence, counterstories, and intersectionality provide lenses for music educators to critically examine their own practices as teachers and consider what equitable teaching practices might look like in order for them to identify and address racist practices. To address racial inequities in music education, music educators must possess the tools and concepts needed to discuss race and racism. By exploring how participants engaged in a PLC focused on CRT, this project expands the current literature and practices on race, racism, and CRT in music education. The following questions guided my research:

1. How do the music teachers' perceptions of CRT evolve within the professional learning community experience?
2. How might an understanding of CRT influence music teachers' practices/pedagogical choices?
3. How might participation in the CRT transform their approach toward race and racism? What transformation took place?

These questions focus on teacher growth following transformative learning theory and produced data and analysis that may serve to expand dialogues surrounding race and racism in music education and music teacher education. These questions highlight teacher growth and reflection —a tool necessary for liberation (Lorde, 1992). Additionally, understanding race and racism in music education provides an opportunity to create more equitable practices in music education.

The remaining chapters provide the details of this research study. In Chapter 2, I provide historical context of music education scholarly work focused on inclusive and equitable practices. I detail the methodology in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I provide specific details from the PLC experience by answering Research Question #1. In Chapter 5, I detail pedagogical shifts and emerging themes for Research Question #2. I then discuss any ideological or transformational changes by answering Research Question #3 in Chapter 6. I conclude this dissertation with a full summary with implications for music education in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the current project is to explore music educators' experiences in a professional learning community focused on critical race theory. This study has the potential to expand critical perspectives on race and racism in music education and may extend equitable practices with regards to race in music education. The study's focus on race and racism requires a review of how music education scholars have taken up these issues over time. In the 1960s, the Tanglewood Symposium highlighted the need for music education to fight for relevance in public schools, which then prompted considerations for multicultural, social justice, and critical practices with regard to race in music education. For this reason, I trace literature related to relevance and inclusivity by first examining the scholarship related to multiculturalism. I subsequently explore literature related to social justice in music education and ultimately review critical perspectives in music education. I begin this chapter by summarizing the Tanglewood Symposium and its effects, I then discuss the multicultural movement and how that movement evolved into the social justice movement. After detailing the social justice movement, I discuss critical perspectives related to equity in music education. I conclude the chapter by addressing gaps in the literature and possible directions for equity research in music education. Each movement addresses relevance, equity, and fairness in music education differently because those concepts evolve as the profession evolves. This literature review details each movement in order to better understand how music educators address relevance and equity issues.

The Tanglewood Symposium

In the late 1950s, before the Tanglewood Symposium, the music education profession found itself in a fight for relevance. The Cold War—a state of hostility between many countries including the United States and the Soviet Union— and shifting cultural and ethnic student

demographics sparked a strong push for science and technology training within the school setting, which indirectly affected music education (Goble, 2010; Mark, 1999; Volk 1998). According to Goble (2010), "the fear of Soviet domination spurred educational theorists to recommend that additional instructional time be devoted to more high-priority subjects and to question whether music education was anything more than a 'frill'" (p. 224). Due to the focus on science and technologies, musicians and educators held two conferences to discuss the content and relevance of music education programs: the Yale Seminar and the Tanglewood Symposium (Goble, 2010). Although the Yale Seminar and the Tanglewood Symposium both intended to strengthen music education in the United States, I choose to focus on the Tanglewood Symposium because the Tanglewood Symposium included a variety of music education stakeholders including public school teachers (Mark, 1999); the Yale Seminar had little representation of music educators (Mark & Gary, 2007). In this section, I detail the Tanglewood Symposium and explicate how the desire for relevance after the symposium sparked the movement toward multicultural education in music education.

The Tanglewood Symposium took place in the summer of 1967 and included prominent musicians, educators, researchers, and other concerned music leaders in the United States at that time period. The symposium goals included defining the purpose and future of music education in the post-industrialization era (Goble, 2010; Mark, 1999) and identifying multiple issues relevant to addressing the changing cultural demographics in the U.S. including: a) content of future music education courses; b) the fight for relevance within education; and c) discussion about whose music should be taught. While some teachers embraced the idea of including non-Western musics, other teachers voiced concerns due to their lack of experience with musics

outside of the Western canon. Identifying the place of music in public school proved to be contentious because no unifying purpose for music education existed (Goble, 2010).

During the Tanglewood Symposium, educators and researchers argued over the purpose of music education in the K-12 setting, as participants held ideologically split views. One group argued for music education to function as a way to recognize high quality and exemplary music by focusing on the "classics," while others advocated for a more egalitarian position that embraced different musics (Goble, 2010). These perspectives highlight polarizing views of music education; the former represents a more traditional practice, while the latter represents a classroom that has the potential to provide more agency to the students and to embrace multiple ways of music making. Although participants held different positions, they all advocated for strong music education programs in the public schools and for music education's place in the core of the school curriculum (Goble, 2010; Gurgel, 2019).

The Tanglewood Symposium concluded with a document for music education called *The Tanglewood Declaration,* which included eight points focused on making music education more inclusive of multiple types of music and music making (Goble, 2010; Mark & Gary, 2009; Volk 1998). Goble (2010) highlights one portion of the declaration:

> Educators must accept the responsibility for developing opportunities which meet man's [sic.] individual needs and the needs of a society plagued by the consequence of changing values, alienation, hostility between generations, racial and international tensions, and the challenges of a new leisure. (p. 226)

By naming racial tensions, this statement provides a foundation to consider race and racism in music education. This statement and others in the declaration establish the beginnings of a movement to address equity issues in music education.

Although the declaration in its entirety provides a foundation upon which to address access and equity issues in music education, point number seven highlights a deficit mindset attributed to “social problems” in the inner city: “The music education profession must contribute its skills, proficiencies, and insights toward assisting in the solution of urgent social problems as in the ‘inner city’ or other areas with culturally deprived individuals” (The Tanglewood Declaration as cited in Goble 2010, pg. 227). Hess (2018) cites Castagno (2014) and Delpit (2006) in her description of a deficit framework that positions students of color as inherently inferior or in need of saving. By declaring individuals residing in the inner city as “culturally deprived,” point number seven in the Tanglewood Declaration suggests that the problem resides in the culture of the “inner city” and not with music educators’ approach. This example illustrates a deficit perspective.

The Tanglewood Symposium did not produce perfect results but provided a genesis for considering and addressing representation and social issues in music education. After the Tanglewood Symposium concluded, the Music Educator’s National Conference (MENC)[3] created multiple commissions and committees to explicitly address race and inclusion, including the *Goals and Objective Project* (GO Project) in 1969 (Mark, 1999). The GO Project helped to actualize the vision created during the Tanglewood Symposium through principles that challenged the organization to expand its vision. In 1972, MENC created the National Minority Concerns Commission to conduct a study of minority concerns as they applied to music education in the United States (Goble, 2010; Campbell, 1994). The commission created the

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[3] MENC is the professional organization for music educators in the United States and is currently named the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME).

Source Book of African and Afro-American Material for Music Educators to attempt to address issues regarding race and equity. Campbell (1994) notes that this commission changed its name twice, becoming the "Minority Awareness Committee" and subsequently the "Multicultural Awareness Commission," highlighting the multicultural trend in music education.

The Tanglewood Symposium created a foundation for considering the cultural, social, and racial shifts in music education which then initiated a multicultural lens through which to consider and teach music education. Multiculturalism provided a framework that allowed educators to build curriculum that explicitly included music outside of the Western canon. Although the multiculturalism movement did not directly address systemic issues in music education, such as critically analyzing the power and influence given to Western classical musics, it later provided a foundation to provoke critical thought about race and racism in music education.

The following sections detail the effects that emerged from the Tanglewood Symposium Declaration and its recommendations. Recognizing student population ethnic and racial demographic shifts, music educators sought to incorporate multicultural music to provide an equitable and relevant music education. In an almost direct response to the Tanglewood Symposium, the multicultural music education movement used music from around the world to address relevance and equity concerns. As multicultural music education evolved, music education researchers began to address relevance and equity concerns through a social justice lens, including student agency and the democratic approach. The critical perspectives section challenges and expands social justice themes by explicitly addressing power and systems of oppression in music education. Although each section is presented as pseudo-chronological responses to what preceded it, no hard origin or end dates exist for these movements. For

example, even though multiculturalism seemed to surge after the Tanglewood Symposium, the movement and its concepts are still present in today's discourse, and it influences social justice and critical perspective discourses. In the following sections, I review literature from each period in music education and connect it to the push toward relevance and equity in music education.

Multicultural Music Education

Once the Tanglewood Symposium ended, music education priorities began to evolve to include music from around the world in the curriculum. During the multicultural movement, fair and equitable music education practices included classrooms that incorporated musics from outside the Western classical canon. Multicultural music education researchers emphasized using multiple types of musics from around the world in the curriculum. Anderson and Campbell (2010) state, "A multicultural approach to learning necessitates organizing educational experiences for students that develop sensitivity, understanding, and respect for people from a broad spectrum of ethnic-cultural backgrounds" (p. 1). In this section I discuss how proponents of multicultural music education attempted to address concerns identified at the Tanglewood Symposium. These concerns include maintaining relevance in public education throughout shifting racial and ethnic demographics in the United States. I begin by detailing how multicultural music education emerged, continue by discussing how multicultural music education proponents aim to remain relevant, and conclude by addressing critiques of the multiculturalism movement.

In 1973, Lundquist challenged music education scholars to generate more literature about multicultural music and racism in music education (Quesada & Volk, 1997). Quesada and Volk (1997) reviewed dissertation abstracts from 1973–1993 focused on "world music," to determine how world and multicultural music education research evolved since Lundquist's call. Their

conclusion suggests that the sheer number of dissertations on multicultural music education affirms Lundquist's call for expanding music education research on multicultural music education but did not address Lundquist's call to address race and racism in music education.

As a professional organization, MENC worked to support multicultural music education by publishing special issues of *Music Educators Journal*, creating books such as multiple volumes of *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (Anderson & Campbell, 1989, 2011), and hosting conferences focused on multicultural music education. Initiatives such as the *Goals and Objectives Project* also aimed to advance and include music from all cultures into the music education curriculum (Campbell, 2002; Volk, 1998). The 1983 *Music Education Journal* special issue on multicultural music education included topics on African music, world music, and gospel music. These publications emphasize MENC's mission: "music for every child, and every child for music" (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Heller, 1983). Multiculturalism in music education continued to evolve in research and in practice with assistance from these journals and conferences.

Many music education scholars cite the shifting racial and ethnic demographics as the basis for incorporating music from multiple different types of cultures (Anderson & Campbell, 2010; Campbell, 2002; Howard, Swanson, & Campbell 2014; Navarro, 1989). The many cultures represented in a music classroom served as an impetus to provide musics outside of the Western classical tradition. Navarro (1989) argued for including music from different cultures in the music teacher education curriculum after finding that syllabi from 12 music teacher education institutions across the U.S. had not changed to reflect the demographic context in society.

In recognizing student demographic shifts, multicultural music education helps music education remain relevant by providing music experiences outside the Western classical tradition. Anderson and Campbell (2010) discuss four major benefits of multicultural music education for students:

1. introducing students to a variety of musical sounds from all over the world to expand their "palette of musical experiences";
2. understanding that musics from other cultures are just as sophisticated as theirs;
3. discovering different but equally valid ways to construct music; and
4. developing greater musical flexibility.

Multicultural music education scholars describe how multicultural music education prepares students to live in a global environment (Anderson & Campbell, 2010, p. 3). These benefits can apply to both homogenous and diverse student populations. Although according to Anderson and Campbell, these benefits help students prepare for a global society and culturally diverse context in the U.S., they do not address systems of power and the effects of othering (as described below).

The multiculturalism movement prompted a more critical perspective in regard to addressing equity issues in music education. Although multiculturalism emphasized inclusion, it lacked the critical nuance needed to address issues of power and racism. Quesada and Volk (1997) found that although multicultural music education research dramatically increased, considerations of racism were not addressed following Lundquist's (1973) recommendation. Outside of music education, Bedard (2000) critiques multiculturalism in the Canadian context as a way to "mask discomforting racist practices and policies" (p. 43). The critique describes how multiculturalism is used to appease the discomfort of discussing race. In identifying different

pedagogical tools used to dismantle racism, Bedard (2000) states that multiculturalism only addresses personal prejudice as opposed to structural and systemic issues. Multiculturalism does not necessarily acknowledge issues of power and privilege or structures that maintain certain powers and privileges. Additionally, Bedard emphasizes how White dominance becomes implicit in multiculturalism. Teaching students about other cultures that "presents an appropriated and colonized version of those other" (p. 55) demonstrates ways in which multiculturalism can be problematic. This example perpetuates "othering" music outside of the Western European canon where musics outside of the Western canon are seen as inferior. Othering suggests a dual hierarchy where the dominant concept— in this case Western classical music—is portrayed as superior to all other forms of music making. Bedard concludes the chapter with a call to White teachers to engage in antiracism as a way to dismantle racist structures. Similarly, music educators must explicitly employ lenses like antiracism and critical race theory in order to challenge oppressive systems in music education.

As multicultural music education continued to expand and evolve, music education scholars began considering social implications of such expansion. Bartolome (2011) considers issues of authenticity when representing musical cultures from around the world and the importance of providing social and cultural contexts. Years since the emergence of multicultural music education, it seems that music education research has shifted to not only consider integrating music from different cultures, but to also consider racism, student agency, and power through social justice considerations. In the next section, I detail how music education research began to consider these issues through a social justice lens.

Social Justice in Music Education

In music education, social justice research began to emerge in the mid-2000s with conferences and journal issues focused explicitly on social justice efforts. Social justice conferences include the International Conference on Music Education, Equity, and Social Justice located at the Teacher's College at Columbia University in 2006, the CRÈME conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2010, and the Social Justice conference at the University of Toronto in 2008. In 2007, *Music Education Research*[4] and *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*[5] published special issues exclusively on social justice in music education. Books including *The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (Benedict et al., 2015), *Giving Voice to Democracy in Music Education* (DeLorenzo, 2015), and *Exploring Social Justice: How Music Education Might Matter* (Gould et al., 2009) expanded music education research on social justice in the music classroom. The major social justice themes that emerged in music education in that time period include a focus on democracy in the classroom, a critique of musical hierarchies, and attention to culturally responsive practices and urban music education. The social justice movement might define equity and fairness in music education based on student agency, democratic consensus, and equal opportunities and resources. In this section, I define social justice and explore the literature across each theme in order to examine how this movement continued to push toward equity in music education.

Social justice research in music education examines ways to foster a more fair, just, and inclusive music classroom. Multiple scholars (Jorgensen, 2007; Kendall-Smith, 2011; Roberts &

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[4] Volume 9, Issue 2

[5] Volume 6, Issue 4

Campbell, 2015) recognize that many definitions of social justice exist in music education. Some scholars use fairness (Kendall-Smith, 2011; Palmer 2018; Riley, 2009) whiles others use the term equity to describe social justice (Hess, 2017; Roberts & Campbell, 2015). Riley's (2009) study suggests that the participants use the term fairness to mean equal. Salvador and McHale (2017) explored music teacher educators' perceptions of social justice and found that about half of their participants defined social justice through a color-blind, equal treatment/access/opportunity frame. Vaugeois (2009) takes a systemic approach with her definition by defining social justice as, "the work of undoing structures that produce raced and gendered oppressions and systemic poverty as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures" (p. 3). This systemic approach to social justice overlaps with other critical approaches toward equity in music education and will be discussed further in the next section. For this section, social justice research in music education expands multiculturalism's efforts by considering student agency through a democratic approach, critiquing musical hierarchies, and exploring culturally responsive practices and urban music education. I explore these three themes below.

Democracy in Music Education

Music education literature on social justice often emphasizes fairness through a democratic approach. Music education researchers (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Cook, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2015; Elliot, 2007; Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Woodford, 2005; Wright, 2015) suggest that a democratic classroom approach provides the strategies to create a more equitable and fair music classroom. Themes in the literature on the democratic classroom mainly address creating consensus and providing more student agency in the classroom with an element of critical self-reflection (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Cook, 2015; Kindall-Smith et al., 2011). Through

the use of public pedagogy (Allsup & Shieh, 2012), a Deweyan perspective (DeLorenzo, 2015; Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Woodford, 2005), and critical reflection (Cook, 2015), music education scholars establish how a democratic approach achieves social justice goals and efforts by enhancing student agency.

Researchers explore student agency by challenging traditional teacher-student roles in the music classroom (Allsup, 2016; Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Cook, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2015). In a traditional Western classical ensemble and general music setting, the teacher possesses most of the power, which often leaves little agency for students (Allsup, 2016). Allsup and Shieh (2012) propose a public pedagogy that challenges teacher-student power dynamics by allowing students to contribute to the curriculum with the teacher acting as change agent. Challenging the teacher-student power dynamic acknowledges and names inequalities in the classroom. Cooke (2015) emphasizes the importance of "breaking down" the "teacher as expert model" in music education in order to "develop a more democratic view of music learning" (p. 532). This type of rupture can be seen in the way that teachers can acknowledge their own assumptions and model their own learning with students.

Some scholars use a Deweyan perspective to ground their democratic classroom lens (Frierson-Campbell, 2007; Woodford, 2005; DeLorenzo, 2015). Dewey (1916) emphasizes a democratic sense of community united by shared values, humane actions toward one another, and addresses issues relating to social inequality (Dewey, 1916; McCarthy, 2015; Younker & Hickey, 2007). Music education scholar Frierson-Campbell (2007) puts forward a democratic approach toward social justice in music education by emphasizing Deweyan practices in classroom decision-making processes. She suggests a democratic consensus within decision-making. Frierson-Campbell provides a pragmatic approach toward a socially just music

education profession that highlights the importance of professional development focused on social justice and categorizes a socially just music classroom as one with an equitable distribution of resources such as instruments and culturally relevant curricula. Although an equitable distribution of resources and the implementation of culturally relevant curricula begin to address inequities in music education, these actions must extend further. In the final section on critical music education, I discuss the limits of a democratic approach.

While some music education scholars initiate a more socially just and fair classroom by expanding student agency and challenging traditional roles, little consideration is given to the positionality and identities of both teachers and students, uncovering assumptions about teacher-student roles and power dynamics. For example, it is important to consider the positionality of a female high school marching band director who may be consistently overlooked or dismissed because she is a woman in a male-dominated specialization. Similarly, all students may not be fairly represented within a democratic approach due to their positionality. Although a democratic approach toward music education suggests fairness and equality, this approach does not address the limitations of certain assumptions that accompany democracy in education.

Critique of Musical Hierarchies

Although social justice discourse heavily emphasizes a democratic approach in music education, social justice research also critiques implicit hierarchies. These hierarchies include privileging Western classical music, Western-based notation and learning styles, and Western-classical large ensemble settings. Social justice scholars in music education identify and critique these hierarchies to challenge traditional and common practices in music education (Abril, 2009; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Sands, 2007).

In music education, Western classical music receives preference in K-12 and higher education settings (Bradley, 2007; Green, 2006; Hess 2018; Kelly-McHale & Abril, 2015; Koza, 2008; Robinson, 2017). Kruse (2015) and Rodriguez (in progress) explore music genre preferences among preservice music educators and practicing music educators. They each found that most practicing and preservice music teachers prefer using Western classical music in the music classroom. Social justice scholars in music education challenge such musical hierarchies in the music classroom and consider both genre and preference.

Sands (2007), for example, challenges the musical hierarchy that places Western classical music as most important. She states:

> Teaching that is rooted in principles of social justice and equity must emphasize that "quality" is not the possession of a single musical tradition—and in particular—not the exclusive possession of the European classical tradition that is the curricular core of most American school, college, and university programs. (p. 47)

Sands' critique of music education provides an opportunity to consider how music educators may implicitly or explicitly reinforce these hierarchies and what that means for attempting to create a more equitable profession. Similarly, Nancy, a participant in Abril's (2009) case study who created a Mariachi ensemble in a suburban middle school, worried that her administration and parents would not embrace Mariachi as a legitimate music ensemble because Mariachi is not a Western classical tradition. Kastner's (2018) participant, Nicole, also found herself feeling isolated from other music teachers because she chose to use informal teaching as a music teacher, as opposed to a traditional, Western classical approach.

Informal music learning experiences can challenge power hierarchies present in traditional music education classrooms. Green (2006) explores informal music learning and

exploration as a way to engage students in music making. She discusses how teachers may allow their students the opportunity to fail and problem-solve on their own through informal learning. This type of informal learning not only provides autonomy to students, but also decenters traditional Eurocentric music making by emphasizing rote learning. In this case, informal music learning is used as a way to encourage student agency in music education. Mercado's (2019) literature review on informal, vernacular, and popular music making found that students experienced benefits like creativity and collaboration in making music outside of the Western tradition.

In addition to genre, music educators hierarchize the way students learn and experience music by prioritizing Western notation. Western musical notation permeates middle school and high school ensemble settings, with less emphasis given to learning by rote, improvisation, and exploration. Heuser (2008) explains, "One of the great paradoxes of formal Western music instruction is that the aural art of music is taught almost exclusively through visual musical notation" (p. 1). This critique of Western music teaching provides an opportunity to consider additional, more inclusive ways to consider musical notation.

Music education also privileges large ensembles including band, choir, and orchestra. Students who engage in music making outside of the large ensemble do not necessarily have space to explore their musicianship in the music classroom. Hoffman and Carter (2013) emphasize improvisation as an additional way for students to engage music. Their students reflected that they were more engaged and found their music class to be more relevant with alternative forms of learning music through improvisation and composition than in a traditional band setting. Hierarchies in music education extend past genres, learning styles, and notation to include setting. Social justice music education discourse extends to include music education

practices in urban settings. In the next section, I discuss how social justice discourse in music education addresses music education in urban settings.

Culturally Responsive Music Education

Additional social justice efforts in music education can include practices such as utilizing culturally responsive teaching (Fitzpatrick-Harnish, 2015; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Robinson, 2009), and employing diversity training for preservice teachers (Kindall-Smith et al., 2011; Kindall-Smith, 2012; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Although these practices are beneficial in all music education settings, music education researcher Bond (2017) cites shifting, more diverse demographics and teaching in urban settings as a reason for using culturally responsive practices. In recognizing "urban" as a complex term used often in music education to signify being Black and poor (Farmer, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2015), Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) challenges the common, pejorative understanding of "urban" by describing the term as an intersection of material realities, symbolic imaginaries, and embodied cultural practices. This conception provides a more nuanced understanding of urban settings that can help confront common misconceptions. Culturally responsive teaching and intentional training with regard to teaching in different music education settings provide an opportunity for music educators to become more inclusive and expand their practices to be more social justice oriented.

Many music teachers often come from homogenous, White, suburban, middle-class homes with little understanding or experience in working with diverse, or urban school settings (Kindall-Smith, 2011; Robinson, 2006). Kindall-Smith (2011) recognized the importance of preparing preservice teachers to teach in urban school settings and chose to intentionally incorporate social justice literature in her courses for music education majors. She noticed a lack of thorough urban education research and preparation for music education students. Many of her

students noted how their perspective and understanding of social justice changed to become more understanding and empathetic toward urban settings.

Culturally responsive teaching in music education can provide music making experiences that better reflects the culture of the students they teach. Lind and McKoy (2016) provide practical applications for music educators to use culturally responsive teaching in the music classroom. They state:

> We can re-envision our classrooms in ways that allow us to move away from an exclusively Eurocentric model to a more inclusive process, one that allows all students opportunities to access learning in ways that are respectful and congruent with different ways of knowing. (p. 30)

By recognizing the benefits of culturally responsive practices, music educators can continue to push toward more equitable and fair practices. In the next section, I detail how critical perspectives expand and challenge certain social justice themes by addressing systems of power and challenging Whiteness.

Critical Perspective

Following the Tanglewood Symposium, as explored above, many music educators and scholars embraced multiculturalism in order to increase diverse learning and remain relevant as a profession. As the multicultural movement evolved, music educators expanded and challenged core principles of multiculturalism in order to create a more relevant, fair, and just professional and learning environment through social justice efforts. Although many music education social justice scholars desire a fair and just profession for both students and teachers, the social justice discourse leaves room for a critical perspective that accounts for systems of oppression. An equitable and fair music education setting from a critical perspective involves challenging

hegemonic systems in order to break exclusionary barriers. This final section of the literature review explores the critical scholarship in music education.

Critical perspectives focused on equity in music education challenge and expand social justice efforts by addressing large systems of oppression like racism, Whiteness, and colonialism. In expanding social justice efforts, critical music education scholars challenge assumptions and create productive discomfort to help the profession recognize its complicity in these systems of oppression, in order to create a more equitable profession. Although social justice efforts also aim toward a more equitable profession, critical perspectives challenge assumptions in the social justice literature to extend equity work critically. The most salient difference in the critical literature is the acknowledgment of systems of oppression through anti-oppressive lenses such as antiracism and critical race theory. Common themes from critical perspectives in music education include explicitly discussing race and racism (Bradley, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2015, 2017; Fiorentino, 2019; Hess, 2014; Hess, 2015a, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b; Mathews, 2015; Vaugeois, 2018; Wahl, 2018), embracing critical pedagogy (Abrahams, 2005; Hess, 2019; Schmidt, 2005) critiquing the democratic approach (Bradley, 2012; Gould, 2007; Schmidt, 2008; Vaugeois, 2007), and critiquing colonialism (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2015a, 2015b; Rosabal-Coto, 2019; Vaugeois, 2009). These themes broaden social justice efforts by directly addressing large systems of oppression. An equitable profession and learning environment through this lens addresses systems of power and oppression and actively fights against them. In this section, I detail these critical perspectives in music education as they appear in the literature.

Embracing Critical Pedagogy

Music educators embrace critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1993) as a practice to challenge teacher-student power dynamics, emphasize students' lived experiences, and identify cyclic oppressive structures. Conscientization (Freire,1970, 1993), a main component of critical pedagogy, "describes a process through which people become aware and reflect upon the conditions that shape their lives" (Hess, 2019, p. 19). Recognizing the deeper context of students' lived experiences can help teachers address oppressive systems, which can then expand their teaching approaches.

In his critique of music education, Schmidt (2005) states, "Music education works, accordingly to Freire's criticism, to foster the reproduction of dominant ideals, while alienating dialogue and critical inquiry" (p. 3-4). He furthers his point:

> Music Education practice has been based on routine activities that do not foster communication. Instead, such practices promote the acceptance of preconceived notions where the creation of value is based not on personal or communal parameters, evaluation and critique, creation and transformation, but upon syntactic intricacy and technical excellence alone. (p. 5)

Schmidt (2005) critiques the closed nature of music education, wherein music educators primarily use only Western concepts of music making in their curriculum and practices. He later shares how critical pedagogy provides an avenue to challenge individual power by connecting to "one's cultural traditions and social relationships" (p.7). By emphasizing critical pedagogy concepts, music education can prioritize students lived experiences and begin to challenge structures that routinely exclude racialized individuals.

Abrahams (2005) provides a literature review of critical pedagogy and how it relates to music education. He states. “Critical pedagogy enables teachers to create a rich and varied music program, but it does not prescribe a particular curriculum. Rather it encourages learning experiences that are multiple and liberating” (p. 1). Embracing critical pedagogy can force music educators to widen the music making experiences in the classroom.

More recently, Hess (2019) used critical pedagogy as a foundation to construct an activist music education. She provides a deeply detailed and descriptive analysis of how music education researchers adopt and explore critical pedagogy. She says conscientization in music education is a reflective process that includes critique and awareness of power and is necessary for the movement toward action. Hess continues her analysis: “Conscientization and problem-posing education provide important reflective mechanisms in music education through which to consider lived conditions” (p. 26). Critical reflection as a tool creates a tangible pathway to further address oppressive practices in music education and to embrace students’ lived experiences that are commonly disregarded.

Critical pedagogy provides an approach where educators embrace a reciprocal relationship to learning with their students and can truly highlight students’ lived experiences. Music educators can use critical pedagogy to challenge typical power dynamics where the teacher is assumed to be the expert. By challenging these types of power dynamics, music educators may begin to address larger, systemic concerns, such as the prioritization of White, Western classical music.

Critical Perspectives of Race

Some critical music education scholars explicitly address race and racism through frameworks like critical race theory and antiracism education. They also address race by

examining how Whiteness perpetuates inequities in music education. These considerations challenge colorblind notions—which perpetuate false narratives of equality by assuming all races have equal challenges and access (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)— and provide a foundation to understand how race and racism exist in music education. With this understanding, music educators can challenge the status quo to create a more equitable profession and learning environment for our students. In this subsection, I discuss how critical music education scholars engage race and racism through CRT and antiracism education frameworks by addressing Whiteness and counternarratives to challenge assumptions in the profession.

As discussed in Chapter 1, CRT and antiracism education provide frameworks to understand race and fight against racism. Through CRT, critical music education scholars explicitly consider Whiteness in music education curriculum (Bradley, 2006, 2015; Gustafson, 2009; Hess, 2015a, 2018b), repertoire/curriculum and music classroom practices (Hess 2015b, Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Vaugeois, 2018; Wahl, 2018), and in the collegiate setting (Bradley, 2017; Fiorentino, 2019; Koza, 2008).

Whiteness is a social construct that represents and reinforces power within dominant society. Kraehe et al. (2018) suggest that Whiteness does not necessarily only describe White people but exemplifies the pinnacle of society and embodies an unspoken agreement of acceptable behavior. They state, "to speak of Whiteness is to speak of those markers, ways of being, orientations, dispositions, and enactments that mark the subject as 'White' and therefore as being in possession of those things that 'belong' to Whiteness" (Gaztambide-Fernández et. al, 2018, p. 9). Whiteness embodies dominant culture while dismissing anything that challenges its dominance.

The following examples challenge music educators to consider how they maintain inequitable systems through practices of Whiteness. Bradley (2007) emphatically warns that social justice efforts will have little success without explicit consideration of Whiteness in the profession. She states:

> Until we are able to break the silence that maintains music education's complicity in perpetuating racism by leaving Whiteness the undisturbed and undisputed cultural norm, our concerns about social justice in music education will amount to little more than lip service. (p. 143)

Hess (2018b) highlights how the common Eurocentric foundation in music education pushes additional types of music making to the periphery. Koza (2008) challenges the profession to critically examine how audition practices into schools of music privilege Whiteness and in particular White students. These scholars discuss Whiteness to provoke music education to become conscious of inequities that are perpetuated by Whiteness within the profession.

In addition to considering Whiteness, critical music education scholars also use their own personal narrative to challenge racially based assumptions about their experiences in music education (McCall, 2017; Thornton, 2017; Robinson & Hendricks, 2017). These narratives embody the CRT definition of counternarrative or counterstory. These stories challenge assumptions and stereotypes about race in music education. As described in Chapter 1, these stories are often called counternarratives or counterstories. Music education scholars McCall (2017) and Thornton (2017) use counternarratives to describe their experiences as scholars of color in a predominantly White profession. Counternarratives dispel stereotypes and provide narratives that challenge assumptions (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; McCall 2017). McCall (2017) details the obstacles she endured in obtaining her Ph.D. in music education as a woman of color.

Thornton (2017) asks why he was quite often the only person of color throughout different times in his education and career as a musician and music educator. His counternarrative describes his journey of obtaining a Ph.D. in music education and the importance for underrepresented populations of access to programs in music education. In noticing the lack of Black males in the music education profession, Robinson and Hendricks (2017) discuss Robinson's personal experience in music education as a Black man, using DuBois's concept of double consciousness. This concept details the internal conflict of maintaining a Black identity in a White world—where one must maintain a double consciousness of both identities in order to become successful. By understanding McCall (2017), Robinson and Hendricks (2017), and Thornton's (2017) experiences as counternarratives, as defined within CRT, their stories address race and racism, challenging assumptions to consider explicitly how race and racism influenced their experiences in music education.

In addition to understanding the experiences of music educators of color, it is just as important to explore and understand the experiences of students of color in school music programs. Hoffman and Carter (2013) identify a lack of literature and research studies that discuss the experience of students of color, specifically Black students, in the music classroom. Their study explored three African American students' experience in a secondary woodwinds class and found that through creative music making such as composition, these students felt a strong ownership over their music when compared to their experience in a traditional large ensemble class setting. Through counterstories, Hoffman and Carter highlight their students' voices in a way that challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Understanding educators' and students' experiences becomes crucial to addressing and rectifying inequities and social justice concerns.

Critique of the Democratic Approach

Although many social justice scholars in music education believe that a democratic approach will create a more equitable educational experience, critical music education scholars critique the limits and assumptions latent in the democratic approach. The democratic approach assumes that all students have equal access to power and voice in the classroom and does not consider how students' positionality plays a factor. This approach makes it difficult to recognize that students are not all considered equal, and they do not necessarily all have equal power and voice in their classroom. This critique expands social justice efforts by addressing larger systemic considerations.

As noted in the social justice section above, the democratic approach assumes that decisions based on the majority will benefit all students. Music education scholars (Bradley, 2006; Gould, 2007, 2008; Schmidt, 2008; Younker & Hickey, 2007) critique this notion by asserting that the majority often does not represent the most vulnerable populations. Younker and Hickey (2007) suggest that the "White, middle-class, university-trained concept of democratic education or social justice might not be the 'right one for all" (p. 221). Schmidt (2008) and Vaugeois (2007) note that the democratic approach in music education does not engage in discourses about race, gender, ethnicity, class, privilege, and systems of power. Democracy without a critical perspective dismisses the needs of the most vulnerable.

Critiquing the democratic approach allows a broader conceptualization of democracy. Gould (2007) challenges the music education profession to consider social justice from a more radical and critical perspective through sharp critique of the democratic approach. This critique directly responds to the heavy emphasis on the democratic approach in the social justice literature. She characterizes the commitment to democracy as one of the main values in music

education social justice efforts. Her critique challenges the democratic notion of equality as the erasure of difference by suggesting the democratic approach values the expectation of the dominant group and perpetuates assimilation. This critical perspective challenges the limits of the democratic approach in music education and widens the opportunity for multiple voices, perspectives, and a more equitable profession, as described at the beginning of this section.

Critical music education scholars also challenge liberal notions inherent in democracies such as consensus, "majority rules," and the belief that all peoples are born with equal opportunities regardless of class, race, or gender by critiquing colonialism. Critical music education scholars challenge these colonial ideals through their critique of the democratic process. Schmidt (2008) states, "democratic practices that proclaim 'mutuality of understanding and respect' often enact colonialism where the discourse of mutuality is enacted as coercion" (p. 16). In the case of music education, if students want to participate in a high school ensemble, they are seemingly coerced to participate in traditional Western classical music.

Decolonizing Music Education

Critiquing colonialism is an additional critical perspective in music education that challenges large, oppressive systems. Rosabal-Coto (2019) describes decolonization: "As a process, it entails unveiling, questioning, dismantling, and removing structures that sustain material and symbolic colonization" (p. 1). Music education resources focused on decolonization include a special issue volume in research journals[6], online resources, and non-profit organizations. *Decolonizing the Music Room* is a current non-profit organization and website on which music educators can find resources and projects focused on decolonization. Many music

[6] In 2019, *Action, Criticism, & Theory* dedicated a special volume to decolonization in music education.

educators and researchers embrace decolonization as a practice to critique materialization of colonialism, such as prioritizing Western European classical music as supreme and any additional type of music making as “other” (Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2015b).

Action, Criticism, & Theory for Music Education, an international music education journal, dedicated a special issue focused on decolonization in music education in which music educators analyzed the international impacts of decolonization efforts. Córdoba (2019) emphasizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge by embracing a

> Land-centered philosophy (Styres, 2017) which places the perspectives and the needs of Indigenous groups at the heart of the conversation, with the understanding that the knowledge that these cultures hold must be valued equally— neither superior nor inferior —to Eurocentric knowledge. (p. 201)

This land-centered philosophy challenges notions of European and colonial practices and perspectives as the default marker of civilization. In critiquing the music conservatory model, Córdoba (2019) states:

> Using the standards provided by conservatories as representative institutions of the dominant culture, it is possible to institute a “superior” form of approaching music, and thusly to devalue forms of interaction with music that are not aligned with the parameters that said entities outline. (p. 206)

By embracing decolonial practices, music educators can critique and challenge ideas of “superior” forms of approaching music in order to create a more liberated profession in which highly complex approaches to music, outside of European classical music, will no longer be “othered”.

Hess (2015b) suggests the Comparative Musics Model, based on Mohanty's (2003) Comparative Feminist Model, as a way to decolonize and challenge the Western classical hegemonic hold on music education curriculum. This model emphasizes the interconnectedness between the music and its context, highlights power relations and intersectionality, and allows for different music traditions to inform one another, such as the way West African music influences samba (Hess, 2015b). By embracing strategies to critically challenge curriculum in music education, music educators have the opportunity to help students disrupt oppressive cycles in music education.

Decolonizing approaches in music education provide pathways to examine further who does and who does not have power. By critiquing and challenging singular, classical approaches in music education, music educators can challenge larger oppressive practices and systems.

Addressing Positionality

Addressing positionality and complicity can also challenge oppressive systems and structures. Educators are political beings with their own assumptions and intentional/unintentional prejudices that have material effects on students. Matthews (2015) suggests that in order for music education to become more inclusive, music educators must critically engage and acknowledge their prejudices. Vaugeois (2007) uses critical race theory and post-colonial feminist theory to "provide us with analytical tools that help us notice our political locations and our investments in particular ways of seeing the world" (p. 190). Critical music education scholars highlight how acknowledging one's positionality recognizes that all are complicit in the systems of injustice; acknowledging one's positionality is one way to begin to address injustices (Vaugeois, 2009). Rosabal-Coto (2014) suggests that music educators must recognize their "bodily selves" in order to acknowledge and challenge colonialism in their

teaching practices. Kruse (2020) provides a personal account of his position as a White male who studies hip-hop in order to acknowledge his privilege and be explicit about how his perspective is shaped. Addressing positionality explicitly can potentially disrupt oppressive structures and continue the journey toward a more equitable, liberated music education by recognizing and then challenging structures that disproportionately benefit certain positionalities and oppress others.

Pushing Forward

Since the Tanglewood Symposium, music education continues to evolve in order to address concerns identified at the symposium, such as a) content of future music education courses, b) the fight for relevance in education, and c) discussion about whose music should be taught. These concerns prompted the multicultural movement in music education, which sparked the social justice movement in music education and has now evolved to highlight critical perspectives in music education. Each movement addresses relevance, equity, and fairness in music education differently, although the movements evolve as the profession evolves. In the multicultural movement, a fair and equitable music education setting emphasized incorporating musics from outside the Western classical canon. Scholars in the social justice movement may define equity and fairness based on a democratic consensus. An equitable and fair music education setting within a critical perspective includes challenging hegemonic systems in order to break exclusive barriers. Current critical perspectives in music education research focus on race and equity, pushing the profession to acknowledge and combat systems of oppression in order to create a more equitable profession. The present study extends the literature by exploring practicing music teachers' experiences in learning about and implementing critical perspectives like critical race theory.

My current project offers further research on CRT in music education by focusing on practicing music teachers' experiences in exploring CRT in a professional development community. With an understanding of the CRT tenets, music educators may be able to extend critical perspectives and teaching practices. Considering power, equity, and systems of oppression in music education may lead to new practices and expand views of race and racism in music education. Empirical data from this study provides practical and tangible applications for music teachers who wish to better understand CRT and systemic power, in order to explore what challenging racism and creating a more fair and equitable profession looks like in practice.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study centers the experiences of music teachers who learn about critical race theory (CRT) in a professional learning community. I explored potential pedagogical or epistemological transformations through a transformative learning theory lens. Consistent with music education research that focuses on professional development and transformative learning experiences, I used a case study design, specifically single instrumental embedded case study. In this chapter, I detail the project design, discuss participant selection and project procedures, highlight the data collection and analysis process, address the trustworthiness of the project, and conclude with the participant descriptions.

Project Design

Through case study methodology, researchers engage in an in-depth analysis of bounded systems to help audiences gain a deeper understanding of the individual experience. Disciplines that use case studies as a research design include psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, and education (Yin, 2009). Case studies provide an opportunity for researchers to examine a particular case or cases in detail. Although case studies are not meant to be generalizable (Stake, 1995), they provide an opportunity for "investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). In this section, I detail different approaches to case study design, explain why I chose a case study design for this project, and conclude with examples of case studies used in music education, focusing on professional development and transformative learning experiences.

Case Study Definition and Approaches

Although many case study researchers agree that the basic construction of case study research is the study of a bounded system (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Smith, 1978; Yin,

2009), definitions of what constitutes case study research differ. Merriam (1998) describes the three characteristics of case study research as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. The particularistic case study focuses on a particular phenomenon. The second characteristic—descriptive—emphasizes the thick, rich description of the phenomenon. According to Conway et al. (2011), the heuristic characteristic explains the "reasons for the problem, the background of the situation, what happened, and why" (p. 2). As a qualitative research methodology, case study research highlights the unique nature of what is being examined.

Yin (2009) provides a two-fold definition of case study research that describes case study research as an "all-encompassing method" (p. 18). The first part of Yin's definition focuses on the scope of a case study: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The second part of his definition focuses on data collection and analysis strategies:

> The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needed to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2009, p. 18)

Yin (2009) emphasizes that case studies can be used to answer "how" or "why" questions and can be used for explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive purposes. He also outlines four different types of case study research designs through a 2x2 matrix. The horizontal axis of the matrix includes single and multiple case studies. A single case study is understood through a single context, while a multiple case study includes multiple contexts (Creswell, 2007; Merriam,

1998; Yin, 2009). The vertical axis of the matrix includes holistic (single unit of analysis) and embedded case studies (multiple units of analysis). The four different types of case study research include:

- holistic single case study,
- embedded single case study,
- holistic multiple case study, and
- embedded multiple case study.

Additionally, Yin (2009) distinguishes between holistic and embedded case studies by the number of units of analysis. While a holistic case study only involves one unit of analysis, an embedded case study contains multiple units of analysis. For example, if a researcher examines the "global nature" (Yin, 2009, p. 50) of one school, the study would be considered holistic. Conversely, if the researcher examines subunits like teacher satisfaction and student achievement within one school, the study would be embedded. Further, if the researcher wished to examine the global nature of multiple schools, the study would be considered a holistic multiple case study.

Yin (2009) also provides five rationales for using single case studies methodology. The first rationale is when a case represents a critical case in testing a well-formulated theory; a single case that meets all conditions for testing a theory can "confirm, challenge, or extend the theory" (p. 47). The second rationale, which commonly occurs in clinical psychology, is when the case represents a unique case or extreme case such as a rare disorder or specific injury. The third rationale represents a typical case that captures the condition of the everyday or commonplace situation. The fourth rationale represents a revelatory case in which the researcher investigates or observes a previously inaccessible phenomenon. The fifth and final rationale for

single case study methodology is for a longitudinal case to gather and examine data over a long period of time. This project most represents Yin's (2009) third rationale for single case study methodology, a representative or typical case, due to the common experience of educators participating in professional learning communities (PLC).

Stake (1995) distinguishes two different types of case study research: intrinsic and instrumental. The researcher pre-selects the case (the bounded system) in an intrinsic case study. In an instrumental case study, the phenomena or larger picture takes precedence over the particular bounded system. The researcher in an instrumental case study prioritizes the larger theme that surrounds the bounded system. For example, Kruse (2013) uses an instrumental case study to examine the experience of a Chicano student (the bounded system) to explore cultural barriers or challenges within her experience (the phenomenon). In the current project, I prioritize how participants engage with the CRT theme in the bounded system of the PLC.

Creswell (2007) states that "case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p. 73). He describes case study research as:

> a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 73)

Drawing from Creswell (2007) and Yin's (2009) definitions, I define case study research as an examination and analysis of a bounded system in order to examine experiences within that bounded system. Thus, my project design is best described as an instrumental, embedded, single

case study with multiple units of analysis, for which I will use ethnographic tools for data collection. The participants' experiences in the professional learning community focus on learning about critical race theory represents the bounded system, and the different participants represent the multiple units of analysis. Since the bounded system— the PLC—represents a common experience of music educators, this project most represents Yin's (2009) third rationale for a single case study, a representative or typical case.

Professional Development Case Studies in Music Education

In music education research, case studies highlight experiences throughout the entire education community including student, teacher, parent, and community stories. Many music education scholars have also used case study methodology to highlight professional development (Bauer, 2007; Bell-Robertson, 2014; Blair, 2008; Conway & Garlock, 2002; Kastner, 2012) or transformative learning experiences (Perkins, 2019; VanDeusen, 2017). I discuss the following case studies to show how case study design is appropriate for the current study.

Professional development research in music education that uses case study as a methodology examines unique experiences in the professional development setting and provides robust details from within that bounded system. Much of the research reveals the importance of having a learning space in which to collaborate and learn from fellow music teachers (Bauer, 2007; Bell-Robertson, 2014; Blair, 2008; Kastner, 2015). Bell-Robertson (2014) created an online professional community for novice music teachers as a supportive space where participants could post their challenges, triumphs, and ideas about curriculum or pedagogy. Her findings suggest that the participants valued the online community as an outlet and as a space where they could feel comfort or relief. Similarly, Blair (2008) emphasizes the importance of mentoring new music teachers so that they have the opportunity to interact and learn with fellow

music teachers. Kastner (2015) created a professional development community focused on informal learning in music education. The participants in her study were able to gain new knowledge and practices with informal learning and also experience feeling "fed professionally" by being able to connect with other music educators in a professional development community (p. 307). These examples highlight how music education researchers use case study methodology to explore professional development communities.

Music education researchers also use case study methodology to explore learning and transformative experiences. Conway and Garlock (2002) explored the experience of a first-year general music teacher and highlighted occasions when the participant felt underprepared as a music teacher and had to learn how to navigate situations such as dealing with administration and proving herself to fellow co-workers. Although Conway and Garlock (2002) do not use transformative learning theory as a theoretical lens, they highlight many learning and transformative experiences from the participant's first year of teaching.

Researchers investigating transformative learning experiences in music education research have used case study as a methodological design. VanDeusen (2017) and Perkins (2019) used case study methodology and transformative learning theory as a framework to explore transformative learning experiences for undergraduate students. For both studies, the participants engaged in self-reflection practices and dialogues with each other to help facilitate the learning process. VanDeusen (2017) created a cultural immersion experience for preservice music teachers and explored the transformation of being immersed in a different culture than their own. Perkins (2019) created a collegiate course focused on social justice through choir singing. In this study, Perkins (2019) centered students' perceptions of the course: he found that "empathic and critical modes of learning may foster transformative social justice education and may broaden

the goals of music education" (p. 72). Similarly, the PLC for this project provided a space for participants to have an opportunity to transform their understanding of race and racism in music education.

Professional learning communities provide a space for collaboration, dialogue, and support and a space where learners can experience transformative experiences. According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), "the most useful professional development emphasizes active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection…" (p. 47). In my study, I use transformative learning theory with an emphasis on self-reflection to explore how the participants experience the PLC and how they transform their teaching practices after participating in a PLC focused on CRT.

Data Collection and the Professional Learning Community

Interviews and Participant Journals

After receiving informed consent (Appendix A), I conducted a total of three individual, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2007) with all participants. The initial interview established their understanding of CRT, their classroom practices, and their expectations for participating in the PLC. The second interview gauged any preliminary changes to their teaching practices and reflections on the first half of the PLC. I conducted a final interview after the completion of the PLC to explore any transformation or concluding thoughts. All interview protocols may be found in Appendix B. Participants also had an online reflection journal in which they answered the questions of the week and reflected on their classroom and classroom practices with regards to topics discussed in the PLC.

The Professional Learning Community

Originally the PLC was scheduled to meet in person eight times, for 90 minutes each gathering, over the span of 10 weeks. Since the PLC's main function was to provide learning and reflective opportunities to teachers, it was important that the PLC catered to the teachers' schedules and their capacity to fully attend all PLC gatherings. For this reason, we met in person a total of six times to accommodate inclement weather and sickness. Two of those meetings involved extended workshops to ensure we covered eight sessions of material. The extended sessions lasted an extra hour. Since this project took place before COVID restrictions were implemented, all PLC sessions met in person.

In each meeting, participants had the opportunity to reflect on the prior week and discuss new content. In between each PLC meeting, participants were encouraged to be critically aware, notice certain aspects of the surroundings in their schools, and pay attention to their practices. They were assigned readings and other material to review. They completed a short reflection and recorded behaviors or occurrences that they deemed important to discuss for the upcoming PLC gathering. In preparation for each PLC gathering, participants were occasionally responsible to read one short article or blog post related to the theme for that week. In recognizing that the participants are full-time educators with little free time, I designed the PLC curriculum so that the participants could gauge the amount of work they could complete during the week between PLC gatherings.

Benefits of this structure included having the opportunity to be face to face with participants and learning together in a shared space. Since music education research focused on professional development opportunities states that music educators yearn for professional development opportunities with other music educators (Bauer, 2007; Bell-Robertson, 2014;

Blair, 2008; Conway, 2007; Kastner, 2015), it might be beneficial for the participants to see each other and learn together in person. Workshops provide space for participants to actively engage in multiple ways of learning. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) state, "Active learning opportunities allow teachers to transform their teaching" (p. 48). In person workshops allow for multiple ways to engage active learning such as music-making or small group discussions.

Participant Selection

I used a combination of convenience, snowball, and purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) to select participants. Qualifications to become a participant in the PLC included: being any type of K-12 music teacher with a moderate interest in equity and social justice work. I did not require them to have any prior experience in equity work. I recruited participants from a state music education conference in the Southeast part of the United States. Even though I established this PLC in the Southeast part of the United States because I lived here, there is historic significance for creating a PLC focused on race in this region, due to the way this region exalts Confederate soldiers through statues, building names, and Confederate battle flags. I invited six qualified participants who were interested in joining the PLC. Due to scheduling and outside obligations, only four of the six ultimately agreed to join the PLC and become a part of the study. All participants lived within a 30-mile radius of each other.

Role of the Researcher

My experience as a Black, queer, female music teacher presents a unique and connected lens for this study. I choose to research topics pertaining to race and oppression because I have had to deal with racism within my life and career. From feeling isolated as the lone Black teacher in a school district, to dealing with homophobic subtleties in the elementary setting such as fear of retaliation for being openly queer, my experience in education shapes my lens as a researcher.

This PLC centered critical race theory as the main topic so as to provide productive discomfort for participants to reflect on the views and practices in their classrooms that may perpetuate racism and/or other forms of oppression. There is much potential in music education for considering and providing more equitable and liberated practices. The current study provides an opportunity for music educators to reflect on practices focused on race and racism.

As the PLC facilitator, I designed lessons and activities that I could simultaneously observe and facilitate while participants actively engaged with each other. Presenting CRT concepts and guiding learning throughout the PLC allowed an opportunity for me to experience the PLC with the participants as the facilitator. As a fieldworker, the ethnographer's responsibility is to observe, write jottings and fieldnotes of the observation (Emerson et al., 2011). Participant-observers actively engage in the community they are observing and often become a part of the group they are observing. Although in other professional development research in music education, the researcher identified as a participant observer (Kastner, 2015; Stanley, 2009), my role was that of a facilitator, distinct from the PLC participants. I used ethnographic observational tools such as jottings and fieldnotes, from the PLC sessions, to gather data immediately after each workshop.

Reflexive practices provide an opportunity for the researcher to acknowledge how personal judgments, experiences, and approaches can influence the research (Creswell, 2007). Reflexivity recognizes that the researcher's biases and positionality cannot be separated from the research itself. This element of ethnographic research speaks to the researcher's lens within the study. I cannot pretend that my experience as a Black woman in music education does not influence my lens as a researcher.

Data Analysis

Data for this research includes interview transcripts, fieldnotes, participant reflective journals, researcher reflective journal, online posts, and PLC video recordings. I analyzed these various sources of data to develop common themes. Identifying patterns and themes in qualitative work is essential. Saldaña (2015) suggests that "finding patterns in our data and articulating their interrelationships are key elements of qualitative analytic work" p. 20. It takes several cycles of reading and analyzing data to identify and code themes.

Memos

Memos provide a space for the researcher to write important thoughts or reflections throughout the data collection and analysis process. Saldaña (2013) descries analytic memos as a place to "dump your brain" (p. 41). I wrote memos while constructing and reading fieldnotes and transcripts and during the process of developing codes and themes. I handwrote memos on the margins of the data collected during the PLC, using the comment function on multiple Google and Word documents.

Coding Process

Although multiple coding approaches exist (Creswell, 2007), I chose to use practices from Emerson et al. (2011), Creswell (2007), and Saldaña (2015). I used both open and focused coding methods. Once all data were collected and transcribed, I began with an open reading of the data in the order in which they were written, before I started focused coding. This process allowed me to better understand everything that had been collected before the coding process began (Emerson et al., 2011).

Once I completed a full, open read of my data, I began several cycles of coding, beginning with open coding (Emerson et al., 2011; Saldaña, 2016). All data points were

thoroughly analyzed several times to generate different codes. Emerson et al. (2011) suggest that "qualitative coding is a way of opening up avenues of inquiry" (p. 175). Within their approach, Emerson et al. (2011) define open coding and focused coding as two phases of qualitative analytic coding. Open coding occurs when the researcher generates initial ideas and categories while reading field notes line by line. Researchers generate as many codes as necessary within the open coding phase. Emerson et al. (2011) provide a list of questions to consider when examining field notes as the researcher begins the coding process:

- What are people doing? What are they trying to accomplish?
- How, exactly, do they do this? What specific means and/or strategies do they use?
- How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on? What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes? Why did I include them?
- How is what is going on here similar to, or different from, other incidents or events recorded elsewhere in the field notes?
- What is the broader import or significance of this incident or event? What is it a case of? (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 175)

I used these questions to guide my open coding process as I developed initial codes, which eventually evolved into emerging themes.

After the initial round of open coding, I did a round of focused coding. According to Emerson et al. (2011), focused coding is a "fine-grained, line-by-line analysis of selected notes" (p. 191). Within focused coding, the researcher examines field notes for subcodes that may

create additional themes and new relationships between initial codes. The focused coding process can result in the final themes for the analysis. Similarly, Saldaña (2016) suggests a combination of value, descriptive, and in-vivo approaches when coding fieldnotes after the initial round of coding. He states, "The primary goal during second cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes" (p. 234). This process allows for emergent themes to develop.

Value coding reflects participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs on their worldview (Saldaña, 2016). Since the PLC required participants to engage in self-reflection and identify certain values regarding race and racism, value coding provides a context for coding personal beliefs and values. Descriptive coding allows the researcher to establish what is happening during an observation (Saldaña, 2016). Although I facilitated the PLC, I used the descriptive coding process as a way to provide additional context for the conversations and emotions expressed within the PLC. I used this coding process to capture the voice and stories of the participants throughout the PLC (Saldaña, 2016). After several cycles of coding, themes began to emerge. The initial emerging themes evolved as I continued to read and analyze data.

Trustworthiness

I established trustworthiness of my project through triangulation of the data, peer review, member checks, extensive time in the field of research as a facilitator, and my own positionality and experience as a race scholar (Creswell, 2007). In regards to triangulation, Creswell (2007) states, "researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (p. 208). Due to the multiple data points including interviews, written reflections, PLC gatherings, and observations, I corroborated similar themes across different forms of data in order to strengthen trustworthiness of the project.

Member checks and peer reviews increased the trustworthiness of this project by providing a sense of credibility from outside the researcher. Member checks allowed all participants to have an opportunity to review their interview transcripts and other data points to ensure that their voice was properly portrayed. I used a peer reviewer process with two colleagues that have expertise in the research area to increase credibility and trustworthiness. They reviewed the content in order to ensure analytical clarity accuracy. The peer reviewers were experts in my field who were able to examine my process and ensure that the findings, interpretations, and conclusions were supported by the data (Creswell, 2007).

My experience facilitating conversations and researching CRT allowed me to provide a thorough approach to this project. I have taken classes focused on race in music; I have been invited to be a scholar in residence to speak on issues of race and racism; and I have presented on aspects of CRT in music education on multiple occasions. Additionally, my experience as a community organizer with anti-oppression organizations provided a unique perspective for this PLC. My responsibilities, in these organizations, included leading discussions about how to recognize and combat racism. These experiences allowed me to provide an effective PLC and to understand and interpret the participants' experiences throughout the project.

Introduction of Participants

Through purposeful and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2007), four music educators, Beth Crosby, Angela, Jesse, and Ty, agreed to participate in the PLC. All participants chose their own pseudonyms, and Beth was the only participant who chose to have a first and last name. Each educator lived and worked in a small university town located near southwestern Virginia. Two of the educators used she/her pronouns and two educators used he/him pronouns; each participant self-identified as White and/or Caucasian. Beth, Angela, and Ty all worked in the same school

district, where over 50% of students are Hispanic and over 60% of students are considered economically disadvantaged. In Jesse's neighboring, rural school district, around 70% of students are White, and approximately 35% of students are considered economically disadvantaged.[7] Every participant attended all sessions and contributed to online reflection questions throughout the PLC. None of the participants had previous training on critical race theory.

Beth Crosby

As I entered Beth Crosby's (she/her) band classroom, I was surrounded by pictures that highlighted jazz appreciation month. I saw greetings in at least 15 different languages. Beth taught middle school band in a school district where students spoke over 100 languages. Inside Beth's band room, I saw encouraging quotes and memes about practicing and playing music. Most noticeable was the large frame of Charlie Parker located on the front wall. By the various visual representations in her classroom, Beth clearly intended for the diverse student population to see themselves in her classroom.

Beth described her journey to becoming a music teacher as one influenced by her experience of being a band student. She emphatically exclaimed, "I remember a moment being in 8th grade [saying], I want to do this forever!" Throughout high school, Beth participated in band, choir, and orchestra. She majored in bassoon in college. When asked which instrument she would identify as her primary, she said, "Everybody asks me that., and I don't know." She then detailed how she plays trombone, has played the flute and viola since middle school, and has also accompanied solos on the piano. Outside of the classroom, Beth participated in community

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[7] These statistics are according to the 2020 schoolquality.[state].gov website.

music organizations including coordinating Tuba Christmas and participating in the local community wind ensemble as a flutist.

As a band director, in addition to playing techniques and musical literacy, Beth valued the type of adults her students would become. She emphasized the importance of teaching life skills within her classroom:

> I'm not worried about you [her students] this year, I don't worry about you next year. I'm worried about where you are in 5 years, in 10 years, 15 years. Am I giving you skills for you to be successful in life? I want them to be great musicians . . . my main priorities in my classroom are, do you know how to work to be part of a team? Do you know how to take responsibility for your own actions and behaviors and know what you do impacts other people?

She continued, "I don't feel that my main responsibility is [teaching] music. It's the life skills that are taught through the music in my classroom." She is passionate about being a music educator.

During the initial interview, when asked what she noticed regarding race and racism in music education, she admittedly did not identify any overt acts of racism but did express past experiences of sexism within the profession. She shared, "I don't know if I've ever seen it [racism]. I've seen sexism . . . I find [sexism] to be very, very present in the band director world because for years and years it has been the 'good old boys' group.'" When I asked what she hoped to gain from participating in the PLC, she recounted how she never learned about female composers or composers of color in college and shared, "I want to know that I don't know as much as I think." Beth approached the PLC with the hope of expanding and challenging what she knows as a music educator.

Angela

Angela (she/her), a high school band director, taught in the same district as Beth. Her responsibilities included co-directing the marching band, teaching concert band, "new-comer"[8] music, and a beginning piano course. On one side of the spacious band room that can easily hold 100 students, seven students gathered and socialized on old, donated couches and love seats as they waited for their next class to begin. Posters with encouraging words and images of instruments filled the walls.

With 13 years of experience teaching music, Angela described the "lightbulb" moments with students—where students gained excitement about learning—as one of many joys of teaching music. She shared, "Family is what we want to establish in band land . . . we want to make sure [students] have a space where they felt safe." Growing up in the same state where she teaches, Angela fell in love with music in middle school while taking flute lessons. As a child, she wrote in her journal that she wanted to teach music. When asked what she hopes her students value in participating in music, she emphasized a need for a classroom, "where they can express themselves freely, but really have a sense of self-expression." She poured her love and passion for music into her students.

Angela positioned herself as a life-long learner who consistently questioned how she could be a better educator and could learn from her students and surrounding. When asked about her past experiences in dealing with racism, she noted that she has not seen any "negative behaviors or feelings." Then she said, significantly, "I don't know if I would notice it [racism]." Understanding that she may not be able to recognize many forms of racism is one of the reasons

[8] New-comer music class includes students who have immigrated to the United States within the last year.

Angela decided to participate in the PLC. Even though Angela emphasized the importance of creating a safe space by providing ample opportunities for students to affirm student voice and autonomy, she wanted to challenge herself by embracing the discomfort of growing as an educator and widening her understanding of racism.

When asked if she noticed racism in music education, Angela described the lack of Black women in the field: "I feel like there's a huge lack of people of color.—women, especially women of color in our field." She also noted the racial demographic differences in the classes she taught. "Marching band . . . about half [White] and half [students of color]. General music [students are] 10% White." Angela wished to make her classroom as inclusive as possible. "I want to continue learning how to make my classroom inclusive and how to make sure kids are all getting the experiences that they need."

Ty

In addition to marching band, two levels of concert band, choir, and secondary general music classes inclusive of piano and electronic music, Ty's school district also offered an after-school music course focused on DJing and beat-making. Beth, Angela, and Ty all taught in the same school district. Ty (he/him) had taught the after school DJing course for the past three years. The course lasted for 10 weeks each semester. His beat-making class was part of a larger community initiative whereby high school students could choose to take enrichment and career-readiness classes. He began his teaching career as a volunteer teacher at the local elementary school's DJ club and quickly took advantage of the opportunity to teach high school students. Ty described the after-school program as "a local youth empowerment program that teaches different career paths and exposes kids to different career opportunities." At the end of each semester, his students participated in a showcase for the entire community to hear their creations.

As a beat-maker, DJ, and pianist, Ty described his love for music and his creative process as being more than entertainment, but as a way to "educate through it [entertainment]." He explained:

> Because music has been such a tool for me to grow and learn, like some of the music that I was exposed to growing up was really informative in a lot of different ways as far as just learning about your history, and there was a lot of really important messages and content within that music that I really resonated with—and I think helped me kind of walk a different way and made me a little bit more informed than I would have been if that music hadn't had those messages in it.

Using music as a tool for education and self-discovery significantly shaped his life; he actively created and performed original music and DJ sets locally.

Ty's intrinsic motivation to explore beat-making and DJing began with his inspirational piano teacher.

> The last piano teacher I had helped me make my own songs . . . I realized how big of an impact that made on me and my path going forward because my teacher came and opened up that option for me . . . like this can be really fun.

As a music educator, Ty emphasized that feeling of fun with his students. With this new curiosity, Ty immersed himself into the world of hip-hop by listening to legends like J. Dilla, DJ Premier, and Pete Rock. In explaining his early days of beat-making, Ty stated:

> So, when I started making beats and instrumentals, I would do stuff on my keyboard. Original key stuff. Then I would incorporate records. I got one turntable and a mixer, and my folks had like two crates in the basement. So, I

would take their old record collection and make beats out of pieces of those records.

When recounting significant memories, Ty recalled,

> I [will] never forget that experience seeing DJs . . . playing 45s in a record shop. It was Chuck City, Breakbeat Lou, and Rockin Rob . . . And these guys were there just like at the beginning of the hip-hop generation in the early 70s.

These experiences solidified his desire to create music through beat-making, sampling, and DJing.

As an educator, Ty prioritized listening to students and creating a learning environment in which he and his students could be vulnerable. When asked about what he hoped his students value in his classroom, he responded, “This embracing of not knowing and embracing a level of vulnerability . . . and exploration and being okay with not knowing how to do something.” These characteristics are similar to those that Ty practiced throughout the PLC. He consistently asked questions and embraced the discomfort of not knowing, in addition to decentering himself as expert and centering his students’ expertise. When asked about his thoughts regarding racism, he emphasized the importance of addressing some of the “deep and ugly origins.” With regard to racism in music education he shared, “So I think that representation should and can be diversified and expanded.” His desire to grow and learn was evident when I asked what he hoped to gain from participating in the PLC. He explained, “I hope to become more informed and be more aware of my responsibilities within [the] culture [of] music education.”

Jesse

Jesse (he/him), an elementary general music teacher, taught in a neighboring, more rural and less racially and ethnically diverse school district than Beth, Angela, and Ty. As a music

educator, his time was spent between two different elementary schools where he taught preK to 5th grade. He described how he first fell in love with the trombone when he was in elementary school. He saw a trombonist from a visiting brass quintet play a glissando. Jesse recounted that exciting moment as a third-grade student and exclaimed, “That’s it! That’s the one!” When he entered middle school, he chose to play the trombone as soon as he was able and continued to play the trombone in college. Jesse further described how his love for music expanded as a high school student: “But it wasn’t till high school when I just had an emotional moment when we were playing a piece of music in school, and I decided *this* is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

As an educator, Jesse emphasized the importance for students to have vast musical experiences inside and outside of his classroom. He described a heart-warming story of one student who came into the music room on their own time to explore and play the piano. This student’s parent approached Jesse and expressed gratitude for letting their child come into the music room to play music, because that student was just accepted into the local children’s choir. When asked about what he hoped the students valued from taking his music class, he explained:

> I hope—like when my students leave me— do I want them to be great singers? Sure. Do I want them to be knowledgeable in music theory? Why not? But ultimately, my goal is, if they leave me loving music and wanting to pursue that in any way they want to—whether that is through a band class, through choir, or through a heavy metal rock band . . . If I can try to just show them that music isn’t just this “stand on the riser and sing” but it’s something so much more to that and they can kind of connect in some way, then I win.

Jesse prioritized a broad love of music for his students. He centered the students' desires in his classroom.

When initially asked how he has seen racism manifest in music education, Jesse reflected on the discourse he has seen on elementary music teacher Facebook group comment threads. In reference to hostile conversations in which someone said something offensive, he asserted, "*Why* would you think that's okay to type on a computer?" He did not feel that people were able to productively debate each other. In fact, he felt as though people could not actually hear divergent perspectives. He wanted his students to be able to critically listen to one another. "If you learn to listen to someone . . . then you could allow yourself to question what you already know." He continued, "Learning how to listen is that first step and . . . allowing things you're not comfortable with to be said." He recognized the need for critical listening skills in order for his students to receive information about difficult or sensitive topics.

Jesse acknowledged the lack of racial diversity in his school district; most of the students in the district identified as White. When asked what he hoped to gain from participating in the PLC, Jesse expressed that he would like to gain "some sort of knowledge into how I bring the conversation of race to a school that isn't [racially] diverse." Additionally, Jesse highlighted the desire for his students to share their stories and their lived experiences: "I'd love to have families share songs that they have within their families and bring those into my classroom and allow students to tell their stories through the songs that they know from their families." Although Jesse recognized the lack of racial and ethnic diversity of the school population, he aimed to create a classroom where students critically listened to each other and shared their stories and lived experiences.

Summary

In this case study, I explore how four music educators experience learning about CRT in a professional learning environment. This study is best described as an instrumental, embedded case study, due to the multiple units (participants) within the bounded system (PLC). In this chapter, I detailed the method of the study, highlighted how additional music education researchers who focused on professional learning communities used case study as their methodology, described the project, and introduced all of the participants within the study.

In the next chapter, I focus on describing the PLC in depth by answering research question #1: How do the music teachers' perceptions of CRT evolve within the professional learning community experience? I detail each session and share how their understanding of CRT developed throughout the PLC.

CHAPTER FOUR: ENGAGING CRITICAL RACE THEORY AS MUSIC EDUCATORS

This chapter captures the participants' perceptions of CRT throughout their time during the PLC. Participants engaged in eight workshops over 10 weeks, dedicated to five specific CRT tenets: *counterstories, ordinariness, Whiteness as property, intersectionality, interest convergence*. You can find the PLC curriculum in Appendix C. Two of the workshops were cancelled due to weather and illness. In order to accommodate these cancellations, I extended two originally scheduled PLCs from 1 ½ hours to 2 ½ hours. The PLC met in person six times from December 2019–February 2020. In this chapter, I detail how the participants experienced each CRT tenet. By highlighting the participants' questions, challenges, reflections, and revelations of each tenet, I examine Research Question #1: *How do the music teachers' perceptions of CRT evolve within the professional learning community experience?*

All PLCs followed a similar format. Except for the first PLC, in which we started with introductions, I began each PLC workshop with opening reflections or lingering questions from the previous week. After we discussed participants' questions or reflections, I presented the CRT tenet for the week as a PowerPoint and interactive lecture with collaborative opportunities, during which participants could process additional information with targeted activities. In this chapter, I list each reading and describe the related activity at the beginning of each section. I encouraged participants to engage in readings, videos, personal reflections, and online discussion boards in between each workshop. I attempted to provide workshop resources that could accommodate the time commitment of a full-time music teacher. Participants also kept a personal reflection journal throughout the duration of the PLC. Each workshop focused on one of the five CRT tenets I chose for this project.

I have organized this chapter by each CRT tenet. For each CRT tenet, I examine the participants' different questions, reflections, challenges, and revelations. Next, to contextualize their challenges, I examine the questions and reflections participants shared in the PLC. I discuss any revelations last because these materialized from participant reflections, questions, and discussions in the PLC. The order of each CRT tenet in this chapter reflects the order I presented each CRT tenet in the PLC.

I intentionally presented each tenet in a particular order. I began with *counternarratives* to establish an understanding of how music educators typically use storytelling in their classrooms and as a way for the participants to share their stories with each other, to gain an appreciation of who they are as music educators. The second tenet I introduced was *ordinariness*, to show how racism permeates all facets of our society. Next, I introduced *Whiteness as property* to show the connection of the ordinariness of racism to Whiteness. For the fourth tenet, I focused on *intersectionality* to highlight how multiple interlocking identities matter in a racialized society. I presented *interest convergence* as the final tenet, in order to pose a final question to the participants: What interests must converge in order for music education to achieve a more equitable and liberated profession?

Prior to facilitating the counternarrative session, the opening PLC focused on an overview of Critical Race Theory and expectations of the PLC. The first PLC took place before winter break, at the end of 2019, to provide an opportunity for participants to get to know each other, establish norms, and to study any readings expected for the upcoming PLCs.

Counternarratives

To create an engaging learning environment in which participants felt comfortable to push themselves, think deeply, and create a rapport with one another, I began the PLC with

activities that allowed them to get to know each other. As the PLC facilitator, I introduced *counternarratives* as the first CRT tenet, to establish the importance of storytelling and to provide an opportunity for the participants to collaborate and share their stories. Prior to this PLC, I asked the participants to read Ladson-Billings (1998) and choose between reading Solózano and Yosso (2002), Hess (2018), or listen to Kendrick Lamar's album *Good Kid M.A.A.D. City* as an example of counternarrative in music.

A key component of counternarratives is the act of an individual owning and expressing their story. Solozóno and Yosso (2002) describe counterstories: "For the authors, a critical race methodology provides a tool to 'counter' deficit storytelling. Specifically, a critical race methodology offers space to conduct and present research grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of color" (p. 23). By giving the participants a chance to share their stories in the very first PLC, we were able to shift the conversation toward whose stories are commonly overlooked and our responsibility, as educators, to center those stories. An understanding of counternarratives requires an understanding of the importance of an individual owning and being able to tell their story. This PLC focused on counternarratives, and the participants posed questions, discussed reflections and challenges, and identified revelations of how they might use counternarratives in their classroom and in music education. In the PLC and in this section, I use counterstories and counternarrative interchangeably.

Questions

While processing counterstories as a new concept, the participants questioned how counternarratives could connect to their lived experiences. Beth asked how counternarratives are formed. She wondered if her experiences, growing up as one of few White people in her school until she reached high school, which was predominately White, could be considered a

counterstory, asking, “Would the same connections be made in an all-White community?” She continued her question, “Are counternarratives formed out of struggle?” In response, I shared how counternarratives, through a CRT lens, focus specifically on overlooked stories of racialized individuals, but outside of CRT, counternarratives could include multiple identities such as LGBTQIA+ and other marginalized identities.

During this PLC, the participants engaged in a gallery walk focused on quotes that detailed different aspects of counternarratives. I asked participants to walk around the room to read each quote and write a reflection of how the quotes connected to music education and their classrooms. As they participated in the gallery walk, they used post-it notes to write their reflections or questions, anonymously, for each quote. The following quote prompted critiques and questions regarding ensemble priorities in music education:

> Central to our work is the conception that students are not culturally deficient, but rather, enter classrooms with rich and diverse experiences, some of which raise serious questions about what counts as knowledge in the field of education and beyond. As a point of departure, we challenge our students to think of themselves, their families, and communities as resources and sources of strength. (Akom, 2009, p. 58, as cited in Hess, 2018, p. 12)

One participant provided this question:

> I truly believe this—the American band classes squash diversity and replace w/ dead White guys. We have to expose students to diverse music and composers so they see their own experiences within what we do. How can we do more to encourage connections in an ensemble setting? . . . I need to ponder more.

In response to this reflection, a participant replied by writing “YES” with an arrow pointing to the above post-it note. Another participant questioned, “How can we embrace creative processes just as much, if not more than, creative products or performances?” The reflections from Akom’s (2009) quote showed that the participants valued the lived experiences and knowledge students bring to the classroom and that the current structures in music education inhibit opportunities to center students.

Reflections

As participants reflected on the meaning of counternarratives, they recognized and discussed the importance of challenging their own assumptions. Jesse reflected on his limited experience of understanding and listening to rap music and highlighted how listening to “The Art of Peer Pressure” from Kendrick Lamar’s *Good Kid M.A.A.D. City* album widened his understanding of a lived experience with which he was unfamiliar. This was his first time listening to any Kendrick Lamar album, and as he reflected on the lyrics of this song, he expressed how he found it interesting that in this song, Kendrick simply rapped about hanging out with his friends. He shared: “My conception of what rap music is in America is sex and drug and party based.” He continued his reflection, “It was interesting to hear that kind of lifestyle that I’ve never experienced in any way, shape, or form.” By listening to this song, he questioned his assumptions of rap music only being about sex and drugs; he challenged his perceptions of what rap music represented and allowed an unfamiliar story to widen his perspective.

Challenges

Regarding whose stories are and are not centered in music education, the participants acknowledged how music education largely focuses on “dead White men.” In her written online submission, Angela shared:

> Especially in music, a field that has such an "old-White-man" background, it's imperative that we show students repertoire and history of musicians of various races and backgrounds. For students to truly buy into what we're doing, they have to have SOME personal stake in outcome and purpose, so by providing them with role models, they will be able to place themselves into the creative process.

By highlighting the homogenous racial make-up of music education, Angela identified that students need to be able to see themselves.

As the participants processed the characteristics of counternarratives, they discussed their desire and challenges related to centering students' stories in a typical band class. Beth expressed:

> I wanna find ways to allow students to share who they are. And I think one of the struggles is balancing the needs of the ensemble—balancing the needs of the state and what they expect, and the community and what it expects. My community expects me to have three concerts a year. It takes a good solid two to three months to get them to have a concert-ready performance. Unfortunately, opinions are created based on how the students perform . . . whether or not they had an off day, and whether or not I'm a good teacher in the classroom . . . It's hard balancing that with—I LOVED the Detroit song writing project. I think that's super, super cool. And I'm gonna try and do that in May, where I have one free month where I can teach what I want to teach . . . I love the whole song writing project, but my classroom does not necessarily open itself to a lot of those opportunities.

The participants offered criticisms of the performance-centered expectations of music education. Beth discussed how she wanted more opportunities for students in her classroom to show who they are and also shared the struggle between balancing performance expectations.

In addition to recognizing challenges inside the classroom, participants processed counternarratives on an individual and personal level. Frustrations arose as participants discussed and processed their thoughts on counternarratives. Beth reflected on her frustrations regarding presumed assumptions of her ability or inability to connect with her students because she is White. She shared:

> Because I'm White [there is an assumption] I can't connect with my students of color . . . Well yeah, there's a lot of things I can't connect with, and it's not just my students of color. It's maybe my students who are high income, and I never did have high income . . .

She also stated,

> There's been a lot of times where I'm mad that I'm White. It's funny because I grew up as a minority. Selma, Alabama; I was White and everyone else was not . . . and I don't like that because I'm White, I'm perceived in a certain way. And that has given me pause my entire life.

Beth expressed her processing of Whiteness with annoyance and irritation. She recognized her privilege but also lamented on how Whiteness reflects on her. In recognizing how, through a counternarrative lens, students benefit from seeing themselves in the curriculum and throughout their learning, Beth challenged the notion that she cannot connect with her students who are not White because she is White. Counternarratives highlight commonly

overlooked stories and experiences; educators should emphasize their students' lived experiences and not necessarily the positionality of the teacher.

Revelations

As participants processed their understanding of counternarratives, they made connections and revelations to their classrooms. Jesse discussed how he can use counternarratives to build community within his class and how he can use counternarratives to affirm his students. In reflecting on how he would connect to students' stories and lived experiences, he stated, "You [in reference to his students] have something to share, and you have someone that wants to listen." His statements highlighted the lived experiences his students bring to the classroom.

In a later PLC session, Ty discussed how he creates opportunities for students to tell stories in his classroom. He emphasized the importance of prioritizing the process, as opposed to centering the final/finished product. He shared a music-making activity during which students use beat-making to express themselves and communicate their feelings. As he explained:

> Taking this concept of speaking for yourself and communicating clearly and in a grounded way and putting it into the context of music. And when I play the song again, leading up to the drop [I tell students to] think about that person, think about that thing [that is significant], and when this beat drops, this is you clearly communicating what you want to say but doing it in a healthy manner.

This activity provides space for students to reflect and share aspects of themselves in a guided musical way that centers their experiences and contributions.

Summary

These questions, reflections, challenges, and revelations provide a foundation to consider how the concept of counternarratives applies to multiple aspects of music education. Music educators can draw on students' lived experiences and not make assumptions about who they are or what musical expertise they bring. Even in homogenous, White communities, music educators can question whose stories are centered, whose stories they may overlook in their classrooms, and can make decisions to challenge the ordinariness of racism within the classroom. Music teachers use stories and storytelling in multiple ways in the classroom. The distinction between storytelling and counterstorytelling involves recognizing and centering racialized stories that are commonly overlooked.

As music educators embrace the concept of counternarratives or storytelling in their classrooms, there must be an awareness of caveats pertaining to the use of counternarratives. Hess (2019) warns, "As we encourage youth to tell their stories, we must also examine audience desires related to storytelling" (p. 143). She refers to Razack (1998) to continue her point, "Razack (1998) argues that people of color are often encouraged to share their experiences for the edification of White people" (p. 143). Even though counternarratives can be a useful tool to challenge racist practices, it is important not to use students' stories solely as a point of personal education or to exacerbate tokenism.

Ordinariness

After the participants discussed and gained an initial understanding of counternarratives, the next week, I introduced *ordinariness* as the second CRT tenet. Ordinariness is the acknowledgment of the pervasiveness of racism in our society. Bell (1995) describes racism as endemic in North American society; thus, racism is an *ordinary* facet in our society. I introduced

ordinariness as the second CRT tenet so that the participants could understand the depth of systemic racism as a foundation in N. American society, after first creating a sense of community by exploring counternarratives. Recognizing systemic racism can provide a foundation for understanding other CRT tenets.

During the PLC session focused on ordinariness, participants began wrestling with systemic racism. Prior to this PLC focused on ordinariness, they read Koza's (2008) article, *Listening for Whiteness*, and watch DiAngelo's video, *Why I am Not Racist is Only Half of the Story,* so that participants might reflect on racist practices in music education. We began the PLC with reflections and questions from the previous week. During the lecture, I provided further information regarding ordinariness by discussing notions of race and racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and sharing examples of how racism manifests in our society. As mentioned in Chapter 1, racism manifests in our society in multiple ways, including through an inequitable education system, redlining, microaggressions, and the wealth/wage gap.

Questions

As we considered systemic racism in the PLC, participants discussed solutions and questioned how music education can address racism. The participants shared common gatekeeping practices that take place in music education such as college auditions, access to private lessons, and additional financial barriers. While discussing Koza's (2008) article, Angela questioned if smaller universities could begin eradicating college admission auditions. She posed, "Is that where the change is gonna come from? From these smaller universities? . . . Because they do not have as many barriers?" She wondered if smaller universities could lead the change regarding college admission gatekeeping.

As Jesse recognized the breadth of systemic racism, he stated emphatically, "It's hard to look at the big picture and say, 'what can I do about this?'" He continued,

> What I understand specifically about me as a teacher and how I teach my students is I just do my part . . . I'm going to . . . love and listen to people . . . I don't have to go to Washington to do this, I can do this within my own sphere of influence with my coworkers, my students, with whoever . . . My job is not to change the system; my job is to change myself.

By questioning "what can be done" to address and eradicate racism, Jesse opened himself up to addressing systemic racism within his sphere.

These questions provided a foundation for these music educators to consider how systemic change can take place. While Jesse recognized how he can make a change in his classroom, Angela's critique of school of music (SOM) admission practices questioned who can change exclusionary practices at the university level.

Reflections

As participants reflected on systemic racism, Jesse reflected that he did not want to racialize his students by making assumptions about their ability based on race. He expressed:

> I want to believe that I don't racialize my students and use socially constructed race to judge how my students will perform in my classroom. But I also understand that there is social reality of race that produces a real effect on the [inaudible] Black or White. My students are going to feel the effect of being racialized at some point.

Jesse's reflection indicates a conflict: he did not want to make assumptions about the students' ability based on race, but he also realized that the outside forces within society contribute to students being racialized.

After reading Koza (2008), Angela reflected on how she had not fully realized the way Whiteness operates and how the article will change her as a teacher. During the second PLC, she expressed, "It [the article] made me reflect in a different way and is gonna make me a different teacher in front of all of my Hispanic kids." She elaborated by declaring her desire to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers faced by students. She shared, "Makes me more proactive about delving into some of the barriers that they experience on a daily basis." Angela's reflections show a willingness to not only acknowledge how Whiteness affects her teaching but also a desire to become more proactive in better understanding her students. These reflections provide an opportunity to show how music educators can see their students and recognize how ordinariness manifests in music education.

Challenges

Intentionally seeing race comprises a key component of combatting the ordinariness of racism. As we discussed this component during the PLC, many participants revealed challenges with intentionally noticing their students' different races. In a written activity during this PLC session, Beth wrote

> I have had difficulty "seeing color" in my classes while in this PLC. I have to actively think about what my students might be identified as because my brain doesn't separate them in that way. To me, they are divided only by instrument, grade level, and class period. It's been a fascinating observation for me.

Beth's difficulty in "seeing color" reflects DiAngelo's (2018) color-blind statements that "insist that people do not see race, or if they see it, it has no meaning to them" (p. 77). Color-blind or race neutral language provide a false veil of protection against perpetuating racism.

Similarly, Jesse recognized his difficulty seeing racism because of his privilege as a White man. He shared, "I think today it's hard for me to do this [notice racism] because I benefit so much from the system that is already in place . . . It's hard for me to notice it." This quote highlights the challenge Jesse experienced in identifying race.

Revelations

As the participants gained an understanding of ordinariness, they identified exclusionary practices that perpetuate racism in music education and schools of music. Beth identified the limited styles of music that were accepted in her undergrad experience. She shared:

> My college did not have a musical theater degree. They had a voice performance degree, but it was opera and that was the only style you were able to sing. If you wanted to major as a choral instructor—music education with a choral emphasis––you had to study and sing opera . . . That was one of my frustrations in college. I went back and looked at their admissions requirements now, and they're the same from the choral perspective.

This revelation shows the limited musical offerings in SOMs. In Beth's particular institution, nothing has changed since she graduated over 10 years ago.

Participants also considered how power plays into maintaining exclusionary practices regarding admission processes. Jesse identified how the people with power make the decision to maintain limits in admissions. He stated:

> If racism is systemic and is controlled by the people that have the power to make laws that affect people, then the question of why do we study Western European Classical music in colleges—if we use the same definition of racism— it's because the people who prefer that music have the power to decide what they study in this system.

Recognizing racism as ordinary provides an opportunity to see how racism permeates ordinary life in our society.

Summary

The participants widened their understanding of systemic racism and how it affects them in the classroom by reflecting and engaging in discussion focused on ordinariness. Their reflections, questions, challenges, and revelations provided a glimpse into how these teachers perceived racism. They critiqued how some practices in music education, such as SOM audition expectations, are not only racist but also have undergone very little change to address racist practices or accommodate a racially diversifying student population.

Whiteness as Property

The next PLC workshop, focused on *Whiteness as property*, took place two weeks after the ordinariness workshop. We extended this workshop to accommodate the previous missed week. Whiteness as property centers on how Whiteness can enact privilege, power, and control. Prior to this PLC, I encouraged the participants to read Harris (1995) "Whiteness as Property," DiAngelo (2018), and watch a University of Oregon interview with Cheryl Harris. During this session, participants watched Peggy McIntosh's *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRnoddGTMTY&t=164s). Since this was the fourth time gathering as a PLC, the participants gained a rapport with one another and embraced

vulnerability, tension, and conflict. Throughout this PLC session, participants leaned on the knowledge gained from learning about ordinariness and counternarratives to help process the meaning of Whiteness as Property.

Questions

As the participants identified the way systemic racism is maintained through individual action, they thought deeply about their actions as educators. Questioning every little action allows an opportunity to become more intentional about instruction and can lessen the unintentional harm based on implicit biases. Angela reflected, “I still question, which is good, everything I do.” By questioning and thinking deeply about every action, Angela increased her ability to expand her teaching practices.

In an effort to connect counternarratives to Whiteness as property, Ty shared his questions about how Whiteness allows the centering of certain stories and disallows the centering of other stories. He asked, “In what ways is Whiteness dominating or disallowing other stories?” This question provided an opportunity to question how Whiteness allows the centering of certain stories in the classroom. Later in the PLC, Ty also questioned whose responsibility it is to dismantle Whiteness. He asked, “As people that benefit from Whiteness, are we the people that should be doing the most in challenging this thing?” Ty’s question highlights the responsibility of White people to challenge and combat the effects of systemic racism.

Reflections

Similar to the PLCs on processing counternarratives and ordinariness, participants reflected on systemic racism and recognizing how Whiteness manifests. After watching Peggy McIntosh’s *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, and in a moment of transparency, Angela shared how she recognizes this manifestation of White privilege. She

pondered, “What have I achieved in life that I wouldn’t have otherwise, just because of the color of my skin?” This observation provided an acknowledgment by the participants that Whiteness can open opportunities.

Regarding how Whiteness influences the educational system, Angela wrote the following in her online reflection:

> For our students, so much of their education (and life) is being delivered by White teachers; there are entire classes (US history, government, sciences) that are based in research, discoveries, and history that comes from a White society. As an educator, my collegiate experience was Eurocentric, and pieces of music performed and studied were primarily composed by old dead White guys. If I didn’t go out of my way to research and break norms, it’s what my students would be learning as well, perpetuating the “importance” of Whiteness. We have to be *intentional* about diversifying our curriculum so we can make an attempt to lessen Whiteness. I think it’s important to know that despite efforts to be equal and diverse, since I’m White, Whiteness will always be present. It’s daily interactions that I have to monitor and evaluate consistently to make a safe, proactively inclusive environment in my classroom.

For Angela, it was important to diversify her curriculum in order to expand what the students experience in the classroom she teaches. Although her intentions focused on challenging Eurocentric norms and expectations, she recognized that Whiteness and its influence may always be present.

Challenges

As the participants shared their reflections on systemic racism and Whiteness, they turned the conversation to focus specifically on music education. Beth stated, "We teach what is familiar" in reference to the cycle of teaching what has been taught to music educators, thus perpetuating the narrative of teaching "old dead, White guys." As the discussion continued, Ty reflected, "I think music education is really good at teaching White music." As Ty shared his thoughts and criticisms about music education, his comment opened a broader discussion to define terms like "White music." Inquisitively, Beth asked, "What do you classify as White music?" After a moment of stillness and silence to ponder Beth's question, Angela responded, "Band literature?" Ty added on to Angela's answer, "Music that has been written by White people." As the facilitator, I felt tensions and defensiveness within the discussion and furthered the conversation by asking the participants: Who and what structures determine whose musics belong to whom? The purpose of this question was to get the participants to consider how and why certain genres of musics are racialized.

In the interview after this PLC workshop, Ty referred to the tension in the previous PLC session as "charged up." He continued, "I think it's important to kind of like start pulling things apart." In this statement, he shared his desire to continue to analyze the protection of "White people music" and the tension it creates. Following this PLC, I asked all participants, "What (if any) 'aha'/revelation moments occurred for you during our [previous PLC] discussion?" In his reflection, Ty wrote:

> The "White music" thing. And how I realized not only how the music education system is racist, but that it is "strong" or that "White people are really good at teaching White music" is what I said last time. It seems like there is an unhealthy

> cycle within music education that is very self-serving and doesn't allow much space for counternarratives or other ways of thinking.

Ty's critiques of music education focus on how a heavy emphasis of White music hinders embracing multiple ways of making music.

Revelations

As the participants grappled with how they understood Whiteness, they identified their desire to change the status quo. Jesse shared his hopes to challenge systemic racism and also mentioned his fears of becoming a White savior. He reflected on how being a White male gives him privilege and safety to talk about race and racism. He expressed:

> Trying to find that avenue of doing my part, but also respecting others and hearing them and allowing the conversation to flow . . . you have to understand that when it's not your turn to talk, you listen . . . you let them have the power to tell their story.

Jesse demonstrated an attempt to balance the desire to challenge racism while prioritizing voices and experiences beyond his own.

The conversation developed to recognizing power, and the participants identified what they could do to create a more equitable power structure. Ty shared his thoughts about Whiteness and its relationship to authority and power:

> I really like what you [Jesse] said earlier, like within the classroom, how can I break the mold? Because looking at society through [Whiteness as property context] is helpful, because I think it encourages us as people that benefit from Whiteness is like, we have a privilege to actually do something about it . . . These

> concepts leave a lot of space for progress by learning them because they disrupt patterns and make us more aware of our privileges.

Ty's statement centered on his responsibility to break and disrupt patterns and actions that reinforce the effects of Whiteness.

Summary

To understand Whiteness as property means to understand the way property ownership provides a means of power, control, and the right to exclude. Whiteness as property manifests in music education with the implicit or explicit exclusion of particular racialized types of music and music-making practices in the classroom. This exclusion can extend beyond music-making activities to who is excluded from participating in music education programs. The participants highlighted the importance of challenging Whiteness in their personal lives and in their classrooms by expanding curricular practices and expectations and embracing multiple ways to create music. They recognized how Whiteness affords them power and a responsibility to challenge oppressive systems.

Intersectionality

In the PLC workshop the following week, I introduced *intersectionality*. Participants used their newly gained knowledge of counternarratives, ordinariness, and Whiteness as property to help them understand intersectionality. Prior to this session, participants read "Mapping the Margins" (Crenshaw,1995), and I asked them to begin to detail their dream for the future of music education based on the concepts they had learned thus far. During the PLC, they participated in Beverly Daniel Tatum's Target/Agent profile activity, to help them process ways that intersecting identities manifest and provide avenues of privilege in music education. The activity comprises multiple rows that list different identity markers (i.e. race, class, gender,

religion, ability, and so forth) and columns; the participants indicate their identity markers and if that identity is part of the target (typically marginalized) or agent (typically dominant) population. I used this activity to focus on how intersecting identities with a proximity to Whiteness provide more assumed access and dominance in society. In order to complete the activity, I asked them to check the column with which they most identified, in order for them to recognize where their identity fell in the Target/Agent profile.

Questions

I opened this session by providing an opportunity for participants to share questions or reflections they noted from the previous weeks of participation in the PLC. Jesse drew upon concepts from previous sessions; he pondered student behavior and discipline through a CRT lens and stated, "I wonder where does that [ordinariness] fit in the idea of perpetuating Whiteness?" This question prompted an active conversation concerning discipline in the classroom. Jesse described student behavioral expectations such as standing when answering a question, answering in full sentences, having good manners, and tracking the speaker as particular behavior expectations in his classroom. Beth responded, "What about kids whose cultural norms are to not look people in the eye? Or they may be autistic." Jesse further reflected:

> With behavior, how I think that I should behave in a situation is gonna be different from a student who didn't grow up in the house or neighborhood that I grew up in. Where can I—or what does it look like for me to change what—how can I change and break out of how Jesse should behave in a classroom? Where is that line for each student? I just need to understand you as a person and what you need in order to respond to me.

By considering individual students' lived experiences, Jesse recognized the nuances of providing behavioral expectations in the classroom. His reflection prompted Angela to state emphatically, "*my brain is spinning 1,000 miles per hour!*" As Angela gathered her thoughts, she continued her comment, "but discipline in a large ensemble, it's a huge group of people. You have to [provide discipline] otherwise you don't get anything done." By combining both Angela's statement understanding the need for behavioral expectations in the music classroom with Jesse's recognition of students' individual lived experiences, music educators may find an approach toward behavior in the classroom that respects the students and the learning experience.

Regarding the demographics of the participants within the PLC, Beth asked the following questions in her reflection just prior to the intersectionality PLC:

> Why were only White, 20-30-something members gathered into the group? It would have been nice to get a variety of perspectives from not just White people but from those of other races/ethnic groups/ages to share their experiences and realities. Why are three of the members within [city name extracted]? I feel like there was growth within our group, but also feel this discussion would have also greatly benefited those who don't necessarily work with as diverse a population as we do in [this city].

These questions critique the homogenous racial make-up of the PLC. Beth highlighted how all participants were White and that three out of four participants worked in the same school district. From an intersectional lens, it appeared she desired more participants who represented additional intersecting identity points. I replied to her question about the lack of racial diversity within the PLC by stating that when discussing matters of race, it may be safer to have homogenous White participants as opposed to mostly White with one Black person or person of

color, due to that Black person or person of color having to speak for the entirety of their race or feeling the burden of explaining a BIPOC experience to the whole White group.

Reflections

After the participants completed the Target/Agent profile, Jesse stated that he knew he would identify as mostly in the Agent profile: "I knew I was gonna do that before we began." Ty, the other White male, agreed, "Me too. I knew that I would be in the Agent population except for religion." Even though they predicted the outcome of the activity, by participating in this activity, they acknowledged their intersecting identities.

As the participants reflected on the readings and their understanding of intersectionality, Beth expressed her desire to embrace identity points besides race. She asked, "When we've been discussing all of these things [in the PLC], I'm like, what other elements make them [people] who they are?" Beth also shared a conversation she had with her principal. She said,

> Our principal talked a lot about how she is a Black, female, younger [person], in a position of authority. And she talked about how someone came up to her after she got hired and said, "well, you checked all of the boxes," and she talked about that being a microaggression.

With the foundation of intersectionality based on the experience of Black women, Beth's statement highlights how Black women experience their intersecting identities in a way that White women or Black men do not share. Although both Black men and White women can experience microaggressions, an intersectional lens highlights the uniqueness of how a Black woman can experience exacerbated moments of oppression due to her being a woman and being Black.

Challenges

As the participants processed their experience completing the Target/Agent profile, Angela expressed her challenges in talking about race and racism. Besides saying that she does not know the history very well, she also shared, “I was raised to just not talk about it [race].” Even though she expressed her discomfort and challenges with talking about race, she was still adamant about embracing opportunities to learn and grow.

Once they completed and discussed the activity, I asked the participants how they might implement the Tatum Target/Agent activity in their classrooms. In her reflection, Angela shared, “I think there are a lot of kids that would want more answers than I could give.” She further reflected on how she could facilitate this activity by emphasizing that she does not come with answers, she comes with questions.

Revelations

After Jesse completed the activity he asked, “What I would like to see is, okay, I’ve checked these boxes, now what? What do I do with this information and where does that conversation take you?” Ty suggested the Target/Agent activity was a great opportunity for the students to lead and for the teacher to learn more about the students. Ty critiqued the concepts of teacher/student, expert/novice, and suggested that the teacher should come and sit with the student so they might figure it out and learn together when he asked, “How do *we* figure this out?” He continued his thoughts, “I always challenge myself to be a student.” Ty saw this activity and the concept of intersectionality as a way for him to learn from his students and to gain a deeper understanding of his students.

Summary

To understand intersectionality means to understand the interconnecting identity points and the privilege afforded to different identities. The Target/Agent activity may offer a self-discovery tool to identify dominant and subdominant identities. It can also provide a tool for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their students' identities. Teachers can use this concept to challenge their assumptions of their students by recognizing the depths and intersections of their students' identities.

Interest Convergence

The final PLC was another extended session to accommodate missing the previous week's workshop because of inclement weather. In this PLC, I focused on the last CRT tenet, *interest convergence*, in addition to providing ample space for participants to share their dreams for the future of music education and any other concluding reflections. Interest convergence details how dominant culture meets the needs of the most vulnerable only when it also benefits the dominant culture. Participants pondered what interests must converge in music education in order for a more equitable music education profession to emerge. Prior to this session, I encouraged participants to read Dixson and Anderson's (2017) "Where are We? Critical Race Theory in Education 20 Years Later" and the unpublished second chapter of this dissertation.

Questions

During the interest convergence PLC, we watched *Tadow* by FKJ and Masego, a 17-minute music video of two musicians who display musical depth by creating an improvised song using looping technology, guitar, bass, drum set, saxophones, and multiple keyboard instruments. I presented this video as an example of how music education might expand the type of music-making opportunities offered in schools. I asked the participants if they thought that

ensemble directors could embrace this type of music-making. Beth responded, “I think they would embrace it if they were given the opportunities to 1) to observe it, 2) to experience it, 3) to know that it’s okay if it doesn’t work the first time.” Angela sarcastically responded, “But Beth, *what about the concert*? It takes away time from getting ready for the concert.” Angela also shared her excitement for the possibility to incorporate that type of music- making experience in her classroom. If music educators desire to create this type of music- making experience, they must identify the interests that need to converge in order to provide the opportunity.

As Jesse processed the discussion on interest convergence, he asked “Are there situations where the minority in situations is able to make advances despite the majority’s lack of convergence of interest?” Ty also asked, “At what point does my interest of like teaching, or leading, or being creative get in the way of others’ creativity?” This question highlights the importance of recognizing the need to work toward change, access, and advances despite the lack of converging interest from the dominant culture.

Reflections

In thinking about how power relates to interest convergence, Jesse shared:

> It made me feel very cynical in how we can work together. The only way those who lack power to move forward, the only way for them to move forward is if the ones with power basically give them permission to move forward.

Jesse’s wording, “give them permission to move forward,” indicates an embedded assumption of his power as a White man. As opposed to thinking about power being given to those without, it is important to consider that those without power fight to gain access and are neither helpless nor defenseless.

Angela reflected on her experience as a member in a local, semi-professional concert band in which Beth was also a member. This local concert band recently presented a session focused on underrepresented composers at a music conference. During this conference performance, the band only played songs written by women composers and composers of color, to showcase the inclusion of composers other than White men. She shared that the only reason the director of this group programmed music by underrepresented composers was because of the conference presentation. She stated that the director of the concert series typically only programmed music written by White men. Beth corroborated Angela's statement: "His [the director] interest was that it made him look good." In this case, the director only included underrepresented composers for the conference but does not include them in the regularly scheduled concert series.

Challenges

I asked the participants what interests must converge for music education to evolve? Beth shared her perspective, "My perspective was community and parents. A lot of changes in education in general, happen because some parents got heated about it and it became a thing. I see parents and community being a big agent of change." Community members and parents can help shift certain interests.

With regard to expanding what is taught in music education, Jesse shared it can be a challenge to teach the unfamiliar in music education. He shared, "We have that European model that we're based off of, that people don't want to leave because it's comfortable, it's what they know." In discussing the difficulties of embracing improvisation for some music teachers, he said it is "because they didn't experience that in school, it's not comfortable for them." Regarding the interest that must converge in music education, Jesse stated, "I have a hard time

trying to picture another interest that would converge except survival." School districts have under-funded and cut music programs to the edge of survival. With an understanding of interest convergence, if changes based on addressing systemic racism align with the desire of dominant culture, music education might adhere to those changes.

Revelation

As participants discussed and grappled with recognizing how interest convergence functions, the participants guided the conversation toward a desire for a solution. Angela shared, "Change won't happen just because it's the right thing to do." Angela's statement highlights the importance of recognizing that change will not automatically happen—it will take intentional effort. Her quote also illustrates the complexity of doing the "right thing." At multiple times throughout the PLC, participants lamented the unnecessarily time-consuming state performance expectations and expressed that they would rather engage students with exploratory or creativity-based music-making activities. Even though the "right thing" would be to do what students desired, they did not feel that they could just do the "right thing" without compromising state performance expectations. There were outside pressures and expectations that prevented them from focusing on what they most desired.

When asked in an online journal prompt, "What interest must converge in order for music education to expand its critical considerations of race?" Ty wrote:

> What empowers or "interests" one White scholar, (i.e., having a job within education and teaching in a particular way) may continue to oppress a Black student who has no "interest" in learning within the seemingly limited context of the class, therefore disregarding and ignoring the student's interest and narrative.

By recognizing how the interests of White or dominant music educators may inhibit other types of music educators, Ty addressed the importance of thinking critically about the actions of music educators, to insure the space to challenge the status quo and create additional practices that emphasize creativity and exploration.

Summary

An understanding of interest convergence in music education allows music educators to recognize how power influences dominant movement in music education. The participants' questions, reflections, challenges, and revelations showed their eagerness to understand interest convergence. Once they gained a better understanding of interest convergence, they desired to identify a way to solve the inequities perpetuated by dominant culture.

Chapter Summary

Throughout the PLC, the participants engaged in readings, discussions, and reflections focused on five central tenets of CRT: *counternarratives, ordinariness, Whiteness as property, intersectionality,* and *interest convergence*. Prior to beginning the PLC, none of the participants had a strong familiarity with CRT. Their understanding of CRT had expanded by the time the PLC ended. They each described how their perceptions and interpretations of racism changed during their time in the PLC.

I interviewed all participants after the final PLC gathering to assess their thoughts regarding CRT and the PLC. Each participant acknowledged how participating in the PLC affected their perceptions of racism. When asked in his final interview about his thoughts regarding CRT, Jesse declared, "It [CRT] needs to be one of those things to be taught to every teacher, no matter what school you're teaching." He continued his thoughts, "I just feel like if every teacher kind of had, just had an understanding of that, their interactions with their students

and the way they would approach their content will be totally different." Jesse found the PLC to be a beneficial experience to help him better understand race and racism.

During Beth's last interview, she described her thoughts on CRT. She expressed, "For me, it is noticing things that I haven't noticed before, that I don't think it's intentional racism, but it's racism regardless." By participating in the PLC, Beth's understanding of racism expanded to include implicit racism.

The PLC not only influenced the participants' understanding of CRT and racism, it also influenced their teaching practices. In the next chapter (Chapter 5), I detail the themes that emerged from the data regarding how the PLC influenced the participants in the classroom. In Chapter 6, I discuss any transformation the participants experienced, and I also highlight the last activity in the PLC, which focused on the participants' dreams for the future of music education.

CHAPTER FIVE: APPLYING CRITICAL RACE THEORY TO MUSIC TEACHING PRACTICES

The professional learning community provided a space for participants to discuss ideas, ask questions, grapple with concepts, and push each other to learn. As the participants engaged and grew in their understanding of critical race theory, they started to identify how CRT could influence them as teachers. At the end of each PLC session, I asked the participants to begin noticing their practices and their schools through a CRT lens.

Throughout this study, participants discussed their thoughts regarding critical race theory and its application to teaching music. The participants shared how an understanding of CRT influenced their teaching in multiple ways. In this chapter, I explore the emerging themes that relate to how an understanding of CRT influenced the participants' practices and pedagogical choices by addressing Research Question #2: *How might an understanding of CRT influence music teachers' practices and pedagogical choices?* In the multiple ways the teachers in this study identified how an understanding of CRT influenced them, three major themes emerged: critical self-reflection, highlighting student stories, and considerations for the future of music education.

An understanding of CRT influenced the way they questioned themselves as educators, as well as prompted intentional conversations and considerations of their students. They used self-reflection techniques such as a writing journal, consistent self-questioning, and reflective learning. Through these practices, they began to notice how race manifests, and they critiqued common teaching practices. CRT also influenced the way they emphasized students' lived experiences and their narratives. As the PLC came to a close, the participants also discussed their visions and themes for the future of music education.

Critical Self-Reflection

As the participants discussed their thoughts regarding CRT and how it relates to teaching music, they each expressed how they had begun to question and notice different practices in their classrooms through constant self-reflection since the beginning of the PLC. Just as Lind and McKoy (2016) discuss the importance of practicing self-reflection when attempting to recognize or confront personal biases, the participants consistently engaged in self-reflection, as a practice to question themselves and broaden what they notice in their classrooms and schools with regard to race and racism. Participants made intentional decisions to consider race in ways that they had not prior to the PLC. By expanding what and how they noticed, they also questioned their teaching practices and critiqued how they engaged with questioning their students. They made intentional changes to their practices by implementing constant questioning and self-reflection. Participants engaged in continuous critical self-reflection to reflect on their practices within their classrooms. Through their engagement with critical self-reflection, reflective learning and critical reflection provided space for cognitive dissonance that led to transformation and ideological shifts.

Many participants highlighted how an understanding of CRT prompted the act of questioning with regard to their teaching, as they reflected on how CRT can influence music teaching. Participants used questioning as a self-reflection tool to interrogate their actions in the classroom, and they also reflected on the questions they asked their students. Hess (2019) draws upon what Giroux and Giroux (2004) call a "culture of questioning" in which individuals "learn to notice and question the ideologies, messages, and representations they encounter" (p. 107). While Hess uses this understanding of culture of questioning to focus on youth, this concept may be applied to any age. The participants in this study questioned their ideologies, messages, and

who was represented in their classroom, similarly to the way Hess (2019) describes a culture of questioning. Participants questioned their choices and practices on both a broad and specific level. In this section, I detail what participants noticed within their teaching and classrooms and how they critiqued the practices in their classrooms as they progressed in the PLC.

Noticing

Throughout the PLC, participants utilized self-reflection to intentionally notice their classroom practices. The act of deliberately noticing helped participants to reflect on what they saw in their classrooms. At the beginning of each PLC session, I asked the participants to reflect on anything they noticed from throughout the week and in between sessions. I challenged them to notice practices and patterns that related to one of the CRT tenets. I also urged them to continuously see the racial demographics of their classrooms and schools, to observe their teaching practices, and to reflect on who and what were consistently centered. As the participants progressed through this PLC, they began to notice race and policies differently in their classrooms and schools.

During the first interview with Beth, before the first PLC began, she indicated that she did not see race in her classroom. In her second interview, about half-way through the PLC workshops, she stated, “I've had to go back and notice my kids . . . I had a hard time literally thinking about like what is the racial makeup of my students.” Beth initially found it to be a challenge to consciously recognize the different races of her students. Purposefully noticing students’ races requires the teacher to see an additional identity of their students, thus challenging color neutral ideology (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), which is an important CRT tenet.

Jesse also expressed how he saw race in a different light since participating in the PLC. In his second interview, he stated,

> (CRT) open[ed] my mind a little bit [in] how I look at somebody and look at my students . . . looking at the demographics in my room, look at the way I teach the words I use and the way I present things . . . to my kids.

As Jesse continued to notice and recognize the impact of his choices as a teacher, he recognized the responsibility he had to hold himself accountable in his classroom. During the fourth PLC session, he shared, "I need to be the one to initiate us getting out of this system in my classroom because they [students] can't. But I can." In his reflection, Jesse emphasized the importance of personal responsibility in acknowledging systemic oppression. Similarly, Hess (2018) challenges music educators to disrupt practices that support Whiteness in music education.

In addition to noticing racial demographics in the classroom, Jesse also began to notice the implicit priorities of school music. During the third PLC session, Jesse reflected on how Western classical European music is inherently prioritized in the makeup of the school day. He shared, "The non-Western classical European learnings of music happen in after-school settings. Like a DJ club or music tech happens in an after-school setting, and I think it's interesting that it isn't the center." This type of prioritization creates an "othering" of musics outside of Western classical music.

Hess (2015) similarly describes hierarchies in school music with regard to how the music curriculum in Canada embraces music outside of the Western classical canon as Other. She states,

> This "Other" category then encompasses musics in a range of styles with roots in places "Other than" Western Europe. It is a broad category that includes music learned formally and informally, music with a variety of transmission practices that may or may not include written aspects, and music that may be fused with other music or be an entity unto itself. What links this disparate category together is that despite the fact that it includes musics that are drastically different from one another, they are marked "Other" to Western classical music by virtue of their place in the "hierarchy of civilizations"—always already inferior to the West, and thus also to Western classical music.

These priorities reflect what music education values and undervalues. Through reflection and intentional noticing, Jesse realized how the implicit prioritization of Western classical music did not completely align with his values as a music educator.

As Angela continued to notice and reflect, she identified some of the limitations within the band world:

> I value the ensemble so whole heartedly because of the lessons it teaches in team work and group work and common goal and love of music and love of achieving common goals. But it's like wrong because all we're doing is studying classical forms.

Her quote shows the passion and commitment she has for the ensemble setting while recognizing how it can be different. By challenging the status quo in the ensemble setting, music educators can expand the type of musicking offered in schools.

Intentionally noticing, as a self-reflective tool, provides an opportunity for educators to expand what they see through a critical lens. As educators, the participants cared for their

students. By intentionally noticing their students' races, the data show that the participants had to expand how they saw their students and their classrooms in order to include race.

Critiquing Common Teaching Practices

As participants practiced noticing, they also began to critique common teaching practices. Similar to how Angela noticed and reflected on the limitations in an ensemble setting above, participants began to reflect on other common teaching practices. Participants discussed their critiques of how they used folk music and instrumental method books. Additionally, they critiqued how they used questions in their classrooms. They also discussed the potential benefits of exploratory based opportunities for their students.

Beth discussed her critique of the folk songs used in her beginning band classroom during our first interview, before the PLC began, and expanded on her ideas during the second PLC gathering. During that PLC, she shared, "I wish we had a method book that had a lot of options . . . for folk songs for students. Learn the notation and the melody . . . kind of by ear." The type of method book that Beth described is one that would represent and reflect the multiple races and cultures represented in her band room. She continued her critique by describing the limitations of instrumental methods books:

> That I'm dissatisfied with the method books and curriculum resources that are out there for the content that I teach, which is band . . . Because what is currently available to me is limiting to a certain demographic. I should say not limiting, but limited to a certain demographic.

Beth desired a method book that incorporates many cultures and represents multiple races. Since her classroom was filled with many races, ethnicities, and cultures, she wanted her students to feel connected to the songs they played. Beth's perspective reflects Banks' (2001)

content integration dimension of multiculturalism, wherein educators incorporate multiple cultures in their teaching to broaden perspectives. Content integration emphasizes the importance of incorporating multiple cultures into the curriculum to expand offerings and create a sense of belonging. Systemic racism manifests when cultures outside of the Western classical tradition are confined to the margins or are not present at all. Although content integration highlights the importance of providing diverse representation in the curriculum, it is only one dimension— the lowest level of multiculturalism— and does not by itself address systemic barriers that create exclusion in the first place.

Jesse stressed the importance of making sure that folk songs from multiple cultures are sung and used appropriately. During his final interview, he expressed:

> I need to know the history of a song before I even consider bringing it into the classroom. I need to know how to pronounce these words correctly so that I'm not just blindly saying them. I need to know how this song is used and whether I'm allowed to use it. Like whether it's okay for the song to be used in my classroom work. I think of like some Native American songs that you're not supposed use in your classroom.

Jesse highlighted the importance of taking time to hold oneself accountable when presenting folk music from different cultures. This quote recognized the responsibility of integrating multiple cultures into the classroom to ensure that integration is done so thoughtfully and respectfully.

In addition to critiquing common practices in his classroom, Jesse also critiqued particular language that he used. When Jesse began to intentionally notice the different races of his students (even though the racial demographic of his school is mostly White), he reflected on the impact of considering particular words and presenting particular concepts in his classroom.

Changing language used in the classroom exemplifies how the participants intentionally questioned their practices. Jesse stated:

> The biggest change I've seen is just the language I'm using . . . Like for instance, I was teaching basic staff concepts staff are lines and spaces and rather than saying this is how music is written. I said, this is how some people write down their music for other people.

In his reflection on being particular with regards to specific language used, Jesse recognized the weight of his words. He deliberately used language that decentered Western classical musical concepts.

In addition to questioning their own practices as teachers, the participants also reflected on the questions they asked their students. During the second interview with Angela, I asked if she noticed anything different about her teaching since beginning the PLC. She responded:

> The way I'm framing questions, who I'm asking questions [to]. The content that I'm asking hasn't really changed . . . I feel like I've always been really aware of student emotions and student reactions. Especially really visceral ones like getting them to articulate what they're feeling. I'm paying more attention to how I framed the question so that all students—I feel like I'm trying to get students to think deeper. I think I shied away from probing more of students that I assumed like might not know, like [English] language learners, especially . . . Like [now] can you tell me [more]? Can you can you say that to me in a different way? Whereas [previously] I would have been like it was just a language barrier . . . I think I want them to feel comfortable articulating things.

Angela became more intentional with how she asked questions of the students. She recognized how she no longer shied away from deliberately engaging more deeply with students who may be English language learners. She expanded how she framed questions so that all of her students could participate.

With regard to questioning their actions, participants also discussed discipline in their classrooms. Angela reflected on an experience during which she helped her student teacher to provide more grace before reprimanding students. Angela shared:

> Yeah. There's a kid who she [her student teacher] kept yelling at to stop talking, without the awareness that kid is translating everything that she says into Spanish so that the kid who speaks no English is understanding. And so, to be able to give grace.

Instead of jumping to conclusions and assuming that students were deliberately causing disruption when they spoke out of turn during class, Angela instructed the student teacher to ask herself why the students were talking or ask what they were talking about before immediately reprimanding them.

Through self-reflection, participants critiqued the common practices used in their classrooms and throughout music education. They discussed including multiple cultures in method books, using intentional language, and questioning how they engaged with their students. By reflecting on their considerations of race in their classrooms, the participants identified how critiquing these common practices may disrupt racist systems.

As the participants critiqued common practices present in music education, they also critiqued practices that were not present. They identified that in future music education, they would like to see more exploration opportunities for students. The best definition for how they

described exploration is, “exploring: to become familiar with by testing or experimenting” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Exploration provides an opportunity for students to navigate their learning experiences and connect to their individual interests. to reflect on their own stories and identities as musicians. During one of the final PLC sessions, Jesse outlined his dream for the future of music education:

> In my dream world, I would just like to have creative, expressive music making where the kids are doing what they want to do, how they want to do it, in whatever way that means to them . . . Your music is your music. You get to have that ownership in whatever it looks like.

Jesse centered student autonomy and student interest as a way to challenge and expand current music education practices.

In reflection on his process, Ty described his love for “blank space” as a way to explore and create. He exclaimed, “I love an opportunity to create. I love an opportunity to write!” In his love for using a blank canvas, he explained that he provides the same opportunities to the students he teaches. During the discussion about method books, Ty posed the following question, “How can we provide [blank] canvasses?” Providing a blank canvas creates an opportunity to co-construct learning experiences within the classroom and disrupt Western classical tradition as top priority.

As the PLC progressed, the participants critiqued common practices in music education. They challenged how folk songs were utilized, examined the language they used, reflected on how they asked questions, and considered the benefits of providing more exploratory based opportunities in the classrooms. These actions provided a pathway toward being able to recognize and address racism in music education.

Summary

Participants used critical self-reflection as a way to highlight and notice what took place in their classrooms and in the music education profession. Through self-reflection activities, participants began to expand what they noticed in their classrooms; they critiqued common classroom practices, and they considered how a more exploration-based music education might look. They emphasized the importance of questioning their own actions in the classroom, including using particular language, critiquing method books, as well as challenging how they posed questions to their students. These considerations can help music educators further understand how race and racism can influence teaching practices and how an understanding of CRT can provide possible options to disrupt racism and racist practices.

Highlighting Student Narratives and Stories

Because counternarratives are a central CRT tenet and a central part of the PLC, the use of stories and storytelling in the music classroom emerged as a dominant theme. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) describe four functions of counternarratives:

1. Build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice,
2. Challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems,
3. Open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position,

4. Teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone. (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36)

These functions connected to how the participants grew to understand counternarratives and the ways participants used counternarratives in their classroom.

Wahl (2018) uses storytelling and her personal narrative as a way to "highlight the ways in which being Black has been one of the defining factors of my career as a choral conductor in Canada" (p. 503). Black women in music education may relate to Wahl's (2018) story, realizing that they are not alone in their experience; this connects to Solórzano and Yosso's third counternarrative function. Although the participants in this study were not racially marginalized, they were able to identify methods and practices that highlighted students and people of color and their lived experiences. By recognizing how stories similar to Wahl's (2018) can impact their students, the participants used counterstories as a way to highlight stories that were commonly overlooked.

Even though three out of four the participants worked in a racially diverse district, they questioned how counternarratives could work in a homogenous, White community. With regard to counterstories, Beth asked, "Would the same connection be made in an all-White community or culture?" Counternarratives, through a CRT lens, center race and are intentionally used to emphasize stories of those at the racialized margins of society. Outside of CRT, counternarratives can be expanded to include any story that "counters" or challenges a readily accepted narrative.

This section details how participants processed the concept of counterstories and storytelling throughout the PLC. They reflected on their use of stories in their classrooms and

critiqued whose stories were commonly overlooked. Through this process, they highlighted how storytelling provides an opportunity for connection and empowering community in their classrooms.

Constructing Counterstories

As participants learned and engaged with counterstories as a concept and practice, they recognized how counterstories and storytelling can create connections among their students and between themselves and their students. During the first PLC session, I facilitated a storytelling activity with musical improvisation. Participants worked in pairs to create a short improvisatory song that represented their past semester of teaching. They chose between different string instruments like guitar or ukulele and multiple percussion instruments such as claves, shakers, triangle, or djembe, to create their 20-second song. The purpose of this activity was to give the participants an opportunity to reflect on their past semester, connect with their partner, express their experience musically, and incorporate counterstory characteristics like being able to own and narrate your own story. Participants identified their experience, shared it with their partner and the large group, and created music to represent their experiences. After the performances, Beth highlighted how her fellow participants "brightened" and looked like they were having fun. She then reflected that she hoped to be more intentional with regard to using more open and creative spaces for her students to create music. Beth expressed:

> It gave me a reflection of myself as a teacher. Too often I'm thinking about what could be better. What could be fixed? It's just reminding me that I need to be more affirmative in a lot of stuff that I do. Because the looks on your two faces . . . you just brightened!

This activity also allowed participants to connect with each other and express their stories in a musical way.

During discussions in the second PLC, focused on counternarratives and storytelling, participants recognized the potential significance of embracing that concept into their classrooms. Angela described how storytelling could help her connect with her students, “getting to know the students enough so that you know their backgrounds and their story or narrative so that you can help them learn the best and most effectively.” During her final interview, Angela discussed choosing to discuss racism in her advisory class, who were mostly students of color. She allowed her students to share their counterstories with regard to their experiences of racism in their high school. She stated:

> I feel more comfortable speaking about it [racism] . . . And this Monday, I was [whispers to herself encouragingly] I’ma do it, I’ma do it. [Speaks loudly like she’s speaking to her advisory]: “So I've been on this thing called a PLC— a professional learning community—and we’ve been talking about racism, and it's like really opened my eyes to a lot of things.” They had an awesome conversation about the school [and racism] . . . They said that different teachers were racist and don’t know it.

Angela emphasized the importance of allowing students to share their experiences and to know that their experiences are valid. This interaction reflects Solózano and Yosso’s (2002) second function of counterstories—to “challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems” (p. 36). Angela, as the center of wisdom in her classroom as the teacher, was challenged to expand her understanding of racism in the school in which she teaches.

When Ty reflected on how he built relationships with his students during his second interview, he stated, "How do I interact with students? And I think [it is] by modeling vulnerability. Or like modeling fearless creativity. Like how do I tell them that it's alright if you mess up?" He discussed the way he models vulnerability in his classroom by sharing his story at the beginning of a course and then encouraging his students to share their stories. Ty extended his point of sharing stories in the same interview in which he highlighted establishing trust with his students. He shared:

> I think the thing that I've started a lot of classes with is just like me sharing my story. And me being like "hey guys," and I'll like share some of my music with them. Like music that I've made and like I've written . . . I feel like I would hope that there's a level of trust and relatability.

Establishing trust by sharing stories creates an opportunity to build community. Each participant discussed the importance of making sure their students felt a sense of belonging in their classrooms.

Jesse also discussed how he might connect with his students' stories. In his second interview, he expressed:

> And then there's the sign of interacting with my students just as people in recognizing, you know, what is your history? What's your story and then giving them the time to use the ways or not use the ways that we're making music to then let them kind of own it and tell their story . . . and then be aware of their history and where they came from and what kind of power dynamics have they experienced in their life.

Asking students about their history and their story gives them an opportunity to potentially show pride of their culture and how they identify. Students may also be reluctant to share their story for a multitude of reasons. During the second PLC, Jesse discussed how a colleague asked a Spanish-speaking student to say a particular word in Spanish and the student refused. The student did not want to be singled out. Although teachers may desire to provide a space for students to share their stories or histories, teachers must also center students' autonomy to choose if they want to share their story. Counternarratives, along with every CRT tenet, underlines how power must shift toward whomever is systemically vulnerable or oppressed.

Both Ty and Jesse's quotes with regard to connection and counterstories reflected Solórzano and Yosso's third function of counternarrative: "Open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position" (p. 36). Counterstories can potentially create a sense of connection between students.

Storytelling as Empowering Community

Participants also highlighted how counterstories could create a sense of community among their students, where students feel included and safe. Creating a sense of community reflected Solórzano and Yosso's first function of counternarratives: "Build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice" (p. 36). This function highlights the importance of students of color seeing people who look like them in the classroom and recognizing that they are not alone. With regard to emphasizing feelings of being included, Jesse described the possibilities for building community by embracing student stories. During the second PLC session, he shared, "[The] end goal [of the counternarrative] is where you have a community where the people at the margins are inside and

included." Jesse saw counternarratives as a tool to find ways to ensure that all of his students felt welcome and included.

In an anonymous written reflection during the second PLC, one participant stated, "The American band classes squash diversity and replace with dead White guys. We have to expose students to diverse music and composers, so they see their own experiences within what we do." Here, the participant questioned how the band world can create more opportunities to reflect students' experiences and lived realities. During that same PLC, participants later reflected on and agreed with that statement. Jesse expressed, "Our educational standard system is based upon a dialect of dead, White music." All participants agreed that music education placed too much emphasis on "dead White men." With an understanding of counternarratives, participants identified how challenging the overuse of "dead White men" could benefit their students.

Ty also discussed how he used storytelling to empower students to own their stories. He shared:

> The story to me is the beginning and the end. By telling a story, you allow space for others to think about their own stories, and then hopefully that allows them to create their own story—and then there's a ripple effect and the power of stories is manifested.

Ty acknowledged the amount of importance he places on storytelling in his classroom and how the act of owning and telling one's story created a connectedness with other students. As an educator, Ty continuously centered student autonomy and student interest and questioned how he could grow with regard to centering students and various stories in his classroom.

In addition to creating a safe and empowering space, Jesse reflected on how he could use stories and counternarratives to meet students where they are. During his final interview, he pondered:

> How have they [students] interacted with music and their background knowledge, and then how can I kind of use that to inform what music I'm introducing to my classroom—to better meet them kind of where they are versus kind of trying to make them come with me?

This question provides an opportunity to consider ways for the teacher to intentionally center the students' lived experiences and backgrounds. Similarly, Gay's (2018) culturally responsive pedagogy describes the importance for teachers to reflect their students' identities in pedagogical practices. Jesse's desire to meet students at their level represents a facet of culturally responsive pedagogy. By creating a learning environment that centers the knowledge and interests that students bring to the classroom, teachers can broaden the opportunities to empower students and create shared experiences.

Participants shared the importance of creating a sense of community in their classrooms. As they processed their understanding of counternarratives, they identified ways that counterstories can empower a sense of community among students. By providing space for students to share their stories and lived experiences, they created opportunities to connect with one another and build community.

Summary

While the concept of centering students' stories may feel simplistic, incorporating counterstories expands the ways that teachers can use stories in their classrooms. Counterstories provide tangible ways to intentionally address racial exclusion in the classroom and also provide

an opportunity for teachers to create an ideological shift in their classrooms and their teaching. With an understanding of counterstories, participants reflected on whose stories were overlooked and how they could do a better job of intentionally creating a classroom environment that centered their students' lived experiences. Counternarratives center people whose experiences are commonly overlooked. With an understanding of counternarratives, teachers can reflect on whose stories are centered in their classroom and can examine if the way they use stories in their classrooms perpetuates or challenges racism. When engaging with counternarratives, it is important for teachers to be careful not to force students to share stories they do not want to share. While creating a space for counternarratives to exist, teachers must also continue to critique and challenge themselves to continue to push forward toward action and change.

Chapter Summary

Throughout the PLC, participants identified how CRT influenced the approaches in their classrooms. As educators gained an understanding of CRT, they consistently engaged in critical self-reflection moments, which then led them to question common teaching techniques and intentionally notice race in a new way. Additionally, participants emphasized how storytelling and counterstories impacted their teaching approaches by examining and then addressing whose stories were most centered or invisible in their classroom. With a CRT foundation, critical self-reflection and storytelling provide options for music teachers who aim to expand their understanding of racism and disrupt racist practices in their classrooms.

At the conclusion of the PLC, all participants took time to reflect and discuss their dream for music education. In recognizing how race and racism play a role in music education, participants discussed their vision for the future of music education. As they considered what lay ahead in music education, they reflected on how CRT influenced their pedagogical choices

throughout the PLC. In the next chapter, I discuss how the participants experienced transformation during the PLC by detailing how the participants grappled with disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991), while they attempted to determine how they and/or their practices perpetuated or challenged racism.

CHAPTER SIX: EXPERIENCING TRANSFORMATION

I used transformative learning theory (TLT) as a lens to analyze how the participants experienced learning about CRT in the context of a PLC. As mentioned in Chapter 1, "Transformative learning is a deep shift in perspective during which habits of mind become more open, more permeable and better justified" (Cranton, 2011, p. 76). TLT, mainly used in adult learning research, focuses on perspective shifts that adults experience through intentional or non-intentional instruction. "Transformative learning was found to be effective at capturing the meaning making process of adult learners, particularly the learning process of paradigmatic shifts" (Taylor, 2007, p 174). In this chapter, I use TLT to analyze how participants came to understand CRT and how racism manifests in music education by answering Research Question #3: "*How might participation in the CRT transform their approach toward race and racism? What, if any, transformation took place?*"

As typical of many educational theories, TLT has evolved as more researchers embrace and explore its functions. According to Taylor (2011), the original three main components of TLT included individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue. TLT has grown to include holistic orientation, awareness of context, and authentic practice. In Taylor's (2007) literature review, he found that "[t]he review finds less research less about identifying transformative experiences in different setting [*sic*], and more about fostering transformative learning and the complex nature of critical reflection, relationships, the nature of a perspective transformation and the role of context" (p. 173). In the present study, I aimed to create an environment that generated deep reflection and fostered transformative learning.

TLT, based on Freire's (1970/1993) critical pedagogy, greatly emphasizes deep reflection as an impetus for action and transformation. Freire states, "The insistence that the oppressed

engage in reflection on their concrete situation is not a call to armchair revolution. On the contrary, reflection—true reflection— leads to action" (Feire, 1970/1993, p. 48). By providing many opportunities for the participants to engage in multiple reflective activities in each PLC session, such as the final sequence of reflective activities, the participants created space in which to internalize the content, reflect on the content, and identify actions and hope for the future.

Using TLT as an analytical lens provides an opportunity to examine how the participants in the PLC processed new information about race and racism in music education. Salvador, Paetz, & Tippetts (2020) problematize transformative learning in a way that warns of the possibility of coercion when embracing TLT. They state, "The possibility that an intent to create TL experiences could translate into coercion is something that educators who care about emancipatory and empowering education must constantly interrogate" (p. 16). Although I anticipated the participants would experience change and transformation, I was careful to allow space for the participants to experience their journeys by emphasizing the importance of their personal reflecting and questioning practices.

Taylor (2007) emphasized the importance of experiencing disorienting dilemmas as a catalyst for change. People encounter disorienting dilemmas when they confront something new that does not fit into their meaning perspectives or the way they understand the world. Mezirow (1991) states,

> Meaning perspectives provide us with criteria for judgement or evaluating right and wrong, bad and good, beautiful and ugly, true and false, appropriate and inappropriate. They also determine our concept of personhood, our idealized self-image, and the way we feel about ourselves. (p. 44)

I separate this chapter into two main sections: Transformative Experiences and Dreaming for the Future. Within the transformative experiences section, I detail disorienting dilemmas from the participants' perspectives to highlight moments of reflective tension. In the second section, Dreaming for the Future, I present the culminating activity, "Dream Out Loud," to demonstrate how participating in the PLC influenced music educators' untethered dreams for the future of music education. I presented this activity at the conclusion of the PLC so that the changes and transformations that took place over the course of the PLC could be included in the participants' desires for the future of music education as a profession and for themselves as educators.

Transformative Experiences

The participants in this study engaged in an eight-workshop PLC focused on CRT. Throughout this experience, they created a rapport with each other, built relationships, and leaned on each other throughout the learning process. Taylor (2007) describes the importance of building relationship by stating, "It is through trustful relationships that allow individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly and achieve mutual and consensual understanding" (Taylor, 2007, p. 179). The participants experienced moments of tension, friction, and conflict while processing information regarding racism and questioning their complicity in maintaining racist structures in their classrooms.

Although every participant identified how the PLC helped them grow in their understanding of racism, not all participants experienced a disorienting dilemma. I divide this section into two sub-sections that encapsulate the transformative learning experience: Understanding Racism as a System, and Responsibility to Address Racism. Within each sub-section, I detail how some participants experienced disorienting dilemmas and how other

participants acknowledged growth and an expanded understanding. Developing a broader understanding of racism, questioning if they are racist, and recognizing their power to change the status quo exemplified the disorienting dilemmas the participants faced.

Understanding Racism as a System

As the participants processed systemic racism and the way it manifests in music education, many participants expressed how their understanding of racism expanded due to the information learned in the PLC. The participants learned how racism can manifest in individual acts as well as through systems, policies, practices, and biases. One of the activities used to help participants process their understanding of race and racism involved a critical reflection and examination of the different notions and approaches to race and racism as detailed by Bonilla-Silva (2018). During the *ordinariness* PLC, the participants completed an activity sheet I created to help them further recognize race and racism.

Bonilla-Silva (2018) describes how social scientists view the perspective that race is a social construct and identifies three distinct approaches:

1. "The idea that because race is socially constructed, it is not a fundamental category of analysis and praxis. Some analysts go as far as to suggest that because race is a constructed category, then it is not real and social scientists who use the category are the ones who make it real." (p. 8)
2. "Writers in this group . . . discuss 'racial differences in academic achievement, crime, and SAT scores' as if they were truly racial. This is the central way in which contemporary scholars contribute to the propagation of racist interpretations of racial inequality." (p. 8)
3. ". . . acknowledges that race, as are other social categories such as class and gender, is constructed but insists that it has a *social* reality. This means that after race—or class or

> gender—is created, it produces real effects on the actors racialized as 'black' or 'white'. Although race, as other social constructions, is unstable, it has a 'changing same' quality at its core." (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p.8).

In the approaches to race activity, I asked the participants to reflect on Bonilla-Silva's (2018) three approaches to race, identifying and explaining to which approach they most connected as an educator.

During Jesse's second interview, just beyond the midpoint of the PLC and after the approaches to race activity, he discussed how his understanding of racism shifted due to discussions, readings, and other activities in the PLC. He shared, "seeing racism shift from an individual act to this system-wide natural oppression that we're kind of soaked in. And I think just that shift of perspective has really been impactful and world-shattering." Describing his shift in perspective as "world-shattering" is an example of a disorienting dilemma that provokes change.

After the Whiteness as property PLC, Jesse shared some "aha" moments in his weekly journal reflection. He wrote:

> Another "aha" moment has just been learning that racism is more than just an individual act but a system of laws and societal norms that create natural oppression for those deemed "others." This was just never taught to me in school, and to realize this as a 26-year-old feels like I've almost been lied to and shifts my views on topics covered by the news media.

For Jesse, recognizing race as a system was outside of his understanding of racism prior to participating in the PLC. By engaging in readings and discussions, he broadened his

understanding of racism. This shift represents a transformative learning experience and a shift in the way he understands the world.

Similarly, Angela recognized how systemic racism is maintained by individual acts. During her final interview, she expressed:

> It's system, okay. It's like cyclical—and self-perpetuating. Just like, who is doing the teaching? How do they get to be certified to be a teacher? What were they taught in college? And then what are they taking back to their students? [As she finished her last statement, she moved her hands close to the temple of her head to suggest her mind was blown.]

Her questions provide a foundation to examine how racism is perpetuated in educational settings. How can educators provide a space that challenges racism as opposed to inadvertently or explicitly supporting it? Angela continued:

> And like where do you break that—how do you break that? Like being in a PLC so that can every single teacher go through that. I don't know. It's just, I mean, at some point, practices have to change or be updated.

Angela recognized the need for change. She, like many of the participants, desired to identify ways to fix or eradicate racism once she had grasped a fuller understanding of racism. Angela's statement provides an additional example of how the PLC was a transformative experience.

Not all participants experienced the same scale of disorienting dilemma or transformation. Some participants identified how the content within the PLC aligned with their worldview, which eliminated the possibility of a disorienting dilemma. But even for the participants who did not experience a disorienting dilemma, participating in the PLC helped

them grow as educators as it increased their awareness and vocabulary related to race and racism in music education.

Ty reflected on how his experience in the PLC expanded his understanding of systemic racism. During his final interview, he shared:

> As far as just yeah, like dealing with these [oppressive] structures or dealing with these [oppressive] systems and dealing with how we show up within them. I think the PLC helped me just unpack it more. I think I had, I think I have an openness to like the facts and the realities of racism and how it's ingrained in music education. I think I was open to that and still am, but I think here and now I have a little bit more vocabulary.

Although Ty's worldview regarding racism did not transform and did not cause a disorienting dilemma, he increased his understanding of racism and how it can be applied to music education.

During Ty's final interview, I asked what his biggest "take-aways" were from participating in the PLC. He replied:

> I think take-aways [are to] listen more and provide more space for people to come together and learn together. I like that I can see myself trying to model like what you were able to do with the PLC. To provide a space for people to explore these issues. And yeah, explore them together.

His reflection on the PLC shows that the learning that took place throughout the PLC helped him increase ways he could help to make a difference as a music teacher.

Am I Racist?

By learning about how particular teaching practices can either perpetuate or challenge racism, participants began to reflect on their practices and to question if they perpetuated racism.

Around the midpoint of the PLC, participants became concerned about whether they were racist. They began to ask themselves and ask me if they were racist. Questioning if they or their actions are racist reflects Hardiman and Keehn's (2012) third stage of "White Identity Development"—resistance. The resistance stage can occur when White people:

> may have an experience that leads to some sort of critical incident or "aha" moment connected to the topic of race, or experience a series of events that leads them to question their prior beliefs. . . . This stage is characterized by a number of negative feelings such as guilt and shame which lead people to want to distance themselves from their whiteness (p. 122).

Participants experienced many moments when they questioned themselves and their beliefs. Although some participants wanted me to explicitly answer if they were or were not racist, I encouraged them to continue to question and reflect on their definition of racist and did not explicitly answer their question, so as not to contribute to any possible coercion, as warned by Salvador, Paetz, and Tippetts (2020). Through this process, they faced the possibility that they could be racist; they wanted to reject that notion and the negative feelings associated.

In his journal reflection following the Whiteness as property workshop, Jesse discussed a particular conversation from within the PLC that had stayed with him. He wrote:

> I don't remember exactly what was being talked about; however, I remember something being said (or it could have been triggered by a quote) about asking ourselves the questions, "am I racist?" or "are my actions racist?" I remember thinking to myself that these questions are such good questions to keep in the back of my mind as I interact with people, plan lessons, talk with my students, and just go through life. However, since these questions are extremely personal

> and the answers could be very attacking on who I believe [myself] to be as a person, I know that answering them will be very hard to do honestly. I also recognize that I might answer no, being blind and ignorant to the ways that I should be answering yes. These, I think, are questions I will keep with me. Adding to this list, for lesson planning, is "how might this lesson perpetuate racism as ordinariness?"

Here, Jesse has thought deeply about the weight of his actions as an educator. He distinguished between the questions, "am I racist?" and "are my actions racist?". Both questions are important in order to address racist systems and racist actions. Jesse acknowledged the deep, personal feelings attached to considering himself as racist and attempted to embrace that discomfort.

During Jesse's second interview, he furthered his thoughts regarding personal racism and its connection to the actions of teachers. He shared:

> Are you [teachers] doing this because that's just what you were taught? Are you doing this because you actually believe in what you're teaching and then outside of the classroom like as a person, I think actually asking yourself the questions like am I racist?

This quote aligns with his written reflection, in which he emphasized the question, "Am I racist?". Considering himself as a racist challenged his worldview and created a disorienting dilemma.

Similarly, Beth reflected on her feelings of being considered racist. During Beth's second interview, Beth and I dialogued about her thoughts regarding how she views herself as an educator. Beth expressed:

And so many of the readings and the videos were basically like—well, I interpreted as— every White person is racist and that, like I found that offensive because I don't see myself, I don't, through an outside lens looking at myself, I don't see myself as that person. And I kept trying to find ways that, like, am I [racist]? And it doesn't mean it doesn't exist, but I haven't come up with anything. I'm like, am I just like hiding, or am I really like not of that norm? Does that make sense? I've really struggled with do I fall under that because I'm a White person? I know that about myself; like, it's been that way my whole life, and I just haven't found a time that I can think of—like I've gone oh, you know that person and actually at my . . . I'm applying to be on the auxiliary squad of the police department, and I had a polygraph, and one of the questions was have you—I wish I could remember how his words were—basically have you said anything against someone based on their gender identity, race, sex, whatever in an unkind way. And I felt very confident. I'm like, no. Then I'm like, is that true? Has there been a time in my life where I've acted in that way?

Amy: So how do you work through that? Have you worked through that challenge?

Beth: I keep thinking about what I've done. Because I, I feel honestly like I'm meaner to my White kids. Now, is that racist? I don't know, is it? And it's not because they're the White kids, but they tend to be the ones that act inappropriately in my expectations of my classroom. I don't know. It's been a continuous—it's like everybody was . . . the wheels were spinning and there were no answers. That's been . . . all of us the entire time.

Amy: Yeah. That's real. Any thoughts about how - not to necessarily quiet the wheels, but how do we work within these wheels spinning? ...Because it's exhausting. Have you found those moments to be exhausting?

Beth: Yep, a lot of the time.

Amy: Can you talk more about what was exhausting about it?

Beth: Well, the very thing of thinking about what have I done? What have other experiences . . . What impact other experiences might have had? Yeah, and it just makes me think like, try to think of like what I want to say. I feel like Ty last night no, Jesse last night. He was like trying to figure out how to say it, right? It's just been exhausting to think like I have this perception of myself that like—I'd like to think I'm a good person, that I treat everybody with love.

Beth continued:

> But I would love to directly ask them [students], and I don't know if it would go the way that I want it to, and I don't know if my admin would support or not support it. I don't know. Have you ever perceived me to be racist? Have you ever perceived me to treat you in a different way?

Within this dialogue, Beth described that if she thinks of herself as a good person, then she cannot be racist. This conversation shows how Beth places importance on not being perceived as racist. She cares about how her students and colleagues see her. She highlighted that she did not like the way all White people seemingly were characterized as racist. Beth's dialogue represents the tension between not wanting to be considered a racist and questioning the possibility of being racist.

Both Jesse and Beth discussed the weight they felt when questioning whether they were viewed as racist. Accepting that they may be racist fell outside of how they viewed the world and thus could be considered a disorienting dilemma. Perhaps instead of placing so much emphasis on asking if you are "a racist," it might be more useful to ask, "how do I support or challenge racist systems," similar to Jesse's question, "are my actions racist?" Kendi (2019) extends considerations of racism by describing the relationship between racist policies and racist ideas. He states, "Racism is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas" (p. 20). Racist ideas maintain racist policies. The way Jesse questioned if his actions were racist may lead to a deeper understanding of how racist actions can maintain racist structures. This shift can create tangible change in identifying and eradicating racist actions, as opposed to wasting energy on concerns for being labeled a racist.

The participants' journey toward understanding racism as a system and questioning whether they were racist or if their actions contributed to maintaining racist structures created a disorienting dilemma for some of the participants within the PLC. Although many participants experienced disorienting dilemmas, some noteworthy experiences generated deep reflection concerning racism in music education. Some of these moments represented disorienting dilemmas, while other moments exhibited how new knowledge may have aligned with participants' worldviews and provided tools to increase their knowledge or understanding of racism. In the next section, I detail how the participants identified their responsibility to address racism in the classroom.

Responsibility to Address Racism

Outside of disorienting dilemmas, participants encountered notable experiences wherein they identified their ability, power, and responsibility to address and change racist and

oppressive structures. Throughout the PLC, participants questioned how they could break different oppressive or racist systems. In this section, I detail how the participants described their responsibility to address oppressive practices and change themselves. They identified how the privileges they wield may be advantageous in challenging racism. They also discussed ways their transformation of understanding racism made them more confident to discuss racism.

During the Whiteness as property workshop, Jesse recognized his power, privilege, and his responsibility to contribute to a change. Jesse shared:

> It's hard to look at the big picture and say, "what can I do about this?" . . . What I understand specifically about me as a teacher and how I teach my students is, I just do my part . . . I'm going to . . . love and listen to people . . . I don't have to go to Washington to do this; I can do this within my own sphere of influence with my coworkers, my students, with whoever . . . My job is not to change the system; my job is to change myself.

Even though Jesse declared that his job is not to change the system, but to change himself, he can inadvertently change the system by changing himself and his actions. If educators identify how they can change themselves, their actions, or policies in the classroom to emphasize systemic change, then education, at its core, can fundamentally change. According to Mezirow (2003), "Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 58). By creating a learning space where educators can experience transformative experiences within an educational context, they can challenge assumptions and create a liberated space for children.

Similarly, Ty shared his reflections on how he can break the mold in music education. In response to what Jesse had stated earlier in the session focused on Whiteness and its relationship to authority and power, Ty expressed:

> I really like what you [Jesse] said earlier, like within the classroom, how can I break the mold? Because looking at society through [Whiteness as property context] is helpful because I think it encourages us as people that benefit from Whiteness is like, we have a privilege to actually do something about it. It makes me think, as people that benefit from Whiteness, are we the people that should be doing the most [work] and challenging this thing.

Ty's emphasis on doing something with his acquired knowledge shows the importance of sharing learned knowledge and doing something with the knowledge gained. In the same PLC, Ty shared, "These concepts leave a lot of space for progress by learning them because they disrupt patterns and make us more aware of our privileges." By acknowledging and becoming more aware of certain privileges, music educators can create a more level and accessible learning space.

In her quest to determine how to address racism and structural oppression, during her midpoint interview, Angela asked, "And so then, how do we like reframe everything, everything that we do in terms of equity and make sure that all students have access to cool opportunities?" She also questioned how music teachers can create access for all students. As Angela reflected on her PLC experience she expressed:

> I feel like this process—I keep saying to myself it broke me, it broke me—but I don't wanna get put back together. I wanna continue to get broken, to question things and the why and the how and the who.

In this quote, Angela demonstrated that she experienced a disorienting dilemma while participating in the PLC, by sharing that the process “broke” her but that she wanted to continue questioning and growing.

As the participants experienced moments of disorienting dilemmas, they also openly spoke of the personal changes and transformations that took place during the PLC. During Angela’s final interview, she talked about how she was more confident in talking about race than she was prior to the PLC. When I asked Angela, “What are your biggest take-aways from being in this PLC?” she responded, “Definitely number one—having more confidence to talk about racism. Like even just vocabulary to talk about things that are happening around us.” During this interview, I also provided space for Angela to expand on whether her understanding of racism has changed or evolved since participating in the PLC. She responded:

> Number one, awareness of my own hesitation to talk about racism. Before, it was like “it’s there,” “try not to be that.” Keep doing what I'm doing, and I'm just gonna include everybody--versus now, I feel more comfortable speaking about it.

In this quote, Angela identified the transformation that took place since participating in the PLC, specifically, how she was less hesitant to talk about race or racism in her classroom.

Summary

Participants in this study experienced growth in different ways. Some overtly identified that engaging with the PLC “broke” them or changed their perspective regarding race and racism in music education. Developing a broader understanding of racism, questioning whether they were racist, and recognizing their power to change the status quo exemplified the disorienting dilemmas the participants faced. Concerning multicultural education, hooks (1994) identified that teachers and styles of teaching may need to change “if the effort to respect and honor the

social reality and experiences of groups in this society who are nonwhite is to be reflected in a pedagogical process" (p. 35). Although the experiences within the PLC may not have provided the same scale of disorienting dilemmas or transformation for each participant, they identified differing degrees of growth and shared that they benefited from participating in this opportunity

Future of Music Education

As the PLC came to a close, participants discussed what music educators must do to address and challenge racist practices and oppressive structures. The final activity in the PLC, titled Dream Out Loud, required the participants to write their dreams for the future of music education. I asked them to dream out loud and in writing to detail their untethered dreams for the future of music education. In recognizing how race and racism play a role in music education, participants discussed their vision for the future of music education.

Love (2019) discusses the importance of being able to dream for a future that embraces justice and equity. Although Love's intentions speak to emphasizing dreams of children of color, for teachers, to embrace dreaming as a practice creates a space wherein music educators might imagine a better future. The participants highlighted how emphasizing exploration in the classroom and extending knowledge of CRT to as many educators as possible could be beneficial for the future of music education. Within this activity, the participants also identified how they wanted to see an expansion of multicultural offerings such as Taiko drumming, Mariachi, or culturally relevant instruction and activities. By giving the participants an opportunity to dream for the future at the end of the PLC, they were able to build their dreams on the experiences, new information, and transformations that took place during the PLC. In this section, I detail the participants' dreams for the future of music education, and I share their final reflections of participating in the PLC.

Dreams for Music Education

Angela divided her dream into a performance-based classroom and an explorative/general music classroom. About the performance-based classroom, she wrote, "Main focus on ensemble, with co-curricular experiences that teach individual technique, improvisatory exploration, technology used to record, loop, and creatively making something new." For the explorative classroom, she wrote, "Also, a general music path (includes piano, uke, guitar options) for students not in an ensemble that teaches exploration, creation via tech, and is accessible to all." In both contexts, Angela highlighted the need for a deeper appreciation of exploration in the music classroom and the value of integrating technology and looping tools.

Jesse separated his dream for music education by age. He wrote the following:

> K-5th [grade students] = exploration of different ways to music; 6th-8th [grade students] = student choice as avenues of focus; 9th-12th [grade students] = collaboration in an effort to find their own musical voice with what they like and what other students like; college = a space where students get to build and develop their musical voice with others in the avenue they choose.

His dream for music education emphasized student voice, choice, and exploration. Emphasizing student voice relates to Emdin's (2016) reality pedagogy: "In reality-pedagogy-based classroom, every individual is perceived as having a distinct perspective and is given the opportunity to express that in the classroom" (Emdin, 2016, p. 27). Centering student voice and student choice create an opportunity for students to share their lived experiences.

Beth wrote the following for her dream:

> All current offerings remain but are also supplemented by additional offerings. With that, current offerings incorporating culturally relevant experiences "beyond

> the norm" within their own classrooms. ALL instruments are included, and **all students** are included. Music studied, created, and performed should be representative not just of the students in the classroom/program but also that of the world. Students should be given a voice within all aspects of music-making. Method books in instrumental music should provide a diverse array of music to connect to students' experiences. These dreams connect to the CRT tenet of counternarratives and fight the concept of Whiteness as the "norm."

Beth emphasized the inclusivity of "all students" and "all instruments" within her dream for the future of music education. Being able to connect aspects of her dream to different CRT tenets indicates how participating in the PLC expanded her understanding of CRT and how it can connect to the classroom.

Ty's dream for music education included:

> My dream is for music education to be a lived experience, a fluid movement, that inspires and motivates individuals to express themselves through music-making, be it with a trumpet, an iPad, sheet music, improvisation, or a combination of these things. Students are included.

Similar to Beth, Ty emphasized the need for the students to feel included in their music education experience. He also highlighted the importance of music education to be fluid and to adapt in order to center individual students. During Ty's final interview, he discussed his hopes for the future of music education:

> I think what I'm thinking about now—how can music education like as a, as a system, how can music educators listen? How can, like, we provide more spaces for potential educators and educators to listen to different stories that are not

> White? That are not, that don't come from the traditional music education system. Not as like, not as like “oh you're doing this and there's all this” and it's like, like a battle, but yeah, kind of like to embrace that like friction and that tension and create safe spaces. Like what you did in the PLC—like you were able to, like, guide the sessions and allow for attention and confusion and like bubbling of energy and [moves hands to mimic bubbling of tension]. I think, I think that's really important because you're like, you're like picking at things— you're picking at what might seem superordinary. You're picking at like what might seem very common within these spaces but are real problems.

Ty’s suggestion to get music education to listen more indicates his desire for music education to expand its priorities. He stressed the importance of including non-White stories

Although only Ty and Beth explicitly mentioned race in their dreams, all participants described a music education experience that they believed would be ideal for all students. Many of the participants included different aspects of exploration within their dream for the future of music education. Centering student exploration can create a space that expands whose stories are centered in music education.

Hopes for Themselves as Music Teachers

In addition to writing their future dreams for music education, in their final interviews and during the final PLC session, some participants shared their dreams for themselves as music educators. The participants identified different CRT characteristics in their hopes for themselves. By identifying different aspects of CRT, the participants show how the PLC influenced them as educators.

Jesse hoped he did not become complacent as an educator. Instead, he aimed to be "ever-evolving as an educator . . . I want to create an ever-evolving classroom." As the participants reflected on their dreams for the future of music education, they also discussed their hopes for the future of music education.

During the final PLC, Beth shared hopes for herself:

> My hope for myself in music education is to think more consciously about my students. Prior to this, I never looked at my students as, "you are Black, you are - - - ." I had to consciously think about the demographics of my classroom because I never observed them. Now I have to go the opposite way and observe that and be conscious about what are my students' stories, and get to a point where I can incorporate their stories in the classroom . . . To incorporate really cool ideas that still meet the goals for my content area, but also incorporate who my kids are and where they come from.

Beth acknowledged how, prior to the PLC, she never considered overtly recognizing the race of the students she taught. This is an example of how experiencing the PLC expanded some of her considerations of race in the classroom. When educators recognize and choose not to ignore race, similar to Beth, they recognize part of that student's identity.

Ty also shared his hopes for himself as a music educator during the final PLC session. He expressed:

> My hope for myself and music education is to embody music and really push myself to create context around that . . . Digging into my own story and my own creativity . . . This has helped me in regards to gaining awareness and vocabulary and tools as to how to navigate music education.

Ty consistently emphasized the importance of centering storytelling throughout his reflections during the PLC and in his interviews. In this quote, he highlighted his desire to examine his own story and his creativity to push himself to continue growing as a music educator.

These quotes center the participants' desires for themselves after participating in the PLC. They aimed to be more conscious of their decisions as educators. Salvador, Paetz, and Lewin-Zeigler (2020) examined a transformative experience involving social justice themes in a music education graduate course with multiple music educators. One of the findings of their research focused on how the teachers became more intentional and conscious of what they said as educators, similar to the participants in the current study.

Reflection on Initial Goals

As the final PLC approached its conclusion, I handed each of the participants a personalized piece of paper with their initial goals for joining the PLC, to remind each participant of those initial goals for participation in the PLC. On the sheet of paper, I instructed them to "reflect on your initial goals for participating in this PLC. In what ways have your goals been achieved or not achieved? What more do you desire in regard to understanding CRT in music education?" This was one of the final activities so that participants could reflect on what they had learned and how they had changed throughout the PLC.

Beth wrote:

> My goal has been achieved, in that I've gained a lot of new perspectives. It's also given me affirmation of the things I've been wanting to see in the materials available to help music educators achieve their classroom goals (i.e. method books that are actually relevant to 2020). I also now need to find ways to gain an

> understanding of my students' perspectives and how they can tell their stories within the context and content of my classroom.

Beth's reflection shows that she gained new perspectives, and she hopes to better center and to understand her students' perspectives. During her final interview, I asked Beth if her thoughts on race and racism in music education had changed. She stated, "I don't think they've changed. I think they've expanded." This "expansion" suggests that she gained new perspectives about race and racism.

In Ty's first interview, he stated that his goal for participating in the PLC was "to become more informed and be more aware of my responsibilities within the culture of music education." During the final PLC, Ty reflected on whether he met this goal and noted:

> I achieved this goal to an extent, as I gained useful vocabulary and ideas regarding race and racism, specifically with how it connects to music education. I feel this is an ongoing process. I found the discussions with current music educators very informative and eye-opening. If anything, I look to engage, listen, and share with this community more often.

Ty acknowledged that this process does not end, and the learning must be continuous. In order for him to continue to learn, he emphasized the importance of listening.

During Angela's first interview, I asked "What do you hope to gain from being part of this PLC?" She replied, "I want to continue learning how to make my classroom inclusive and how to make sure kids are all getting the experiences that they need." During the final PLC session, I asked her to write down if her goals were met, and she wrote:

> I don't feel like my goals have been achieved—because they never *will* be achieved; nor do I hope to ever have the answers . . . because it means that I will

> stop questioning my daily practices. Every student is different, and students will continue to be individual— coming from different backgrounds, different political climates, and different shared experiences. This PLC has succeeded in giving me a toolbox with which to ask hard questions, ways to self-reflect, and ways to engage in conversation with others to continue to journey toward knowledge . . . or "wokeness."

Angela highlighted how, as a result of participating in the PLC, she no longer avoided asking hard questions and embraced self-reflection. She also fully embraced the evolving nature of addressing race and racism and how constant questioning and reflecting practices are at the core.

When Jesse wrote about meeting his goals within the PLC, he reflected on what he had learned:

> I've learned a lot about the power of storytelling, but maybe now I need to look into what that looks like to bring culturally responsive storytelling into my classroom and expand that to hearing stories outside of the culture in my school. I have gained a lot to process through, which maybe will help shape me into the kind of educator that can model these things for my students.

Here, Jesse identified how learning about storytelling impacted him as an educator and how he intends to embrace culturally responsive pedagogy in his classroom.

By asking participants if they met their goals in completing the PLC, I desired to gain an accurate understanding of their experiences. Each participant experienced their own level of growth throughout the PLC. They each identified how they gained new tools, vocabulary, and perspectives since participating in the PLC. According to Taylor (2017), "It is transformative learning theory that explains this learning process of constructing and appropriating new and

revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world." By reflecting on if or how the participants met their initial goals, they detailed portions of their learning experiences from engaging in the PLC that indicated growth.

Summary

Concerning the need for change, participants discussed their thoughts for the future of music education and the future of their careers. Asking the participants to dream without barriers created a space wherein they not only identified their desires for music education but also their visions for themselves as music educators. Participants highlighted storytelling and counternarratives in a way that suggests that particular CRT tenet greatly impacted their perspectives. Emdin (2016) states, "Once students' voice is valued, the educator can work toward fostering family" (p. 59). Learning about how teachers' perspectives relate to seeing students could be a way for music educators to better address race and racism.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explored how the participants experienced transformation and paradigm shifts while learning about CRT with fellow music educators in a PLC. I also detailed the final activities in the PLC focused on dreaming for the future and participants' culminating reflections. According to Mezirow (2003), "Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 58). The participants in this study encountered moments in which they learned new information that either challenged or expanded their world view. Some of the participants identified how participating in the PLC completely changed their understanding and approach to race and racism in music education. They identified the

importance of understanding racism as a system, intentionally seeing race, and centering students' stories in the music classroom. Although the PLC may not have provided the same scale of disorienting dilemmas or transformation for all participants, they each identified how they grew and benefited from participating in this opportunity.

In the culminating PLC activity, participants expressed their dreams for the future of music education and also reflected on whether they met their goals for joining the PLC. Goal setting gave the participants an opportunity to identify their hopes for joining the PLC. Giving the participants space to dream for the future of music education provided space for them to articulate what they valued most. Their hopes for music education included being more intentional about embracing technology, exploration, and creativity. In the final chapter, I provide a summary of the project and its implications for music education.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE THROUGH FOUNDATIONAL SHIFTS

Discussion

The findings from this study detail how four practicing music educators experienced learning about CRT in a PLC. They identified how their understanding of race and racism expanded and influenced their practices as music educators. Throughout the duration of the PLC, they expanded their vocabularies and strategies about challenging racism and racist practices. The participants engaged in critical reflection throughout the PLC experience. They reflected on their teaching practices and how they understood race and racism within themselves. As they practiced self-reflection and processed new information, the participants identified connections in their teaching with CRT tenets. In addition to critical self-reflection, the participants identified the importance of storytelling in their classroom as means of connection and as a way to empower community. In this section, I detail how the findings from this study connect to existing music education and general education literature. I separate this section into the five CRT tenets the participants studied in the PLC.

CRT in Music Education

The participants in this study learned about five central CRT tenets. By reflecting and questioning how CRT tenets could be used in music education, the participants identified how racism is a system, how storytelling influences music education, and how recognizing the intersecting of identities can benefit educators. They additionally gained an understanding of how Whiteness affects them and explored the interests that must converge to create change in music education.

Ordinariness

In recognizing racism as a system, the participants gained an understanding of how ordinariness relates both to systemic racism and individual racist actions. Jesse shared how his understanding of racism expanded to include systems and structures. By considering solutions and ways to challenge racism, he asserted that one way to create systemic change is through change at the individual level. Additionally, participants challenged race-neutral ideology by acknowledging and recognizing race in their classrooms. Although teachers may believe they are being polite or politically neutral when they say they do not see color, they actually erase a key identity point (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

In music education literature, Bradley (2007) identifies the importance for music educators to name race and not shy away from recognizing racism within the profession. She states, "If we can overcome the taboo about naming race in discussion, and begin to talk more knowledgeably and confidently about racial issues, we can begin to make our music education praxes more racially equitable and socially just" (p. 135). Similarly, Hess (2019) presents a pedagogy of noticing in order to recognize oppression. She states, "This pedagogy of noticing encourages youth to notice oppression and the ideologies that influence it, even when (perhaps especially when) it does not affect them, and to question what they encounter in daily interactions" (p. 152). Although Hess centers youth in the pedagogy of noticing, this pedagogical practice can be helpful for adults and music educators to notice and then address oppression. A pedagogy of noticing can be a beneficial tool not only to notice oppression experienced or caused by others but also to notice oppression caused by the self. By engaging in constant self-reflection, the participants noticed race and racism in a way they had not prior to the PLC and even questioned if their own practices were racist.

Ordinariness refers to how racism is everywhere and is endemic in society. For Hess and Bradley, noticing and naming oppression represents a key element for addressing or challenging oppression. An understanding of ordinariness requires the ability to acknowledge racism. Bradley and Hess help music educators recognize how the ordinariness of racism manifests in music education, which then can provide a pathway toward addressing and challenging racism. If music educators desire to become more racially equitable, they must be able to name race and racism first.

Counternarratives

In addition to recognizing how ordinariness manifests in music education, the participants detailed how storytelling influenced their practices as music educators. According to DeCuir and Dixson (2004), "Counter-storytelling is a means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes" (p. 27). The act of emphasizing storytelling and recognizing whose stories are and are not centered helped participants identify the importance of using stories in their classrooms.

Within the study, multiple participants identified how storytelling and counternarratives influenced them as music educators. Ty emphasized storytelling as a foundation for himself as an instructor and as a tool for his students to explore their stories and how those stories might be translated musically. Angela shared an experience from her high school piano class during which she intentionally opened a conversation about race with her students, to center and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. Beth and Jesse also identified the importance of embracing their students' stories and providing space for them to share and reflect on their stories musically.

Storytelling constitutes a critical feature of CRT. By using stories, CRT researchers detail experiences in ways that legitimize experiences that the dominant population may not typically

experience. In addition to naming race, CRT scholars also identify the need to name the world. Naming the world directly connects to storytelling and counternarratives because counternarratives center the lived experiences of those who are racially marginalized. In Hess's (2017) description of critical pedagogy, she shares, "It is a pedagogy that encourages students to "name their world" and work to change it—to identify hegemonic systems around them, resist them, and make something new." (p. 173). The participants in this study were asked to name their world—which is not considered a counternarrative because all the participants were White. I also asked participants to consider ways to provide avenues for their students to name their worlds, which may be considered counternarratives depending on the racial demographics of the students.

Intersecting Identities

As the participants grew to understand intersectionality, they identified how this concept connected to themselves and to their classrooms. The participants learned how intersectionality relates to positional power, domination, and biases based on identity. In describing intersectionality as a metaphor, Collins (2019) states:

> [Intersectionality] arrived in the midst of ongoing struggles to resist social inequalities brought about by racism, sexism, colonialism, capitalism, and similar systems of power. The metaphor of intersectionality could move among and through these forms of domination, providing a snapshot view of their sameness and difference as a way to see their interconnections. (Collins, 2019, p. 27)

Intersectionality requires an understanding of how sameness and difference relate to power, meaning the sameness of one identity point does not eliminate the power difference of an additional identity point. The participants completed an activity in which they had to determine

their identity points as either Agent (dominant) or Target (non-dominant). After completing this activity, we discussed facilitating this type of activity in their classrooms. Ty indicated that this activity could be an opportunity for teachers to listen and learn from their students—the teachers could emphasize their students' lived experiences and gain a deeper understanding of their identities. By understanding power differences through an intersectional lens, teachers can create spaces in which they can learn from and with their students.

Understanding Whiteness

As the participants processed the concept of Whiteness as property, they made clear connections to how White privilege manifests in their lives. Some experienced different phases of Hardiman and Keehn's (2012) White Identity Development:

> Some White people may have an experience that leads to some sort of critical incident or "aha" moment connected to the topic of race, or experience a series of events that leads them to question their prior beliefs (for example, developing a friendship with a person of color, taking a class on social justice that discusses race and racism, etc.). These experiences may lead a person to enter the third stage of Hardiman's model, *Resistance*, in which White people begin the process of unlearning racism. This stage is characterized by a number of negative feelings such as guilt and shame which lead people to want to distance themselves from their Whiteness, and spend most of their time with people of color. (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012 p. 123)

Of the five phases of White identity development, the participants' experiences during the PLC mostly reflected the resistance phase. The participants experienced different "aha" moments and began to question their contributions toward maintaining racist structures. Jesse

and Beth described moments at which they questioned if they or their actions were racist. Reflecting on whether they were racist provided an opportunity for them to personally identify their racist actions.

The Interests that Must Converge

I presented the final tenet, interest convergence, as a jumping-off point to consider and identify the different interests that must converge for the music education profession to become more equitable. This concept provides a foundation for identifying who holds the power to perpetuate the practices in music education. I place a greater emphasis on the conflict involving interest convergence. Dixson (2017) states,

> According to Gillborn, I-C does not describe a balanced negotiation process in which two parties come to a rational compromise; rather, it involves conflict. Whites in power decide to take action because they sense that they will experience greater loss if they fail to take action than if they do not.

The participants identified what they thought needed to change in order for music education as a profession to become more equitable. Even though the participants did not explicitly identify conflict as the main source needed, they highlighted that the people in power needed to have some reason to act or change. Beth suggested that parents, as stakeholders, may contribute to any influence.

Summary

The five tenets included in this study represent only a fraction of the tenets and characteristics of CRT. I chose to present these tenets because they each easily relate to education. If I were to recreate the CRT curriculum, I would centralize ordinariness, counternarratives, and intersectionality. Within those three themes, I provided an opportunity to

deeply examine these concepts and how they connected to additional themes or tenets. For example, within the discussion focused on ordinariness, I would include aspects of Whiteness as property and racial realism to show the interrelations between the tenets. Additionally, I would emphasize how CRT has evolved since its inception and would provide space for participants to compare its relevance today. Although participants had many opportunities to reflect on the tenets, if I were to facilitate this type of learning experience again, I would explicitly have participants identify the interests that converged, which prompted them to participate in the learning experience.

Implications

As I prepared to conduct this study, my philosophical grounding of music education and teaching greatly expanded to include aspects of critical pedagogy and critical race theory. By taking multiple courses that incorporated these themes, my understanding of the over-arching characteristics grew immensely. I was most interested in how central aspects of CRT focus on liberatory practices that challenge power dynamics. With this interest, I desired to explore how practicing music teachers might embrace these concepts for themselves and in their classrooms.

I chose to conduct this study to expand research that explicitly focuses on race and racism in music education. The findings from this study suggest that there remains a need for music educators to increase their understanding of race and racism and how they operate in society and the classroom. In this section, I discuss how music education can embrace particular findings from this study. Based on the data gathered from the participants' involvement in the PLC based on CRT, I present two main implications: Beyond Awareness—Toward Transformation; and Expanding Music Education. These implications emphasize the importance of transformative change that extends beyond awareness and identify how music education can expand to embrace

the transformation needed to create a profession dedicated to identifying, addressing, and challenging systems of oppression with the profession.

Beyond Awareness—Toward Transformation

Throughout the duration of the PLC, I routinely found myself questioning how music educators might fully address oppressive systems. Identifying oppressive systems is a logical first step toward rectifying those systems. This PLC recognized racism as one of many systemic oppressions found within the education system. Recognizing racism or becoming aware of how racism operates in music education is significant but is not the only action needed to promote change. Many discussions in the PLC involved questions about how to address systemic change. For music educators to address systemic oppression, there must be a commitment toward transformation.

Transformative experiences are important in education in order for educators to recognize the need for change. As mentioned in Chapter 6, according to Mezirow (2003), "Transformative learning is learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (p. 58). By creating a learning space such as a PLC, where educators can encounter transformative experiences in an educational context, they can challenge assumptions and transform music education into a more liberated space for children and teachers. A possible transformative goal for music education includes a philosophical shift that challenges Western European classical dominance, prioritizes an openness of exploration and creativity, recognizes how racism operates, and centers students' lived reality.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, Jesse identified and critiqued implicit priorities in music education. He expressed, "The non-Western classical European learnings of music happen in after-school settings; like a DJ club or music tech happens in an after-school setting, and I think it's interesting that it isn't the center." Additionally, multiple participants frustratingly spoke of "old, dead, White guys" as central to music education. By shifting priorities in music education to challenge Western European classical dominance and embrace the validity of multiple types of music-making, the music education profession can widen its narrow offerings and vision.

In centering student exploration and creativity, music educators can provide music-making opportunities that embrace multiple ways to create music and emphasize the process of learning as opposed to placing so much weight on performance as the product. Ty posed the question, "How can we provide [blank] canvasses?" Generating a space for educators to explore the blank canvass with their students creates a space to affirm their individuality.

Recognizing how racism operates can help music educators question how they maintain racist systems and directly address racist practices. Jesse reflected on the deeply personal journey of questioning if or how he maintains and contributes to racist structures. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Jesse shared how significant it is to ask if someone thinks of themselves as racist. He reflected on how personal a journey it was to question whether he was racist, what it meant if he identified himself as racist, and how that may be perpetuated in the classroom. Providing opportunities for teachers to actively ask themselves if their lesson plans perpetuate racism can provide a foundational shift to what music educators teach and their reasons for teaching. Considering how certain practices either contribute to or challenge racist structures can create a pathway toward generating a more liberated music education profession.

Music educators can create opportunities for students to share their stories and their lived experiences in a way that affirms the expertise they bring to the classroom. Angela created space in the advisory period for the students she taught to share their reflections and experiences of race in their school. Although Angela indicated that she was nervous about approaching the subject, she revealed that she was grateful that she took a chance to talk about the students' experiences. In her final interview, as she reflected on the discussion, she expressed, "How are you gonna learn from it, if you don't talk about it?" By creating space for students to share their stories, teachers can learn from their experiences in a way that helps them grow as teachers.

Throughout the PLC, participants shared their thoughts and reflections about change and transformation. Jesse indicated that change comes from a personal level. He shared that in order for there to be any systemic change, he must change himself first. Expressing the need to change himself places responsibility for systemic change on him as an individual. His assertion speaks to how collective and systemic change may be generated by a collective of individuals striving for similar change. Ty emphasized the importance of listening to other stories in order to create change. Listening to students or the systemically oppressed creates a space to grow by accepting and affirming realities different from one's own. Concerning culturally responsive literature, Gay (2018) states:

> They [stories] can entertain, educate, inform, evoke memories, showcase ethnic and cultural characteristics, and illuminate abstractions. Stories are means for individuals to project and present themselves, declare what is important and valuable, give structure to perceptions, make general facts more meaningful to specific personal lives, connect the self with others, proclaim the self as a cultural

being, develop a healthy sense of self, forge new meanings and relationships, or build community. (Gay, 2018, p. 3)

Angela centered her desire to keep learning and to continue to be "broken." Allowing herself to be broken created a vulnerability through which she is willing to learn and embrace difficult topics. Beth expressed that transformation can happen through a change in representation. It was important for Beth to see a diverse representation of musical material for the students she teaches. Representation, together with the desire to consistently learn, grow, and question whether actions perpetuate racism, creates a foundational and philosophical shift for music educators to embrace practices that challenge racism and White supremacy. These examples show the type of change the four music educators desired while learning about CRT.

As the participants processed their understanding of CRT and how it relates to music education, they highlighted the importance of learning from students. Ty's reflection about encouraging the teacher to be the student reflects hook's (1994) engaged pedagogy, which centers freedom within education. hooks emphasizes the importance of a reciprocal teacher-student dynamic wherein both teachers and students contribute to learning and growth. She states:

> When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. Professors who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are

themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive. (p. 21)

Jesse's aspiration to change himself, Ty's focus on listening, and Angela's desire to be "broken" all reflect aspects of engaged pedagogy. They each recognized particular ways to shift themselves in order to grow as educators. By consistently embracing opportunities for growth and questioning, educators may potentially address and challenge oppressive systems in the classroom. By taking the time to reflect and identify ways to change at the individual level and as an educator, like Jesse, educators can identify changes that they may need to make in their classrooms to engage in a more racially equitable practice. Being intentional with regard to whom educators listen can influence who is and is not centered in the classroom. Angela's desire to be "broken" connects to the hunger to learn more and not become settled or complacent when attempting to create more equitable and liberated learning spaces and educational systems.

Transformation, in engaged pedagogy, can also include curricular changes. hooks (1994) shares how curricular changes could challenge systems of domination:

> Progressive professors working to transform the curriculum so that it does not reflect biases or reinforce systems of domination are most often the individuals willing to take the risks that engaged pedagogy requires and to make their teaching practices a site of resistance. (p. 21)

Beth's aspiration to include more diverse musical and repertoire offerings loosely connects to aspects of engaged pedagogy. By providing repertoire that reflects the identities of the students she teaches, Beth challenges a curriculum that only represents a narrow demographic of students. However, without challenging systems of domination in her performance-based classroom, her efforts embody only a portion of engaged pedagogy. In order

for curricular shifts to explicitly challenge biases and systems of domination, educators must commit to identifying systems of domination that inhibit a sense of freedom or liberation and challenging those systems.

Black, liberatory-based educational practices, in addition to hook's (1994) engaged pedagogy, include Love's (2019) abolitionist teaching. Love (2019) embraces the need for educational transformation through an abolitionist framework. She encourages educators to fight for an education system where students thrive. "Abolitionist teaching is choosing to engage in the struggle for educational justice knowing that you have the ability and human right to refuse oppression and refuse to oppress others, mainly your students" (p. 11). By actively choosing to commit to transformation, music educators may be able to address and challenge racism and racist practices.

An additional facet that can affect learning and transformation includes the racial demographics of the PLC. Noting that all PLC participants identified as White provides further insights and implications to how the homogenous racial make-up of the PLC influenced the participants' experiences. With an all-White PLC, participants discussed their responsibility as White people to recognize and challenge racism. Discussing race in a racially homogenous group allows space for the people in that group to speak about their experience without leaning on a participant outside of that race, typically a person of color, to then speak for the entirety of that race. For example, in a White homogenous group, a person of color may feel pressured to represent their racial group. Moreover, White people have an obligation to explicitly learn about racism and do the deep, internal, reflective work to address how they either maintain or challenge racism.

Expanding Music Education

Further implications for this study include exploring and identifying the changes music educators can embrace to challenge racist practices and racist systems. At the conclusion of the PLC, the participants emphasized the need for fellow educators and music education to participate in a learning experience focused on CRT. They thought it would be beneficial for fellow educators to go through the experience of learning about CRT. Data from the participating music teachers suggest a desire to expand music education practices to broaden music-making experiences. The participants highlighted how music education can increase opportunities for students to explore and create music, such as a song-writing class. In this section, I share how the participants described what it means to expand music education.

At different points during the PLC, each participant identified ways music education can expand in order to address and challenge racism and racist practices. They mentioned the importance of expanding and embracing explorative practices and centering students' stories in the classroom. Over 15 years ago, Reimer (2004) critiqued the limited offerings in music education:

> Music is thriving in America, in its rich array of types and styles and ways to be involved that our multimusical culture makes so readily available to all. Music education is not thriving comparably. We have tended to hunker down with our narrow preferences and limited opportunities and then, because we are dangerously irrelevant, we advocate, advocate, advocate—not for fundamental change in music education but for unquestioning support for what we have traditionally chosen to offer. (Reimer, 2004, p. 34)

Reimer's ideas align with the participants' desire for music education to expand music-making opportunities. Participants suggested that music education could expand by creating more space for students to autonomously explore and center the multiple ways they can be musically creative.

All participants mentioned how music education night benefit by placing more emphasis on exploration and creativity in the classroom. The participants connected student autonomy to exploration in a music classroom wherein students have more opportunities to search different ways to create music. In a PK-12 setting, this might involve the elevation of music-making opportunities focused on songwriting. It might also suggest an increase in opportunities to make music by using technology and looping tools. By expanding opportunities for exploration, students and teachers can create music-making spaces that center student creativity.

In addition to creating a learning space that centers exploration, participants mentioned that music education and educators should expand course offerings in middle and high school. Jesse questioned why general music ends in elementary school. This perspective challenges the hyper-specialized course offerings in middle school and high school music courses in which the music-making opportunities center on performing on an instrument that requires years of prior knowledge. Providing musical offerings that do not require years of instruction expands who can participate in music courses.

Music educators might also expand music-making opportunities by considering ways to reconceptualize performance-based classrooms. Music educators can do this by deeply reflecting on what type of music-making is and is not included in addition to who is and is not included in those classrooms. They can then identify what is most valued in those performance-based

classrooms. Non-performance-based courses could emphasize songwriting, an understanding of digital audio workspaces, and sampling technology.

Challenging Current Barriers

If the music education profession desires to expand its offerings, then it is imperative that more types of music makers and creatives have a clear path to becoming music educators. This suggests the importance of critiquing university admissions and the SOM structure. Kratus (2007) shares:

> Collegiate music schools are in many cases the most out-of-touch, clinging to an outmoded nineteenth-century model of conservatory training for professional classical performers, even in the preparation of music educators. One wonders whether our profession's resistance to change is a direct result of the limitations in the musicianship we have been taught. (p. 45)

Kratus' (2007) assertion—written nearly 15 years ago—describes an SOM structure that has not experienced much change. The participants in my study also critiqued SOM procedures and expectations. Beth highlighted how her university alma mater audition expectations had not changed since she attended. Perhaps SOMs have yet to change because music educators and music teacher educators have yet to experience a shift in perspectives that would help professionals in the field prioritize the importance of change.

Participants also highlighted that another reason music education practices have not changed is due to teachers teaching the way they have been taught. Changes in preservice teacher curriculum may help address this issue. By including multiple forms of music making in the university setting, future music teachers have an opportunity to broaden their experiences in making music and to become more open to embracing and offering multiple ways to make music

when they become teachers. Increasing multiple ways to engage with music means to broaden offerings of music that is often racialized and seen as inferior, such as hip-hop and sampling.

Current barriers that make it challenging to address race and racism also include using soft language and euphemisms when discussing race and racism (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2017). By eradicating euphemism when discussing race, music educators can challenge race-neutral language and affirm their students' identities. By acknowledging race, educators may embrace all of the uniqueness attributed to an individual. To be Black is not a singular experience but a beautiful spectrum of experiences. The same can be said of any identity point. I am not perfect in this. As I reflect on this process, I think about the different moments when I have utilized non-direct language when describing race. At the end of the PLC, when the participants dreamed for the future of music education, they avoided identifying race and used race-neutral language such as "diverse" or "cultural," even though the PLC explicitly covered race.

Implications Summary

This research reflected the participants' experiences of engaging in a PLC focused on CRT. As they processed information regarding CRT, the participants identified a need for more exploration/creation-based classrooms in which students have more autonomy in the music-making process. I assert that in order for music education to address and challenge racism and eradicate White supremacy, music educators must commit to transformation. The music education profession must embrace a transformation that includes a philosophical shift—one that challenges Western European classical dominance—prioritizes an openness of exploration and creativity, recognizes how racism operates, and centers students' lived realities. The National Core Arts Standards (2020) expect students to create, perform, respond, and connect in equal portions. According to the data I gathered, the music educators in this study seem to desire less

emphasis on performance and a more equitable prioritization of the create, respond, and connect experiences in the classroom. To shift the narrative and practices to eradicate White supremacy, music educators must affirm and embrace multiple ways to create music.

Suggestions for Future Research

As I reflect on the process of conducting this study and writing this dissertation, I think deeply about the stories and lived experiences of other music educators. While many music educators may be able to relate to one or more participants presented in this study, I think about additional music educators' stories with different narratives and lived experiences. I think about the music educators who have embraced Black liberation movements for decades. I think about the music educators who have openly and explicitly challenged large systemic issues. I think about the music educators who chose to quit due to racism or other types of discrimination.

Future studies in music education focused on systemic change could reflect and expand on present and past research. Learning about and addressing racist practices through a PLC provides an opportunity to deeply reflect on new concepts and personal practices. Additional research in a PLC setting could solely focus on Black and music educators of color. A PLC is not the only space to grapple with understanding systemic issues and learning how to challenge those issues. Salvador Paetz, Tippetts (2020) explored the transformative experience from a graduate course with music educators. McKoy et. al (2017) explored the growth music educators experienced during a professional development day. Music education organizations such as Chicago Area Kodály Educators (CAKE) and Chicago Artists for Action (CAfA) offer opportunities for their members to learn about race and consider how to challenge systemic oppression in their classrooms.

Through research focused on system changes, music educators and music teacher educators can gain tangible knowledge of how they might contribute to changes within their systems. Researchers can examine SOMs that embrace practices and policies that center equity and embrace new strategies and policies to support students and teachers. Researchers might explore if music educators, students, and music teacher educators desire systemic change. For those who do desire systemic change, researchers could examine how they define and describe systemic change for themselves and their communities. Focused on the SOM, researchers could explore how eliminating the audition process broadens the type of music-making that may occur in SOMs. This research on musical practices might include looping/sampling technology, hip-hop, and exploration-based musicking, not only in music education but throughout SOMs.

Concluding Thoughts

CRT is a theory for understanding race and racism in our society (Stefano & Delgado, 2017). It can be used as a tool to better understand systemic oppression and help individuals reflect on their complicity in maintaining that oppressive system. The process of learning about CRT in a PLC creates an opportunity to embrace the tension and conflict with peers. This dissertation is not a "how-to" guide to create a more liberated music education. The purpose of this study was to expand music education research focused on race and racism through a case study focused on the experiences of four practicing music teachers learning about CRT in a PLC, and how that experience transformed them and their teaching.

Teachers must commit to transforming themselves in order to transform practices that create a more equitable teaching environment. Freire (1970/1993) emphasizes the importance of reflection, action, and transformation. He states:

> In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. (p. 31)

The goal of transformation provides a tangible trajectory whereby educators can identify what needs to change in order to address systemic oppression.

I want the music education profession to address systemic oppression. Many music education researchers and PK-12 music educators address systemic oppression in significant ways. Rathgeber (2019) provides a critical examination of how music educators can trouble taken-for-granted assumptions about disability in music education. Thomas-Durrell (2019) explores the intersections of race and queerness. Palkki (2017) emphasizes the importance for choral directors to understand the complexities of gender. Hess (2019) encourages music educators to embrace an activist music education for social change. The work of these and many other researchers provide a pathway toward establishing the transformation needed in music education.

From a police system that can murder Black individuals with impunity to the disproportionate Coronavirus deaths rates — Black individuals are 2.8 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than White individuals in the United States (Center for Disease Control, 2020) — racism is endemic in our society. Additionally, in a country where over 74 million United States voters in 2020 voted to reelect Donald Trump (Dunn, 2020), a racist White supremacist, racism is very much alive.

Even though the exacerbated effects of racism may not be caused in the music classroom, they may be felt there; however, the music classroom can also become a space that disrupts racist practices. Until this society can provide the material care, support such as adequate healthcare,

affordable housing, livable wages, and affordable college tuition for anyone who experiences financial insecurity—because racism is inextricably tied to capitalism—the changes we make in music classrooms may have little effect on the overall system. At the same time, if we can create classrooms that do not ignore present and historical inequities within our society and create learning environments that help students process and challenge those inequities, then we may set off a small spark that can ignite a blazing inferno within a society that unquestionably supports people who are marginalized.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Study Title: Critical Race Theory and Music Education: A Professional Learning Community

Researcher and Title: Amy Lewis, Doctoral Candidate

Department and Institution: Music Education at Michigan State University

Contact Information: amy.lewis20@gmail.com (816)916-0873

Sponsor: Dr. Juliet Hess

BRIEF SUMMARY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation including why you might or might not want to participate, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to discuss and ask the researchers any questions you may have.

You are being asked to participate in a research study focused on Critical Race Theory through a professional learning community. Critical Race Theory is a lens to further understand race and racism. Your participation in this study will include eight sessions (once a week), three interviews, and a reflective journal.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This study will explore the experience of music teachers who learn about Critical Race Theory in a professional learning community. Critical Race Theory provides a framework to understand race and racism. In order to address racial inequities in music education, music educators must possess the tools and concepts needed to discuss race and racism. By exploring how participants engage in a professional learning community focused on CRT, this project can expand the current literature and practices on race, racism, and CRT in music education.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO

Your participation in this research includes participation in an eight-session professional development community focused on Critical Race Theory, three individual interviews, and reflective journal entries.

1) The researcher will facilitate each PLC session, in which you will be encouraged to engage in discussions about race and racism. All sessions will be recorded for research purposes.
2) You will participate in three individual interviews that will last between 30–60 minutes throughout the duration of the PLC. The first interview will take place before the PLC begins, the second interview will take place after the fourth session, and the final

interview will take place after the final PLC session. You may skip or decline to answer any question that you wish.

3) As part of this research, you will be asked to complete weekly journal entries. In each entry, you will answer different reflective questions that focus on a particular tenet for that week.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Engaging in a professional learning community focused on critical race theory may potentially spark new considerations of race and racism in the music education context. Reflecting on issues pertaining to race and racism through a CRT lens may influence your teaching practices and could help you consider ways that racism manifests in music education. Your participation in this study could help broaden the understanding of Critical Race Theory and how that relates to music education

POTENTIAL RISKS

Interview questions and facilitated sessions will pertain to participants' understanding of race and racism with regard to music education. There is no physical risk involved in participation. Although video and voice recorded data will be collected, data will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms and general descriptors of locations of where you work and the location of the PLC. Participants' home and work address or location will not be shared; therefore, no social, legal, or economic risk is involved.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your private data will not be used in any publications or reports obtained from this research; your confidentiality as a participant in this research student will remain secure. Any personal identification will be omitted so that you will not be identifiable in the written analysis. Pseudonyms will be used for participants. Generic geographical designations will mask the specific location where you live/work/attend the PLC. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies, which protect the confidentiality of individuals and institutions. The data collected for this research study will be protected on a password-protected computer or in a locked file cabinet on the campus of James Madison University. The researchers, and the Institutional Review Board will have access to interview, journal, video recorded data. All recordings and data will be kept in an encrypted folder on a password protected computer.

YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop, and you will not be criticized. Whether you choose to participate or

not will have no effect on the relationship between you and the researcher(s). You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

As a participant in this study, you will engage in a free, eight-session professional learning community focused on critical race theory. Periodically participants will receive breakfast before the PLC session begins.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher, Amy Lewis, by phone at (816) 916-0873 or by email at amy.lewis20@gmail.com, or regular mail 10 W. Grace St. Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature ______________________________ Date __________

Signature of Assenting Child (13-17; if appropriate) Date __________

____

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

A signature is a required element of consent – if not included, a waiver of documentation must be granted by the IRB.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING

Audio recording: All interviews need to be audio recorded in order for the researcher to obtain accurate transcriptions of all conversations. Therefore, audio recording of interviews is a required part of the research process. Please indicate below whether audio recording of interviews is acceptable.

I agree to allow audiotaping of the interviews.

☐ Yes ☐ No Initials____________

Video Recording: All PLCs need to be video recorded in order for the researcher to write notes and describe each session. Recording each session is a required part of the research process. Please indicate below whether video recording of each session is acceptable:

I agree to allow videotaping of myself during each session (a total of eight sessions).

☐ Yes ☐ No Initials____________

APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol

First Interview (Before the PLC begins)

1) Please share the following information about your personal background
    a) Name
    b) Preferred pronouns
    c) Age
    d) Ethnicity
    e) Race
    f) Educational background
    g) Where you live
    h) Experience of dealing with or understanding race growing up
2) Please share any information regarding your teaching background
    a) What and where do you currently teach?
    b) What is your teaching background?
    c) How many years have you taught?
3) Please share any information regarding your musical background
    a) How did you first learn to play music?
    b) Were your music learning experiences mainly in formal or informal settings?
4) What do you enjoy about being a music teacher?
5) What do you find to be challenging as a music teacher?
6) Please describe any experience you have working with social justice.
7) Please detail anything you know about Critical Race Theory or any other theories/ideas about race and racism.
8) What are your thoughts regarding racism in music education?
9) What do you hope to gain from participating in the professional learning community?

Second Interview: This interview will be based partially on how the participants have experienced the PLC after four weeks.

1) After four meetings, what are your thoughts regarding Critical Race Theory and its application to teaching?
2) What has stood out to you with regards to the PLC thus far?
3) Have you learned anything new from participating in the PLC?
    a) If so, what new things have you learned?
4) What have you noticed with regard to your teaching since participating in the PLC?
5) Has the PLC influenced your teaching in any way?
    a) If so, how has the PLC influenced your teaching?
6) Please detail any challenging moments you may have experienced while participating in the PLC.

7) What are your thoughts regarding racism in music education?
8) Are there any modifications would you like to see in the second half of the PLC to best meet your learning and growing needs?

Final Interview

1) Since the conclusion of the PLC, what are your current thoughts regarding critical race theory and its application to teaching?
2) What have you noticed with regard to your teaching since participating in the PLC?
3) Has the PLC influenced your teaching in any way?
    a) If so, how has the PLC influenced your teaching?
4) Please detail any challenging moments you may have experienced while participating in the PLC.
5) What are your thoughts regarding racism in music education?
6) Have your thoughts changed about racism in music education?
7) What are your biggest "take-aways" from participating in the PLC?
8) Would you recommend this type of PLC to your music education colleagues?
    a) Why or Why not?

APPENDIX C: CRT Curriculum Calendar

Session #1 **Opening - What is CRT?**	**Guiding Questions: Why is it important to consider race and racism in our profession?**
Session #2 **Counterstories**	Readings and Listening: 1) Hess (2018) 2) Solózano & Yosso (2002) 3) Listening to Kendrick Lamar's album "good kid, m.A.A.d. city" (Explicit) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFbYKPURxeE&list=PL86h966U8nZAg04lwvw2ESBUvAjwvrf_n Journal Questions: As you engage with these materials reflect on how your teaching practices and curriculum highlight student stories through storytelling or counter-storytelling. Please answer the following questions: 1) How can storytelling/counter-storytelling be valued in music education? 2) In what ways do your teaching practices engage storytelling? -Or- In what ways can your teaching practices or curriculum engage storytelling? PLC Guiding Questions: How can music educators use an understanding of counterstories to highlight stories and experiences of students? In what ways can storytelling be useful in the music classroom?
Session #3 **Ordinariness**	Readings and Video: Koza (2008), DiAngelo (2018) https://www.youtube.com/watch/kzLT54QjclA Journal Questions: How can an understanding of "racism as ordinary" influence your understanding of racism? How might racism manifest in music education? PLC Guiding Questions: How can ordinariness challenge your assumptions of racism?
Session #4/#5 (extended) **Whiteness as Property** **(Ordinariness cont.)**	Readings: Harris (1993), DiAngelo (2018) Journal Questions: What is your initial summary of "Whiteness as Property"? What challenges exist in understanding Whiteness? ...and recognizing Whiteness in music education? How can we recognize our complicity in perpetuating Whiteness? PLC Guiding Questions: What challenges exist in understanding

	Whiteness? ...and recognizing Whiteness in music education? How can we recognize our complicity in perpetuating Whiteness?
Session #6 **Intersectionality**	Readings: Crenshaw (1990) Journal Questions (reflecting on the previous PLC sessions) Is there anything that you feel was left unsaid from our discussion today?...what (if anything) would you like to add to what was said within our conversation? Which topic provided the most amount of tension today? Why? What (if any) "aha"/revelation moments occurred for you during our discussion? What (if any) questions do you still have from our discussion? PLC Guiding Questions: How can an understanding of intersectionality influence teaching practices?
Session #7/#8 (extended) **Interest Convergence / "Now What?" Final reflections**	Readings: Dixson (2017) and Chapter 2 of this dissertation Journal Questions: 1) How do you describe/define interest convergence in your own words? 2) What "interests" must "converge" in order for music education to expand critical considerations of race? 3) In what ways has music education attempted to address social justice concerns within the profession? 4) In what ways can music education do better to explicitly address race and racism? 5) How can does addressing race and racism in music education connect to you "dream" for music education? PLC Guiding Questions: What interests must converge in order for music education to expand its consideration of race and racism?

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